



Fourteenth Meeting of the PAAC, Third Session, 12th Parliament

Public Hearing Summary

Wednesday March 1, 2023

Inquiry Subject:

An examination into the provision of flood relief grants by the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS).

Committee Members:

The following Committee Members were present at the meeting:

- Mrs. Bridgid Annisette-George, MP - Chairman
- Mrs. Lisa Morris-Julien, MP - Member
- Mr. Laurence Hislop - Member
- Mr. Wade Mark - Member
- Mr. Randall Mitchell - Member
- Mr. Symon De Nobriga, MP - Member
- Ms. Amrita Deonarine - Member
- Mrs. Ayanna Webster Roy - Member

Witnesses who appeared:

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS)

- Mr. Ryan Ramcharan - Deputy Permanent Secretary
- Ms. Wendy Guy-Hernandez - Deputy Permanent Secretary
- Ms. Jennifer Harvey-Bethel - Director, Finance and Accounts
- Ms. Christine John-Guy - Director (Ag.), Social Welfare Department
- Ms. Patricia De Leon Henry - National Director, National Social Development Programme
- Ms. Ronda Francis - Head, Investigative and Compliance Unit

Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government (MRDLG)

- Mr. Peter Mitchell - Deputy Permanent Secretary
- Mr. Jerry David - Senior Disaster Management Coordinator



Key Issues Discussed:

1. The role of the MRDLG in the administering of flood relief;
2. The status of the collaboration process between the MSDFS and the MRDLG;
3. A detailed breakdown of the ARCGIS Survey 123 System utilised by the MRDLG;
4. The status of the training initiative undertaken by the MRDLG in collaboration with other agencies on the use of the ARCGIS Survey 123 System;
5. The details of the use of the Damage Assessment Needs Assessment (DANA);
6. The plans in place to install cameras on the Stream Flow Systems across Trinidad;
7. The sharing of the data collected by the MRDLG with Local Councillors and Government Ministers;
8. The timeframe for a response from the Disaster Management Unit;
9. The process used to avoid duplications in the systems used by both Ministries;
10. The details on the assessment conducted by the MRDLG;
11. The process used to translate from survey assessment to grant approval;
12. The status of the digitalising of the grants systems of the MSDFS;
13. The improvements made with the CERT Volunteer Programme;
14. The timeline for the processing of applications;
15. The number of applications received and paid to citizens affected by the November Floods 2022;
16. The timeline for the receipt of Temporary Food Support;
17. The lessons learnt from the November 2022 floods;
18. The plans in place to shorten the three (3) months process to receive relief funding;
19. The need for additional staffing to assist with the National Social Development Programme;
20. The challenges encountered when contacting applicants whose application was approved;
21. The details on the collaborations between the MSDFS and the Ministry of Digital Transformation;
22. The processes in place to address fraudulent claims by applicants;
23. The issues with the late payment of Rental Assistance grants;
24. The status of the locations for the collection of cheques;
25. The verification of applicants who are insured or not insured;
26. The processes in place to audit the information received from applicants;
27. The processes undertaken when a community is affected by a disaster;
28. The line item in the recurrent expenditure for the allocation of \$20,000,000.00;
29. The measures implemented to ensure that the issues identified in the Auditor General's Report 2021 does not occur;
30. The clarification on whether one household can receive multiple grants;
31. The process in place to ensure the submission of invoices;
32. The inadequate number of field officers;
33. The status of the recruitment of additional staff;
34. The status of squatters receiving disaster relief grants; and
35. The recommendations on the ways the Committee can assist the Ministries in improving its delivery of services in an efficient and effective manner.



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**Public Administration and
Appropriations Committee**

Next Meeting:

The next Public Hearing of the Committee will be held on **Wednesday, March 22, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.** At this meeting, the Committee intends to will commence an examination into food security in Trinidad and Tobago (aligned with Sustainable Development Goals 1,2, 3 and 12).

PAAC Secretariat

March 8, 2023