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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Renewing efforts to flatten the curve**

The Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce notes the number of new cases of COVID-19. The re-emergence especially as a number of cases are of un-known origin must be of major concern to every citizen. Given our land space and the size of our population, there is an increased need to control the spread of the virus, in the best interest of citizens and for our long-term economic wellbeing.

We have been consistently reminded by the Minister of Health and health sector officials that by simply following the guidelines such as wearing masks, washing hands frequently, staying home if you are sick, going to be tested if you have symptoms and limiting physical contact, the spread of the virus could be significantly curtailed. It is a message that we can no longer ignore.

It is clear that these guidelines may not have been followed, such as not going out in public if you have symptoms; going to the health centres to be tested if you are symptomatic may potentially have the risk of turning this into either cluster or community spread.

It is our view that we all have the responsibility of curtailing the spread. We further believe that the wearing of masks in all public spaces should be made mandatory. Given that we are faced with a public health emergency, if this policy can be made law by an Order, with a penalty of non compliance, the Chamber support its immediate implementation. This will follow the example of several countries which have been showing some success in containing the spread, for example, Vietnam, France and Japan. A recent study by Cambridge University concluded that universal usage of face masks in public spaces might significantly reduce spread.

Businesses too, should where possible keep a detailed log of persons entering and leaving their buildings, inclusive of names, addresses and contact information should there be a need for contact tracing. Many businesses have largely taken the initiative with a “no mask, no service” rule and hand washing/sanitisation before entry and the Chamber believes that all businesses should enforce these policies. Consumers must adhere to the safety and sanitation protocols required by businesses and likewise if they are not being enforced, have the choice to shop where they feel safer.

We individually and collectively are responsible for limiting the spread of this virus. Once we follow the safety protocols, we can flatten the curve.

We all have a stake in keeping Trinidad and Tobago safe and for protecting lives and livelihoods.

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**FROM THE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT**