



FISHERMEN AND FRIENDS OF THE SEA

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Press Statement

Let's support our local farmers and fishers!

Date: March 23rd, 2020

Dear Editor/Newsroom,

We commend the Authorities for implementing restrictions for public safety in high traffic areas such as fresh food markets, but why are supermarket businesses left to create public risks without any overcrowding or access regulations? Look at the attached video which shows hundreds of persons lined up to get into the Tunapuna Market.

When you go to any big supermarket you would notice the large crowds especially on weekends -- entering and exiting unencumbered, in unregulated close proximity. Is this safe?

Let's face it, local farmers and fishers are the backbone of any economy and food sustainability is critical especially in times of crisis! During this life threatening pandemic (COVID-19) that may curtail our food supply, should we not be encouraging and facilitating our local farmers and fishers? Long lines with poor entrance access will only chase away consumers to places of free access and risk public health.

Over the past week the Port of Spain Market has been so restricted that almost no one went over the weekend, leaving the farmers with excess produce which consequently had to be disposed of causing them to incur financial losses.

Shouldn't the same controlled, limited access and mandatory washing hygiene be also implemented in large predominantly imported food retailers? Shouldn't our leaders be putting the best minds to work on how to bring our farmers and fishers goods to the market as efficiently as possible?

Is it good public administration that our local producers are handicapped while corporate food distributors are increasing their stake at the expense of our local grassroots communities? We need to support each other to prevent a domino effect on

the collapse of our economy. Let's encourage farmers and fishers who are our best weapon against a high food import bill and food instabilities.

Sincerely,
Gary Aboud
Corporate Secretary