

PRESS RELEASE

28th February 2020

Situation Requires, Calm, Clarity, Common Sense and Consistency

Business needs clarity and so do employees.

In the context of the Coronavirus situation, the health and welfare of employees is the foremost priority but damaging effects on businesses and jobs need to be mitigated.

The Chamber, has called on the Authorities to open urgent consultation on all matters related to Covid-19 and industrial relations and business. A meeting of the Employment Relations Board was subsequently called for Monday 2 March, only for the stakeholders to receive notice of cancellation shortly afterwards, much to our disappointment in the current circumstances. This morning, scope for discussion seems to have been restored but now this has been transferred to MCESD at an even later date. The Chamber being aware of the fact the situation is escalating in other countries and regions insists that time is not on our side. The situation is crying out loud for clarity, calm, common sense and consistency.

The Chamber has meanwhile taken note of a circular issued on 26th February by the OPMs People and Standards Division which said that anyone travelling to affected countries after February 28 is required to stay at home for 14 days from the date of return and the employee will not be eligible for quarantine leave.

Urgent dialogue and consultation are required in the interest of national health, because measures taken in the public sector must be complementary and applied in the private sector. Complementarity is crucial to deal with likely situations whereby a quarantined person working in the government sector lives in the same household as someone else whose work in a private business.

There are several other issues that need clarity and urgent resolution so therefore we reiterate our call for urgent discussion to bring about guidance to employers based on sound measures and common sense that are applied at a nationwide level.

END