



JOINT STATEMENT ON MEETING WITH MINISTERS

AMCHAM T&T, T&T Chamber and TTMA would like to thank the Prime Minister for arranging the hosting of the joint meeting with various Business Service Organizations and Ministers.

As responsible advocates of the private sector, we look forward to ongoing collaboration with the Government to restart the economy responsibly and get business operational. We recognise the government cannot do this alone we want to ensure that the private sector does ALL that is required to support the Government and the People of Trinidad and Tobago.

Some of the key points our group recommended were:

The Private sector fully appreciates the gravity of the current situation. Businesses are suffering and are under tremendous strain after months of limited and, in many cases, no sales. Nonetheless, we are also fully cognizant that we are all in this together and that some intense pain now may reduce longer term suffering. More importantly, it may save lives. As such, we suggest that the government consider introducing additional measures to reduce the movement and interaction of citizens in the public domain over the next two weeks.

In order for businesses and citizens to plan and have a line of sight between individual behaviour and consequences, we believe the Government should develop and make public a “scale-up / scale-down” approach to restrictions based on pre-defined metrics, weighted across various criteria (Private sector can assist). This approach should result in predictable and consistent restrictions/ease of restrictions which will allow businesses to plan and citizens to understand the consequences of increased cases. In the re-opening period, businesses can be classed along a scale of low to high risk with appropriate protocols being developed for each group.

The only way to effectively reduce the threats of the virus is for a minimum of 1,000,000 people to be vaccinated in T&T. As such, the private sector can assist. What is required is a clear, formal policy for companies to import vaccines where possible.

There were some specific areas we focused on such as:

Ease restrictions for exporters who have inventory and orders to be filled. There should be a phased reopening of the Manufacturing Sector and thus in Phase 1, there should be consideration for exporters with inventories in hand with export orders (and adopting all safety and COVID Protocols) be allowed to facilitate those sales. Secondly, given the management of the numbers of COVID cases, there should be a further relaxation of restrictions allowing all manufacturers with export orders to be given permission to engage.



There should also be a phased reopening of businesses who have built the digital infrastructure and invested heavily in technological and logistical infrastructure prior to the onset of the pandemic and have since pivoted their businesses to support various forms of digital commerce, contactless customer engagement and direct fulfilment. The pivot in these business processes provide the opportunity to limit the number of staff coming out to “traditional places of work” whilst providing gainful and remote employment for many of those employees supporting digital commerce. It also reduces the movement of consumers who can get contactless delivery.

As we balance lives and livelihood, we need a differentiated policy for fully vaccinated persons to enter and exit T&T. If people leave T&T and get fully vaccinated and wait an appropriate period for immunity to be built they should be allowed back in, travel restrictions, including quarantine should be loosened. Such people should not necessarily have the financial burden of hotel quarantine or burden the state quarantine facilities. Additional flights should also be added to facilitate the above (with appropriate restrictions being followed).