



DOMINICA PUBLIC SERVICE UNION

(Formerly Dominica Civil Service Association)

Founded 1939- Registered Trade Union 1960

Affiliate of CCL., CPSA., PSI., ITF., UNI.

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DPSU STATEMENT ON THE CURRENT STATE OF COVID19 **August 11th, 2021**

The growing number of COVID 19 cases in Dominica is of concern to the Dominica Public Service Union (DPSU). Our thoughts and prayers are with the citizenry at this time and in particular we pray for the speedy recovery of those affected by the virus. Our concerns for, and interest in an overworked group of frontline workers is deep. The DPSU although criticized for remarks made early last year at the emergence of COVID19 is however repeating its call for frontline workers to be treated in ways that shows respect and with professionalism. Their personal wellbeing and that of their immediate households, as well as available means of transportation and personal protective equipment should not be ignored.

While at this time of crisis we should avoid castigating blame we cannot ignore the fact that from all levels within our society we simply laid down our guards giving the impression that we had the situation under control and that as a result we could relax on the protocols without pursuing their enforcement.

The DPSU has been viewing with interest the spike of protests which has been taking place throughout the region over mandatory vaccination. It is our hope that we will not get to the point where we will be involve in protest against mandatory vaccination which in our view is an infringement on peoples basic rights to decide for themselves.

While saying so we are at the same time encouraging all citizens to seriously consider taking the vaccine. The DPSU does not support mandatory vaccine but encourages citizens to do so voluntarily.

It is becoming more and more apparent that the rise in the number of cases of COVID19 has been permeated by social activities or events. A ban on 'sewo' or 'open jams' while COVID19 remains in our midst will not cause any harm to our youths or anyone else. Limiting numbers per square foot area and enforcing physical distance at Bars and areas that congregate large gatherings should be instituted until COVID-19 is no longer a threat to citizens.

Address all correspondences to the General Secretary

Dominicans are being urged to yield to the Governments call to observe and follow the curfew orders that have been put in place to protect all citizens.

We should avoid becoming complacent and adhere to the protocols; Masking, sanitizing and social distancing are all important.

Even after the situation would have improved but not yet eradicated, we should continue our strict adherence to the protocols. Churches, business operators, public transport, politicians, community organizations, trade unions and in fact every Dominican and entity should continue to be part of the continuing effort.

Trade unions as workers representatives should have access to information and be added to the list of essential services thereby being given special passes during curfews. Regular dialogue with the union should be a matter of importance. A senior officer within the Ministry of Health and that is, besides the Permanent Secretary should be charged with the responsibility to liaise with trade unions on COVID19 related issues.

At this stage the unions and the Government should jointly launch a voluntary COVID19 vaccination and testing campaign. Recognition should be given to departments with the highest rate of vaccination and testing.

The work scheduling of health workers should be reviewed. The situation of 'pound foolish, penny wise' need to be thought. Avoiding overtime to health personnel and to instead ask them to take days off must be reviewed.

The operation of quarantine facilities for visitors must, as a matter of urgency, be monitored. There are instances where the protocols are not enforced and clients are allowed to leave before receiving result of PCR tests.

Our national campaign against COVID19 should recognize business places which have instituted good measures to minimize the spread of the disease. An ongoing education programme should also form part of the campaign, particularly on the science and benefit of the vaccine, ensuring that key messages are tailored for our diverse public, in language they can understand. While we should avoid littering our environment with bill boards, a few can be erected, reminding us of the seriousness of COVID19.

The effort and responsibility to fight this worsening menace is that of all of us. It is an approach which calls for us to put aside our political and religious differences. It is one which requires humility instead of egoism and arrogance. It must be a campaign which is accompanied by faith, concern for others and one that is informed by facts and the science.

We believe that Dominicans have the ability to ensure that the situation is brought under some degree of control. We had proven in the past that we can overcome national crises, let us demonstrate once again that we can do it.

We may wish to ponder on this verse of scripture. 2 Chronicles 7:13-14 “When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land or send an epidemic among my people, If my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and I will forgive their sins and will heal their land”.

We call on all leaders and those with mediums of influence to lead by actively and visibly joining this effort, seeking to inspire your audiences and the wider public to play their part in the fight against this deadly pandemic.


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THOMAS LETANG
GENERAL SECRETARY