



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**TO: PRESS STATEMENT**

**FROM: DENNIS DE PEIZA, GENERAL SECRETARY, CTUSAB**

**REF: MEM/CMDA/29416**

**DATE: APRIL 29, 2016**

**SUBJECT: CTUSAB'S MAY DAY ADDRESS - 2016**

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Today as members of the Barbadian workforce join with millions across the world in celebrating the Workers' Day 2016, they do so against the backdrop of a lingering global economic recession.

As a consequence of this, many individuals and families have had their lives devastated; as they have been thrown further into a state of adjunct poverty.

In Barbados, the layoffs, retrenchment and offers of voluntary separation packages are being exercised by private sector employers, government and state agencies, in the name of restructuring and promoting efficiencies. These measures have had the net effect of reducing the employment numbers; the consequence of which has been the rising tide of unemployment.

The unemployment problem has been further exacerbated by the growing number of students exiting the secondary school system, along with those graduating from the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and the Barbados Community College, who are finding difficulty in gaining employment.

The current state of the economy is not lost upon the labour movement. Besides the exceedingly high odds it faces, the labour movement remains committed to working towards ensuring the retention of workers in employment.

The Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados (CTUSAB) reminds government and employers within the private sector of the understanding as set out in Section 6. 10 (b) Protocol VI, Termination of Employment, which reads:

*“in accordance with national law and practice, give the workers’ representatives concerned, as early as possible, an opportunity for consultation on measures to be taken to avert or minimize the termination and measures to mitigate the adverse effects of any terminations on the workers concerned (such as finding alternative employment);”*

In reinforcing this Section 6.10 (c) stressed the importance to giving due consideration to workers’ representatives with regard to their retention in employment in case of a reduction of the work force.

Further to this, the Congress will continue to promote, Section 4.3 (e) of Protocol VI, as it relates to the agreement of the Social Partners on the National Employment Policy.

This agreement is to *“seek to protect existing employment and to provide jobs for all those Barbadians who are available for and desirous of work, to make such work as productive as possible, and to ensure the freedom of choice of employment in an environment void of any form of discrimination where workers have the greatest possible opportunity to qualify for, to use their skills and potential in a job well suited to them.”*

The Congress stresses that the right of the worker to employment or retention in employment, should have no bearing on the exercise of choice of the individual to join a trade union. It is therefore important at this time, to voice the agreement of the Social Partners that the national employment policy should specifically ‘protect workers and employers who exercise their constitutional right to freedom of association.’

Turning attention to the prevailing industrial climate in Barbados, it is a credit to the labour leaders and the workers of Barbados that the country has continued to enjoy a stable labour relations climate. In the interest of our national development thrust, it is important that the status quo is maintained. This can be achieved if there is mutual respect shown by both employers and workers.

The Congress therefore urges that special attention is paid to Section 6.2 of Protocol VI, which states that *“The Social Partners agree that the maintenance of industrial harmony depends upon the exercise of mutual respect for and protection of, the rights and entitlements of both employers and workers since they are important elements in achieving the objectives of the Protocol.”*

As workers in Barbados celebrate the achievements and contribution of labour to national development over the past fifty years of this country as an independent nation, let us recommit to high level of productivity, standards of service excellence, the production of quality work, a good work ethic and providing constructive ideas to help drive the process towards building a better Barbados for the benefit of future generations.

**DENNIS DE PEIZA**  
General Secretary