

MALAWI CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS

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STATEMENT FROM MALAWI CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS ON THE COVID-19.

Malawi Congress of Trade Unions wishes to applaud Malawi Government for declaring that Malawi is in a state of disaster due to the corona virus that has shaken not only Malawi but the entire world.

In the address to the nation, His Excellency the State President Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika has outlined measures that have to be seriously followed for Malawi to prevent the infection and spread of the Covid-19.

Malawi Congress of Trade Unions wishes to reiterate that the battle to fight the epidemic, which has already claimed lots of lives in some parts of the world, cannot be left to Government alone. It is a collective responsibility.

For this reason, MCTU urges all workers in the country to take precautionary measures as advised by Malawi Government, Ministry of Health and the World Health Organisation (WHO). MCTU urges all workers to strictly follow all hygienic methods with special attention to the following:

1). Avoid handshakes and hugs. In Malawi, a handshake forms part of our tradition and custom and yet it remains the most conducive means of spreading the virus. MCTU therefore urges all workers to completely avoid greeting or complimenting one another using a hand shakes.

2). All workers must frequently and thoroughly wash their hands using soap for not less than 20 seconds. In this regard MCTU urges all employers to ensure that they provide the necessary utensils and soap at the entry point of the work premises as well as within the work premises. MCTU urges all employers to also consider providing masks and sanitizers to their workers.

3). Workers should ensure that they work at a space of not less than 1 meter from each other so as to avoid contact. In this case, Employers who have a small size of working space compared to the number of employees at the premises to seriously consider bunching the workers into shifts.

4). All workers should avoid assembling in crowded places. Such places remain a fertile ground for the spread of the virus.

5). On the other hand Malawi Congress of Trade Unions wishes to urge all employers whose working premises harbour more than 100 employees to ensure that they split their workers in shifts as a measure of reducing congestion. We urge all employers, at this point of turbulence, to put the lives of their workers first other than profit. Actually employers will put their businesses to a high risk of collapse if, in view of making huge profits, they expose the lives of the workers to this virus. The major focus now as a collective responsibility, is to grant high level of protection to the lives of all Malawian workers as they are the driving force of the economy in the country.

6). In a related development MCTU urges all employers who may desire to close their businesses in an effort of preventing the infection and spread of the virus among workers, to see to it that the workers are still paid their salaries in order not to disrupt their livelihood. We therefore urge employers who may wish to close their working premises to seriously consider offsetting the days of off-duty in the wake of the virus with the leave days of the workers so that workers still get their salaries.

Malawi Congress of Trade Unions implores all patriotic Malawians to join hands in doing everything it takes to prevent the infection and spread of this deadly virus.

"In Solidarity we shall conquer!!"



Denis Kalekeni
Secretary General - MCTU