

Bringing Joy to the World

It is customary at the start of the month of December to hear the sounds of Christmas carols reverberating across the global landscape. The carol entitled 'Joy to the World,' brings with it a sense of elation and the bestowing of blessings upon mankind. Within the context of the emerging challenges in the current global economic, social and health climate, it seems that the anticipated joy associated with the yuletide season, is all but a dream of hope to come.

The many promises made by Governments that pipeline projects would be coming on stream, have left millions who are currently unemployed, wishing and hoping that Santa Claus will bring them glad tidings and great joy, by presenting the news that there is a job offer in his bag of goodies. There are many persons who are in dire need of a job, who would not concerned themselves with the nature, requirements and expectations of the job. The fact that many are desperate for work, does not mean that they should be offered poor quality jobs, with which poor conditions of service are associated. Employers should not be using the Christmas season simply for the purpose of engaging in temporary hiring, only to satisfy or meet the demand for more hands on deck, as they undertake to capitalize on the season of commercialization.

The general scarcity of jobs has imposed serious pressures on the unemployed. Initially, employers in some of the employment sectors are delighted in the promotion of new technologies into the workplace. This has given them the opportunity to reduce staff and to do so in the interest of reducing their operational expenses. For them the Christmas carol of 'Joy to the World' has real meaning. The working class and the working poor are thrown into the deeper end of a bottomless pit, as invariably they are made to fight for the few jobs that become available. There are those who have skill sets which have become obsolete, while other suffer the indignation of having to learn that there are over qualified for the job.

The push to ensure that workers acquire new skills as the labour market now demands, is unlikely to change the outlook for many unemployed persons. As in the case of United States of America, the celebration by employers to trim their staff numbers has appeared to be short lived. It is a fact that those workers who

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were laid off, offered redundancy packages, paid severance or offer grant relief payments compliments of COVID 19, have taken the decision not to return to work. Can this be a case of employers being a penny wise and a pound foolish? It is noteworthy that employers in some sectors of the US economy are expressing dismay that despite the availability of jobs, persons are not attracted to job offers. The bitter pill is being now swallowed that some businesses are facing the challenges of keeping their doors open.

The backlash which now faces some sectors of the US economy may only be a temporary state. This may be so since the millions who live there and those who migrate to the land of opportunity will move into lower level and menial jobs on offer. Those who can seize the opportunity to earn a living being paid in US currency, might see this as the greatest joy of all. The problem that will face workers where they reside, will be that of having access to quality jobs. The expectation is that workers will have job security, are paid appropriate wages or salaries for work done, have a reasonable workload, provided with the tools and resources to get the job done, accorded recognition, benefit from open communication, are engaged through the process of employee participation and are subject to workplace standards and best practices.

Our citizens have a legitimate expectation to be provide the opportunity to work. They can be no comfort or joy where a large proportion of the working population remain in a state of flux, where there is no job and no income. It can be that an educated workforce in every part of the world is left to hold on to hope of things to come. There can be no greater joy than to have suitable forms of employment that can absorb the vast majority of the workforce. It is therefore left to Governments to facilitate and engineer pathways to employment creation and to ensure a higher level of sustained employment. Now to be left out of the equation, the private sector ought to pursue a path towards investment as part of the strategy to creating new job opportunities. This combined efforts of Governments and the private sector will certainly bring joy to the world.