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TO: NEWS EDITORS – For Immediate Release

CHAMBER VIEWS ON SHUT DOWN OF GOVERNMENT OFFICES

The targeted shut down of Government offices being conducted by the Public Services Association has caused disruption and inconvenience to business operations and members of society. While gaining some comfort in the re-opening of the offices of the Immigration Division, albeit with reduced opening hours, the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce views with concern the ongoing interruption to the provision of other essential government services. We call for an immediate resolution to this problem.

Like all organisations, the employer is responsible for completing a risk assessment to ensure that its work place environment complies with the OSH Act. Where there are deficiencies, the employer should correct these in a proactive manner. We are of the view that employees must be assured safe working environments as provided under the OSH Act.

We acknowledge yesterday's announcement by the Minister of Finance and the Economy that just over TT\$1 Billion was approved to be spent in completion of the Government Campus buildings, as a long term measure. We also note that OSH issues identified at the Immigration and Board of Inland Revenue buildings are being tackled in the short term. While laudable, the Chamber believes that there must be a more proactive approach to management of our public service facilities. A well-functioning and efficient public service supports the development of society and ensures social and economic balance, while providing life's certainties to citizens.

We all stand to lose when a shut down of this magnitude occurs. The Chamber has always espoused that alternative channels be taken to resolve matters before resorting to disruptive measures. The country should not, at any time, be held to ransom.

We will continue to urge all parties to always act responsibly and in the best interest of all of our nation's citizens.

The responsibility to have these government services restored in a timely manner is that of all parties concerned.

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