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**CIRCULAR NO.37/2020**

TO : ALL MEMBERS

**EFPNG RESPONSE TO PNGTUC MEDIA STATEMENT**

The Papua New Guinea Trade Union Congress (PNGTUC) made a media statement in the Post Courier on 01<sup>st</sup> June 2020 making a number of calls to government and employers.

The Employers Federation through President David Doig responded to the union's calls via a press release in the Post Courier on 02<sup>nd</sup> June 2020. The Federation stated that the trade union's call was irresponsible especially when Covid-19 was exacerbating the challenges already faced by employers due to a prolonged recession in the economy.

All stakeholders including the union and employers should be working with the government to create an environment for business recovery and safeguarding jobs.

Mr Doig stressed that any threat of industrial action at a time when employers are trying to deal with the economic impacts of a global pandemic would not be in the best interest of Papua New Guinea.

The Federation stands committed and will continue to support the interest of its members and employers in general in these challenging times.

Attached for your further information are the respective press statements by PNGTUC and EFPNG.

Yours sincerely



**Florence Willie**  
Executive Director

# Unions make call in light of SoE period lapse

BY MATTHEW VARI

THE PNG Trade Union Congress, together with its affiliated union groups from the private and public sectors, have passed a resolution as a lead up to the conclusion of the state-of-emergency tomorrow.

TUC General Secretary Clemence Kanau, with the support of union leaders, presented a number of resolutions to the press last Friday in Port Moresby,

This outlines the possible recommendations from the unions, should there be a possible extension by government.

This is despite current government word of no further extension.

The unions are calling for the reinstatement of all private sector employees and as part of the strategies to plan for economic recovery.

"We adopted a resolution today and our resolution calls for the lifting of the state-of-emergency.

"From our data, Papua New Guinea workers have been laid off work and most are now suffering," Mr Kanau said.

The unions demanded, however, if the state goes through with a further extension, all union groups have resolved at Friday's deliberation that working arrangements such



TUC general secretary Clemence Kanau (seated centre) with affiliated union group heads.

as fly-in-fly-out will have to cease effectively.

"Those fly-in-fly-out are the main possible causes of transmission of Covid-19 into the country and must cease and all the companies engaged in the fly-in-fly-out must stop it.

"All the borders are possible threat areas, and we note Indonesia in the South East-Asian region is an epicenter of Covid-19.

Mr Kanau said another resolution was that unions in agreement for all workers in the private sector must return to work.

"These people are the people

working on very important sectors that generate revenue for our people and our country.

"As we all know these people pay taxes and these people contribute to the money basket of this country. If most of them are without jobs, we have a serious economic and unemployment problem in this country.

In addition, they called for the disbursement of Covid-19 funds to be directed to their allocated purposes, which also included the call for government to channel its advice from local experts within the country.

They finally called on the need for close consultation between themselves and government on the new norm, urging for extensive consultation on addressing the new norm after Covid-19.

"Our position that was presented to the government on May 1 is still outstanding and we still have not received any response from the government.

If no action is taken by the government, unions have resolved for the most drastic action yet available to unions to use, which is the industrial muscle.

BUSINESS

# Employers Federation calls for common sense approach

THE Employers' Federation of Papua New Guinea is urging Trade Unions in the country to be sensitive and consider the challenges presented by the coronavirus situation

Federation President David Doig sympathised with workers throughout the country,

But stressed that now was not the time to be contemplating industrial action.

Mr Doig said the economy has been in a prolonged phase of difficulty.

And the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic has heightened the challenges.

"Our combined focus needs to be on supporting the Papua New Guinea government in its endeavors to keep the people of PNG safe.

"And at the same time creating an environment for business to recover, and keep Papua New Guineans in jobs," He said

He said the government should be commended for its swift action.

And an effort in managing the pandemic in Papua New Guinea through the state-of-emergency arrangement.

The private sector is very mindful of just how lucky Papua New

Guinea is, in that we have not seen any massive local outbreaks of the Covid-19 pandemic thus far.

"We fully understand our Government's hesitation and reluctance to relax our international border controls," Doig added.

"Naturally, there has been an economic consequence of restrictions.

He said their members, and most private sector employers are passionate about employing and developing the skills of Papua New Guineans, and any layoffs that have occurred over this past three months have been regrettable and

difficult decisions to make.

He said unfortunately, tough times may continue for some time.

"And it will require the cooperation and joint effort of all stakeholders, to stimulate business and safeguard employment.

"Any threat of industrial action at a time when employers are trying to deal with the economic impacts of a global pandemic would not be in the best interests of Papua New Guinea," said Mr Doig

He welcomed an opportunity to meet with the Unions to discuss these challenges.