



Confédération des Travailleurs des Secteurs Public et Privé

5 Nalla Street (Ex 6-10)
Elias Street - Rose Hill
Republic of Mauritius
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Hon. Pravind Jugnauth

Prime Minister
Government House
Port Louis

Sir

The “Confederation des Travailleurs des Secteurs Public et Prive” (CTSP) is a Confederation of Trade Unions and has members in all the economic sectors in the Republic of Mauritius.

We are in an unprecedented situation and our future action needs to be concerted and human centered. The Covid-19 has affected all of us and we have to take decision together for a better future.

We should also not forget that more than ever we have to be prepared because we never know when we can be affected globally again. As the saying goes, prevention is better than cure. We have all learnt a lesson and we have to build on that together.

Today the world is confronted with one common enemy, Covid-19. No country has been spared from its deadly effect. The capitalist globalisation is not only about the free movement of goods and capital, but is also the free movement of a pandemic threats.

They have imposed on us that the State cannot be the direct producer of goods and services. The world economy was in the hands of the 500 richest families in the world and they have actively blackmailed the government to open the essential services through private lobbies. We are now witnessing how our public structure is weak. No country was prepared enough to protect its citizens from the deadly effect of Covid–19.

We are still on the crossroad of the pandemic consequences. Many are those that are predicting that the worst is yet to come. The world economy will be in doldrums.



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We will witness massive loss of jobs and an unprecedented rise of poverty accompanied with social unrest. MAURITIUS WILL NOT BE AN EXCEPTION.

CTSP believes that Trade Unions in all countries have a very important and active role to play to redefine the Economic and Social Rules.

We cannot go back to BUSINESS AS USUAL. In all countries, Trade Unions are the biggest organisations representing the working class. Governments have a moral obligation to consult us to redefine policies. The effect of the pandemic is not over yet. We have to prepare ourselves in the name of Solidarity and Unity.

- The only way is to invest in Human Centered Development where the State has the role of Arbitrator not as Facilitator in the hands of the Private companies.
- We cannot embark on the prescribed Capitalist Structural Economic Adjustment Programme for casualisation of humanity.
- It is time for the Government to show their guts and advocate for the annulation of the debts of the poor countries.
- We need to have social protection at global level. The CTSP is proposing the setting up of a Universal Minimum Wage which should be 65 % of the Median wage of the country.
- We need to define a wage ratio that will ensure a decent wage for all through the setting up of a proper income distribution.
- The new ILO Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment 2019 ought to be proclaimed as an ILO Core Convention mandatory on all its member States.



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The CTSP is making the following proposals to the Government of the Republic of Mauritius:

SOCIAL DIALOGUE

The setting up of an immediate structure for the permanent social dialogue (National Tripartite Forum as defined under the Workers' Rights Act 2019).

NO DEROGATION OF LABOUR LAWS WITHOUT CONSENSUAL COMPROMISE

No derogation of the present labour laws (promulgated in October 2019) shall be imposed on workers without any discussion with the Trade Unions in an endeavor to reach a consensual compromise.

HUMAN CENTERED INVESTMENT

All Stimulus Packages to business shall be all Human Centered Investments that will preserve jobs and promote job creation that is socially, environmentally and economically sustainable, in line with the SDGs'.

The CTSP firmly believes that necessary amendments to existing corporate laws should be done to allow government participation in the decision making process of the company.

The CTSP proposes that Government should support companies in terms of equity and not as loans, through this, government can impose that they will form part in the decision making process of the company and consequently ensure a sound functioning of same.

STOP PAYMENT OF DIVIDENDS

Taking into consideration the urgency and magnitude of the catastrophe, the CTSP insists that payment of dividend should be suspended at least for the next three years.



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RATIONALISING INCOME DISTRIBUTION

In an endeavor to save job and limit expenditure, it is imperative that income distribution will have to be revisited. The CTSP proposes that a ratio of 1 of the employees at lowest rank and 10 for the highest rank of the company (1:10).

LAND REFORM FOR FOOD

Mauritius import 80 % of its food. It is most urgent to come with a Land Reform and invest in the planting and transformation of foods. All building projects on prime agricultural land should be banned.

DOMESTIC FARMING AND AGRICULTURE

Domestic Farming and agriculture for own use should be promoted and Local Authorities should develop the structure to encourage exchange and barter system.

ENCOURAGING ROOF GARDENING

Roof gardening and logistics fixtures and support should be made duty free and even subsidies for poor and middle-income families.

The CTSP sees in gardening an opportunity for retrenched workers to make a living. However due to scarcity of land, this project may not be feasible. The CTSP proposes that urgent amendment be brought to appropriate legislations where private bare land could be used as communal gardens so far as the proprietor is not using and maintaining same.

To that effect government could support the project through free distribution of seeds and other support for gardening.

The project should be reserved for unemployed only.



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FISCAL POLICY FOR CAPITAL INTENSIVE COMPANIES DESTROYING JOBS

Undoubtedly there will be massive job loss in the Tourism, Entertainment, Aviation, Commercial and others dealing in the Domestic markets.

A new fiscal policy for capital intensive enterprises where jobs have been replaced by I.T., Robotics Technology must be defined.

UNEMPLOYMENT TRANSITION BENEFIT EQUALS TO MINIMUM WAGE

The transition unemployment benefit paid from the Work Fare Program should be extended to at least the minimum wage for a period of 12 months.

REDIRECTING LEVY IN WORK FARE PROGRAM FUND

The 1% levy on the total “chiffre d’affaires” of all enterprises that goes for training and education for the corporates must be redirected to the Work Fare Program for the transitional unemployment benefit as proposed by the CTSP in the above.

RETIREMENT AT 60 YEARS FOR ALL

- At the age of 60 years, every resident in Mauritius benefit from the Basic Retirement Pension which must be equal to the Minimum wage.
- The CTSP proposes that the Law should be amended and make it mandatory that everyone retires at the age of 60 years. Presently if a person continues to work after the age of 60 years, he benefits from his basic wage and his B.R.P despite he has not retired.
- Taking into consideration that the world will still for months to come be under the deadly influence of Covid-19, it is most advisable that we protect our seniors and refrain them from getting physical contact on their work site as the scientific community is unanimous to the fact that people over 60 years old are more vulnerable to the Covid-19.



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This should apply indiscriminately to all sectors of the economy, both Private and Public sectors.

- It is very important to take note that if everyone retires at the age of 60 years, tens of thousands of jobs will be created to absorb all the retrenched workers victim of the pandemic consequences.

INCENTIVES FOR CONSTRUCTION SECTORS TO RECRUIT FEMALE WORKERS

In the Construction Sector, incentives must be given to companies which will provide training to retrenched workers and women to join as Operators or any other jobs. The incentives should be given in terms of points when bidding for public contracts.

TEMPORARY ALTERNATIVE JOBS FOR SKILLED WORKERS

Retrenched skilled workers in the Tourism and Aviation Sectors which represent human capital for the sector must be given temporary alternative jobs in the public structure, in the waiting for the two above mentioned sectors heavily impacted by the pandemic be re boosted.

URGENT INTRODUCTION OF COVID-19 OSH REGULATION

Employees of the essential services working as frontliners and by the nature of their jobs, social distancing and exposure to the Covid-19 virus is uncertain, there is an urgent need to come forward with a Covid-19 Occupational Safety and Health Regulation to prescribe mandatory protection for all workers where Administrative and Engineering control ought to be the first priority. (*proposals in annex document*)



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REORGANISING INFORMAL SECTOR WORKERS

We ought to take lessons of all the flaws in our public structure. Many were shocked that almost 35% of our active population works in the informal sector either with a contract of service or a contract for service. Many are those who have not received any financial support from their employers.

There is an urgent need to launch a campaign by the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Social Security to register all the workers indiscriminately under the National Social Protection Scheme as a worker or a self-employed.

WORK FROM HOME DILEMMA

During the lockdown period, many employers namely from the services sector have experienced advantages they could make through the work from home system. It is worth noting that when a worker work from home the employer save from transport cost, supervision cost, energy cost and shifting from normal working hours passing through a target system.

The CTSP considers that the newly introduced Workers Rights (Atypical Work) Regulations 2019 does not offer enough protection from being over exploited. There is an urgent need to further consolidate the Atypical Work Regulation or to introduce a new and specific regulation for work from home because atypical work does not necessary means work from home.

The issue of salary, working hours, health and safety protection, work life balance will have to be addressed.

Workers working from home will have to be paid a full 45 hours wage per week, because of the specific task nature of the work from home, employers will be tempted to claim that workers should be paid less for lesser number of working hours per week.



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REORGANISING TRANSPORT FOR WORKERS

Transportation of workers must be reorganize to ensure social distancing.

It is also worth mentioning that Tour Operators and Hotel Taxis will face acute economic problem. The CTSP proposes that the above mentioned groups be taken on board in the reorganization of transportation of workers. It is obvious that more transport will be needed to be able to respect social distancing.

ONE STOP SHOP FOR FOREIGN WORKERS

Special attention to the level of hygiene in the foreign workers dormitories must be given.

The Ministry of Labour ought to create a most urgent One Stop Shop Migration Unit under its aegis that will cater for Labour, Health, Welfare and Social Security with adequate human resources to ensure regular inspection and enforcement of the Lodging and Accommodation Regulation. We must learn from the flaws of Singapore in not ensuring proper accommodation for foreign workers which has resulted in an alarming contamination of COVID-19.

ALTERNATIVE JOBS DO NOT MEAN PRECARIOUS WORK

Alternative jobs in the Agro Industry should not be subjected to precarious job. This is a sector with potential growth than can create sustainable employment. Mauritius has the experience and the knowhow. The development of the Agro Industry should not be left in the hands of the sugar oligarchy. Under the control and supervision of the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (F.A.R.E.I.), groups of retrenched workers organised in cooperative can be awarded land to plant food crops.

Alternative jobs such as cleaning and embellishing of the environment under the aegis of the Tourism Authority is an option.



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To ensure that precarious work do not take toll over sustainable job, the CTSP proposes that all vacancies should be canalized to the Ministry of Employment where the total package, i.e. terms and conditions and wages, will be advertised by the Ministry. It will also stop unscrupulous employers to claim that Mauritians are lazy people and they do not want to work.

RESKILLING OF WORKERS

Training and reskilling of workers, benefitting from the Transition Unemployment Benefits, for at least 20 hours a week is a key step to prepare retrenched workers to join other sectors.

LEAVE IN CASE OF COVID-19 INFECTION

The CTSP proposes that all workers be covered under the NPS if ever they get infected by Covid-19, this will apply if they stay in quarantine or are under medical care. The worker could be covered under the same scheme as injury leave, i.e. for the first 15 days, the employer pays full wage and thereafter the worker is catered under the NPS scheme or any equivalent system.

ORGANISING AND PROTECTING STREET VENDORS

Because of lost of jobs, many retrenched workers will transform themselves as street vendors. In order to contain the Covid-19 virus and to prevent contamination through physical contact, local Authorities and Municipalities should provide necessary structure for street vendors/hawkers to work. Police repression to forbid them to work will be a foolish alternative.

REDUNDANCY BOARD

It is very important to note that only employers employing more than 15 workers are obliged to go before the Redundancy Board before declaring a worker redundant.



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The fact that there may be massive loss of job, the demand for employment will increase. Employers employing 15 or less workers will be tempted to terminate the jobs of their workers and to re-employ new ones with a lesser package as demand will take toll over offer of jobs.

The CTSP therefore proposes that all termination of jobs should go before the Redundancy Board for all employers employing more than 5 workers.

PRICE CONTROL

Government cannot ignore that during lock down period the population has been subjected to sale of goods of basic necessities through the black market where the prices were doubled. We are entering into recession. It is the responsibility of government to ensure that everyone has access to basic necessities implying food. The CTSP insists that government should come forward with either a price fixing mechanism or a maximum profit markup system on all products of basic necessities.

CONCLUSION

As already stated the Government has much to gain in consulting all stakeholders, and trade unions are important component of same. As such the CTSP insists that all Trade Unions organisations that have submitted a paper in this special context, be consulted for the future of our country so that we continue to live in peace and harmony. Let us design our future together.

We hope our demand will be positively entertained.

Yours truly

Reez Chuttoo

President

Jane Ragoo (Ms.)

General Secretary

Enc. Proposal for Covid-19 OSH Regulations



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