

A Global Christmas Wish

The protracted downturn in the global economy has a longstanding issue which has occupied the attention of government, capital and labour. There has been eternal optimism that things will get better in the short and medium term. To the dismay of most, the growth pattern in world economies have been rather slow. In Barbados the impact of the slow rate of growth has brought increasing pain and suffering. Labour has been a victim of the continual economic downturn, with many workers being placed on the breadline.

Many of those who are now unemployed, may have been in this unfortunate position since last Christmas or even before that time. Those who would have recently joined the ranks of the unemployed, may find it a little difficult to spread Christmas cheer in the accustomed way. Only those who have endured this experience can best describe the feeling of despair. There is no amount of empathy which is expressed that could possibly remove the pain, agony and suffering that is being faced.

The answer to the problem of the unemployed is the creation of, and the availability of new job opportunities. Based on the state of flux which prevails in the economy, there is an urgent call for investments to be made so as to stimulate life in the economy. It is expected that the outturn from this would be the creation of new jobs opportunities.

This loss of jobs in any economy is a primary concern to government and the labour movement. Government has traditionally been seen as the largest single employer. Over and above this, government has the overarching responsibility of providing a climate that is conducive to business development, so as to enable the creating of new job opportunities. While capital should be stimulated by this, it is not always the case that with the development of new businesses, come a host of new job opportunities.

The evidence points to the fact that capital has a way of shedding labour, which it does under the guise of moving to be more efficient by reducing operational and administrative costs. This also applies to government, which in the name of public sector reform has tended to pay critical attention to the numbers employed within the public service. Wherein the shredding of labour is being undertaken in the promotion of cost efficiencies, the introduction of new technologies are identified as added reasons for employment contraction in the public service.

With new policy changes and practices being employed within both the public and private sectors, it is likely that there will be growing concerns regarding the ability of the labour market to absorb the growing work population. Against the backdrop of increasing competition for available jobs, the wish upon the lips of every unemployed worker this Christmas, is for a job opportunity to present itself. It is not hard to understand and imagine how many share this wish, as well as the numbers that can expect to be disappointed.

For those who are fortunate to find work, the wish going forward would be to have a sustainable job, and one which presents conditions which fall within the realm of decent work. Those who were previously employed and would have amassed work experience, may consider that they have an advantage over new entrants into the work force. These persons should wish that the labour market considers experience as an important factor, and so gives it a significant weighting in the interviewing and recruiting process. Those who are aged, should wish that they are not discriminated against based on this factor.

With constant changes being experienced in the labour market, it ought to be the wish of all employees and prospective employees that there are better days ahead, where secured employment takes pride of place over temporary, part-time or short term contract employment.