



EMPLOYERS' CONSULTATIVE ASSOCIATION OF TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

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MEDIA RELEASE

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ECA's response to PM's Commitment to appoint Tripartite Body

The Employers Consultative Association of Trinidad and Tobago (ECA) is heartened by the stated commitment of Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley to focus on the appointment of a tripartite body upon his return from the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting later this month. The ECA has always been a strong advocate for the institutionalizing of a tripartite approach to social dialogue, and, is if the firm belief that an effective tripartite approach to Social Dialogue is one of the key drivers in the conversation on achieving a better quality of life for all citizens and all parties - employees, employers/businesses and Government - all parties with a stake in a developing state.

Having expressed our sincere appreciation to the Honourable Prime Minister for his stated commitment, we are well aware however, that moving from where we are today is going to require, in the first instance, a willingness by all parties in the process to demonstrate greater levels of collaboration, co-operation and compromise. Moreover, we are of the view that in order to create an enabling environment, parties in the process must be open to:

- Commit to a common sense of purpose
- Work towards creating a shared vision
- Demonstrate the will to overcome adversarial histories
- Work towards reconstructing the relationship on a different foundation
- Work towards broadening the perspectives and views of each other's interest about the future

As we progress to a state of stability and competitiveness foreign investment will flow creating the environment for further economic prosperity and social advancement. The challenge before

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us therefore is how we establish a process and a platform for dialogue and convocation so that we can avoid the confrontation that will surely arise from our failure to act in concert.

The inclusion of key social partners in discussions relating to socio-economic policies at the national and industry levels and in particular, on the legal framework of labour relations and labour-related policies will result in the resolution of important economic and social issues, encouragement of good labour market governance, advancement of social and industrial peace and stability and a boost to economic progress.

To accomplish this however, the ECA advises that this cannot be a cosmetic institution but instead, one whose practice and process is effective and meaningful, in addition to fulfilling the needs of its respective members. While we applaud the commitment and attitude of government to urgently resume the tripartite mechanism, we wish to emphasise the importance of the capacity of the social partners to effectively contribute to the dialogue. As a precursor to effective tripartite dialogue, the other social partners (Employers and Labour) must ensure that a strong bipartite dialogue at the enterprise, industry and national level is maintained.

Finally we believe all parties must consider that in addition to the welfare and rights of workers; sustainability of enterprises, job creation and industrial peace must be taken into account.

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