



## MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SMALL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Levels 5 & 6 Tower C, International Waterfront Centre,  
#1 Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago  
Telephone No: (868) 625-8478; Fax: 624-4091; Website: <http://www.molsed.gov.tt>

---

January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### A Statement from the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development

#### Setting the Records Straight

The Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development wishes to set the records straight regarding a number of misleading impressions which could have been left on the minds of the population at large based upon information contained in an article which appeared on Page 4 of the *Trinidad Guardian* dated Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2020. The headline of the article was "Thousands on the breadline."

Contrary to what was published in the article, data from the Central Statistical Office (CSO) obtained on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2019, states that total employment actually increased on a year on year basis between the second-quarters of 2017 and 2018.

The data revealed that there was a total of 603,500 persons employed at the end of second quarter 2018 when compared with 603,000 employed at the end of second quarter 2017. This represents an absolute increase in employment by 500 persons and not a decline of 900 persons as erroneously reported in the newspaper article.

While admittedly there was a decline in the labour force over the same period, data obtained from the CSO indicates that the figure was moderately higher than what was reported in the article. At the end of second quarter 2018, there were 627,600 persons in the labour force as compared with 636,800 persons in the labour force at the end of second quarter 2017. This represents a decline in the labour force by approximately 1.4%. The Ministry continues to monitor the movement of this variable which, at this point, is hardly a cause for excessive concern, given that there are varying factors which contribute to persons leaving the labour force.

In examining the 1% decline in the labour force participation rate when comparing the data for second quarter 2018 with that of second quarter 2017, the records show that it was not solely a result of retrenchment as is suggested by the article. The moderate decline in labour force participation rates for the period reviewed was due to the combined effects of an increase in the working aged population and a simultaneous decline in the labour force for various reasons including retirement, migration, person doing higher education and mortality.

Under the provisions of the Retrenchment and Severance Benefits Act Chap. 88:13 Section (4) 1 it is clearly stated: where an employer proposes to terminate the services of five or more workers for the reason of redundancy, he shall give formal notice of termination in writing to each involved worker, to the recognized majority union and to the Minister.

---

Section (2) states, the notice shall state-

(a) the names and classifications of the involved workers;

(b) the length of service and current wage rates of the involved workers;

(c) the reasons for the redundancy;

(d) the proposed date of the termination of employment;

(e) the criteria used in selection of the workers to be retrenched;

(f) any other relevant information.

Section (3) states: where notice of retrenchment given by an employer to fewer than five involved workers is followed by notice of retrenchment to any other worker within the time period of the previous notice to other workers, all workers receiving such notice shall be counted together in determining the number of workers to whom notice has been given for the purpose of this section.

For the period 2015-2019, the Ministry received Retrenchment notices for the following companies:

- 200 workers of TMS International Corporation workers in 2015
- 88 workers of Central Trinidad Steel Limited (Centrin) in 2016
- 325 of Construtora OAS Workers in 2016
- 10 workers of Caribbean Development Company in 2016
- 66 workers of GGI Limited 2016
- 16 workers of Trinidad Cement Limited in 2017
- 9 workers of Unipet in 2019
- 500 workers of TSTT in 2018
- 167 notices of UTT in October 2017
- 174 workers of UTT in October 2019
- 178 Unilever Caribbean Limited in 2019

No official retrenchment notices were received in the case of Arcelor Mittal as this company went into liquidation and as such 519 persons were put on the breadline; and Petrotrin was a closure of the refinery.

Data also indicated that during the period 3rd quarter 2015 to 2nd Quarter 2018 even with the economy slowing down due to a fall in oil prices, Government's economic management allowed the following sectors to still create no less than 12,500 new jobs as follows:

- Other agriculture, forestry, hunting and fishing (600 jobs)
- Other manufacturing (excluding sugar and oil) (2,400 jobs)
- Financing, insurance, real estate and business services (4,600 jobs)
- Community, social and personal services (4,900 jobs)

The Ministry is pleased to report that the most recent unemployment rate available (2nd quarter 2018) is 3.8% when compared to the 5.3% which was recorded in 2nd quarter 2017. According to international standards full employment can be claimed when the unemployment rate is at 5.0% or less).

For further information, please contact the Corporate Communications Unit: Tel: 625-8478 Ext. 1203, 1211, 1208 or email:

**END**

---