

MEDIA RELEASE

March 16, 2020

ALL MUST WORK TOGETHER TO HALT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

The Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce (T&T Chamber) listened attentively to the Honourable Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley's address today.

We commend the Prime Minister for taking decisive action. The T&T Chamber believes the steps were necessary in the effort to flatten the curve as it pertains to the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The T&T Chamber is certain that the measures announced by the Prime Minister will have an impact on businesses and the economy. However, if this virus is not contained the impact will be much more detrimental.

The T&T Chamber believes that at this time, we all have to take responsibility for combatting the spread of this virus so that we do not experience heightened transmission rates.

As such, we accept that stringent measures at the border are necessary. We await further information on inter-island travel and trust that a decision will be arrived at which is in the best interest of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

The temporary closure of schools and limiting of some business operations may have an impact on the population's ability to meet certain financial obligations. The T&T Chamber supports the measures/recommendations put forward, such as requesting financial institutions to allow deferrals. It is important that we ensure that these measures are utilised for the purpose for which they were intended.

We recognise that it has become necessary for companies to implement policies to manage the risks and to protect employees. As such businesses have been asked to be compassionate in their application of work policies by providing leave and flexible working hours. We expect that all parties will exercise good judgment and will act in good faith according to the recommended practices.

As the situation remains fluid it is likely that strategies will have to be reviewed and adjusted. We urge businesses to adhere to the recommendations by the public health officials to ensure the safety of everyone. Emphasis must be placed on proper sanitation practices and the strong dissuasion of the gatherings with 25 persons or more.

The T&T Chamber also believes that the Prime Minister has done the right thing by establishing sector-specific committees to develop recommendations to address the economic impact of the COVID-19 as well as the various support measures for those impacted. We look forward to working with the authorities in any way possible as we negotiate our way forward at this critical time for our nation.

-END-

For media enquiries, please contact:

Rachel Stampfli

Manager, Operations Unit

Phone: 637-6966 Ext. 1222

Email: rstampfli@chamber.org.tt

FROM THE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT