



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

**Ministry of Social Development and Family Services**



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Sunday, 02 January 2022

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Priority: **HIGH**

### **Ministry of Social Development and Family Services stands ready to assist victims of Quarry Road Fire**

**Port-of-Spain** --- “The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS) stands ready to provide the necessary relief assistance to all the families affected by the fire.” So said Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator The Honourable Donna Cox, during a visit she made on Sunday January 2, 2022, following the fire which took place at Quarry Road Port of Spain. Four (4) homes were gutted by a fire which occurred on January 1, along Quarry Street in Port-of-Spain, affecting seven (7) families, comprising of twenty-three (23) persons in total.

During a meeting today at the St. Hilda’s Government Primary School, Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, accompanied by Permanent Secretary Jacqueline Johnson and other Ministry staff; the Minister told affected residents that the Ministry is present today on a data collection drive, so that assessments can be completed as early as possible to help bring some relief to affected persons. Also present was an Officer attached to the City Corporation Disaster Relief Department for a combined approach to providing assistance. Minister Cox told residents that upon receiving information, the Ministry dispatched several of its Officers attached to the National Family Services Division, as well as the National Social Development Programme; to journey with the affected families, so that the relevant funding, as well as counselling and psychosocial support could be offered in the shortest possible time.

As she examined some of the damage herself, the Minister offered words of comfort to the affected families and encouraged them that things will get better. Minister Cox indicated that she held discussions with the Member of Parliament for the area, the Honourable Stuart Young and further noted that the Ministry will continue to partner with other agencies like the National Commission for Self Help Limited, the Elections and Boundaries Commission, as well as NGOs and other stakeholders; to provide assistance, and to expedite applications for lost and destroyed documents.

Since several affected persons were now without shelter, the Ministry also stands ready to provide rental support, as well as emergency food relief given the dire circumstances. During the visit, several of the victims were presented with food hampers by the Ministry and were provided with information packages on the available relief grants and services.

The Ministry is also providing support to the children affected, as many school books and supplies would have also been lost. In such situations, the Ministry will provide a grant amounting to \$700.00 for Primary School and \$1,000.00 for Secondary and Tertiary Institutions, to replace school books and supplies, as well as each family member would receive \$1,000.00 for clothing. Through the Social Welfare Division, Household Items (up to maximum \$10,000.00 may also be replaced.)

Affected persons may claim for minor house repairs in the sum of \$20,000.00 worth of materials from the Ministry's National Social Development Programme (NSDP).

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services remains committed to providing emergency relief to all persons affected by the fire at this time. For all enquiries, and information on disaster relief funding, persons may contact the Ministry's toll-free call centre at 800 – 1MSD (1673).

<ENDS>

**For more information:**

Communications Unit

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

(868) 623-2608; Ext 5405/5424/5432



Felician Guerra, Regional Coordinator, National Social Development Programme completes an assessment of an affected resident, Brian Phillips



Minister Cox looks at the damages done to the seven homes with two of the fire victims



Minister Cox speaks to Nicole Bennett about the Rental Assistance Grant



Minister Cox consoles another fire victim, Renwick Douglas



Minister Cox presents Renwick Douglas with a food and toiletries hamper