



FISHERMEN AND FRIENDS OF THE SEA

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Press Statement

Are we Prepared for the Coronavirus?

Date: January 21st, 2020

Dear Editor/Newsroom,

As the world braces for what appears to be a major health crisis, shouldn't we be considering the postponement of Carnival 2020?

What if one Carnival visitor is a carrier, how will we respond?

What medical facilities and emergency response do we have in place for this World Health Organization (WHO) declared "public health emergency of international concern"?

With our health system already dilapidated and operating at full capacity can our nation accommodate the sudden and high levels of patient care which will be required for those infected with the coronavirus?

Fishermen and Friends of the Sea (FFOS) call on Prime Minister Rowley to advise our concerned nation whether detection measures being put in place are sufficient if only selective flights are being tested, and what tests can we rely on if the symptoms do not manifest themselves in healthy carriers? Do immigration and customs officers have sufficient safety gear, including eye and face masks?

FFOS acknowledge that Carnival is the 'greatest show on earth' and brings needed jobs, foreign exchange and will boost our failing tourism product, but given that the WHO has declared this virulent threat as a Global Health Emergency and based on the statistical fact that the virus is spreading quickly shouldn't we consider postponing Carnival 2020?

On Sunday 25th January there were a little over 500 confirmed cases in China. Today, less than a week later, it's over 8000. Based on a conservative growth curve of a 33% increase per day, in another 21 days confirmed cases could reach 3.2m by J'ouvert Morning. With perfectly healthy carriers not showing any symptoms for 14 or more days, the virus, undetected, appears unstoppable!

With a surge of intercontinental visitors expected in the next three weeks, are we not putting ourselves at serious and unnecessary risk by acting as if we are safe and prepared?

Will we continue with the Carnival if persons contract the virus and if so what emergency incubation facilities are available?

We appeal to PM Rowley to be decisive, informed and to break his deafening silence on this critical threat which our nation faces today! Silence and a lack of attentiveness on this looming danger may cause untold death and hardship on our innocent and vulnerable. In our respectful opinion, it is time to act responsibly!

What is more important, our health or a grind and jam festival?

Sincerely,
Terrance Beddoe
President