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▶ **Assessment of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on trade unions in Saint Lucia**

National preparedness, response and recovery actions
in situations of disaster and crisis (2017-2020)

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in situations of disaster and crisis (2017-2020)

Final Assessment Report

Prepared for ILO by:

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March 2021

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► Abbreviations

BCP	Business Continuity Plan
BOHE	Bureau of Health Education
CDPC	Crisis and Disaster Preparedness Committee
CMO	Chief Medical Officer
COVID-19	Corona Virus 2019
CSA	Civil Service Association
DAF	Disaster Assistance Fund
DDC	District Disaster Committee
DGR	Department of Gender Relations
DOL	Department of Labour
DR	Disaster recovery
DWT	Decent Work Team
DWT/CO-POS	ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean
EMP	Emergency Management Plan
ERP	Emergency Response Plan
FSRA	Financial Services Regulatory Authority
HR	Human Resource
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ILO	International Labour Organization
MOH	Ministry of Health
NEMAC	National Emergency Management Advisory Committee
NEMO	National Emergency Management Organization
NIC	National Insurance Corporation
NWU	National Workers' Union
PAHO	Pan-American Health Organization

PDNAs	Post Disaster Needs Assessments
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PPWA	Port Police Welfare Association
PWA	Police Welfare Association
RSLPF	Royal Saint Lucia Police Force
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SLCCUL	Saint Lucia Cooperative Credit Union League
SLCOWA	Saint Lucia Correctional Officers Welfare Association
SLEF	Saint Lucia Employers' Federation
SLFSA	Saint Lucia Fire Service Association
SLHTA	Saint Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association
SLMDA	Saint Lucia Medical and Dental Association
SLNA	Saint Lucia Nurses Association
SLPWA	Saint Lucia Police Welfare Association
SLTU	Saint Lucia Teachers' Union
SWGWU	Seamen, Waterfront and General Workers Union
SOE	State of Emergency
TOR	Terms of Reference
TUF	Trade Union Federation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VFGDWU	Vieux Fort General and Dock Workers Union
WHO	World Health Organization

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- Lisa Goodman, General Secretary of the Saint Lucia Trade Union Federation, for coordinating the distribution of information on the study among its member trade unions; requesting that they confirm the names and contact numbers of the leaders and members who agreed to participate; getting the information received from the union leaders to the consultant; and finalizing arrangements for separate zoom meetings with the trade union leaders, as well as a cross section of ordinary trade union members.
- Former members of the National Workers' Union (NWU) employed in the private sector who were affected by COVID-19 pandemic and agreed to participate in telephone interviews. Their assistance with the collection of data on the effect and impact of COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters on the employment and domestic life of NWU members is greatly appreciated.
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- The HR managers and employees from the public and private sector, for participating in the virtual discussions. Your input helped in providing insight into the issues and challenges facing trade unions brought about by COVID-19 and national disasters.
- Other trade union leaders and members of the Civil Service Association (CSA), the NWU, the Saint Lucia Fire Service Association (SLFSA), the Saint Lucia Medical & Dental Association (SLMDA), the Saint Lucia Nurses Association (SLNA), the Saint Lucia Police Welfare Association (SLPWA), the Seamen, Waterfront & General Workers Union (SWGWU), and the Saint Lucia Teachers' Union (SLTU) who participated in the virtual meetings.
- Public officers who responded by returning completed questionnaires on behalf of the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO), and the Department of Gender Relations (DGR).
- Managers who responded by returning completed questionnaires on behalf of their companies: Caribbean Awnings and Saint Lucia Distillers.
- Virginia Albert Poyotte, who shared with the consultant her extensive knowledge and experience of the challenges facing trade unions in Saint Lucia and offering potential solutions.

► Executive summary

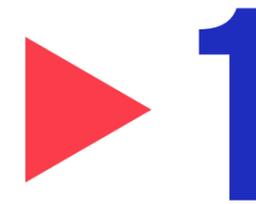
This Assessment Report focused on the collection and analysis of data on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the trade union movement in Saint Lucia. It is anticipated that the results of the data analysis will be used to make recommendations for trade union participation in national policy, decision-making and implementation of national resilience interventions. It also is expected the assessment will consider the involvement of trade unions in existing plans and previous national responses to climate-related hazards and events experienced over the last three years, specifically, the period 2017 to 2019.

The report is presented in 14 independent sections, each of which focuses on a specific aspect of the study:

- Section 1 introduces the report with a background and justification for the study. It also describes the institutional framework for COVID-19 and national disaster management, clarifies the scope of the report and defines the relevant terms used in the report.
- Section 2 outlines the main objectives, general principles, and critical assumptions of the study.
- Section 3 lists four different categories of relevant stakeholders targeted to participate in the study, namely the trade unions, public institutions, private companies, and credit unions.
- Section 4 presents the three organizations that worked closely with the consultant and assisted with the coordination of in-country activities, namely the Saint Lucia Trade Union Federation (TUF), the NWU, and the Saint Lucia Employers' Federation (SLEF).
- Section 5 identifies the main data sources and outlines the data collection methodology, which includes the use of desktop research, telephone interviews, virtual group discussions and a stakeholder survey.
- Section 6 presents a summary of the data collected through document review. It covers the constitutional role of the Governor General, the legislative role of the Parliament, the executive role in policy making, and the operational roles of relevant national institutions.
- Section 7 presents a summary of the data collected through stakeholder consultations. It covers feedback provided by employers on their entrepreneurial challenges; NEMO on emergency management challenges; the Department of Labour (DOL) on industrial relations challenges; the Gender Relations Department on gender relations challenges; HR managers on managerial challenges; unionized and non-unionized workers on their employment challenges; trade union leaders on the representational challenges of the movement; and the credit union leaders on the financial support challenges of the movement.
- Section 8 presents an analysis of findings of the study on trade union challenges with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic. Areas covered include the public health and socio-economic effects, as well as the impacts of the pandemic and the crisis management responses and recovery actions on trade unions.
- Section 9 presents an analysis of findings of the study on trade union challenges with respect to national disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic and overall national disaster management. Areas covered include compliance with the provisions of legislation; the completeness of the institutional framework; appropriateness of management policies; programme strategies and action plans; resource capacity; and the preparedness, response, and recovery issues. Key issues identified with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic include crisis planning, quantitative data, challenges faced by workers and opportunities to address these challenges. Also examined are the cross-cutting issues

that must be considered by the trade union movement in planning for the future. Areas requiring attention include awareness and education, gender equality, gender-related statistics, revenue generation and stability, and member services inclusive of emergency support.

- ▶ Section 10 presents the lessons learned for crisis (specifically, the COVID-19 pandemic), and national disaster management. Key lessons identified with respect to participation in the policy and decision-making and implementation of national resilience interventions include: (a) consultation on proposed legislative instruments; (b) inclusion in institutional frameworks; (c) involvement in assessing post-disaster needs of workers; and (d) the legal provisions in place for social protection.
- ▶ Section 11 presents the main conclusions drawn and actions recommended to address public health and socio-economic effects - as well as the impact - of the COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters on Saint Lucia.
- ▶ Section 12 offers ideas for the way forward, including an outline of the proposal for the development of a five-year strategic plan for the trade union movement. It also presents the specific institutional strengthening and capacity-building activities critical to achieving short-term and long-term goals for the development of the trade union movement.



Introduction

1.1 Background and justification

The ILO Caribbean Resilience Project was launched at the start of 2019, with the objective of strengthening the resilience capacities of three target countries - Dominica, Guyana, and Saint Lucia - in line with the International Labour Organization (ILO), Recommendation No. 205 - by ensuring that the principles embedded in the *ILO Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all*¹, are fully adopted and implemented at national level. Under the coordination of the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean (DWT/CO-POS), a combination of measurable actions is aimed at:

- ▶ Improved capacity of tripartite constituents and the establishment of practical tools (or, where appropriate, use and adaption of existing ones developed by ILO) to support resilience, adaptation to climate change, and greening of the economy; and
- ▶ More holistic, inclusive disaster preparedness, and increased national awareness and capacities to mainstream decent work in early recovery stages.

The assessment of trade unions in Saint Lucia is intended to strengthen the resilience capacity of the country to adapt to climate change, green the economy, improve disaster preparedness, increase national awareness and capacities to mainstream decent work in early recovery stages.

It is anticipated the collection and analysis of data will serve as an empirical basis for TU participation in national policy and decision-making, as well as implementation of national resilience interventions. This is a critical first requirement. Also critical is acknowledging the present and persistent threat of natural disasters due to climate events. As such, the assessment considers existing plans and previous national responses to climate-related hazards and events experienced in the last three years, namely the period 2017–2019.

¹ *ILO, Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all*. 2015. For more information, see: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_432859.pdf. Last accessed 31 March 2021.

1.2 Institutional framework for COVID-19 and disaster management

In this report, the term “institutional framework” is taken to mean a set of formal tripartite arrangements in Saint Lucia that allows the social partners - government, private sector employers and the trade union movement - to engage in social dialogue on matters of national importance.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an epidemic of an infectious disease from 2019, which has spread and affected large numbers of people in many countries across the globe, including Saint Lucia. In addition, almost every year, the country also experiences natural disasters such as storms, hurricanes, floods, and droughts caused by the growing incidence of extreme weather conditions in one form or another.

Saint Lucia uses an institutional framework for managing the COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters that involves up to seven stakeholder institutions namely: the Office of the Governor General; the Saint Lucia Parliament; the Cabinet of Ministers; public sector institutions; private sector companies; trade unions; and credit unions. The responsibilities of each stakeholder institution, which have been categorized as constitutional, legislative, executive, operational, managerial, representational, and financial support, are discussed in more detail in Section 6 of the report.

1.3 Scope of the Assessment Report

This Assessment Report will provide a summary of the data collected from the key stakeholder institutions involved in COVID-19 and national disaster management. It also will provide an analysis of the public health and socio-economic effects of the pandemic (for 2020 and 2021) and national disasters (from 2017 to 2020), as well as the impact of response and recovery actions on trade unions and their members.

In addition, the report highlights challenges associated with creation and implementation of responsive legislation, regulations, policy, strategy, and action plans, as well as creating and enhancing resource capacity.

Finally, it examines the preparedness, response and recovery, and cross-cutting issues, draws a few major conclusions, and makes recommendations for future actions.

1.4 Definition of terms

This section of the report provides clarification on the various terms used in connection with disasters and crises.

1.4.1 National disasters

In this report, a national disaster means any public emergency that has arisen because of the occurrence of any earthquake, hurricane, flood, fire, outbreak of pestilence or of infectious disease or other calamity, whether similar to the foregoing or not. In accordance with Section 17(2)(b) of the Saint Lucia Constitution, the Office of the Governor General may, by proclamation published in the Official Gazette, declare that a state of emergency exists.

All countries, including Small Island Developing States (SIDS) like Saint Lucia, face extreme weather events that result from natural processes of the earth. These events are referred to as natural disasters and include floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tsunamis, and storms.

Man-made disasters are attributed in part or entirely to human intent, error, negligence, or involves a failure of a man-made system, and results in significant injuries or deaths. They include actions involving use of nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons; house or forest fires or road accidents; acts of terrorism; epidemics; oil spills; and droughts.

Natural disasters such as storms, hurricanes, erosions, and droughts are events capable of causing considerable damage to life and property and very often may involve a high cost to the country.

1.4.2 National crisis

A national crisis refers to a situation or time when a nation faces intense difficulty, uncertainty, danger or serious threat to people, national systems and organizations, and a need for non-routine rules and procedures emerge, accompanied with urgency.²

According to Chapter 1 Section 17(1) of the Saint Lucia Constitution, the Governor General may, by proclamation which shall be published in the Official Gazette, declare that a “State of Emergency” exists. For instance, since March 2020, the Government of Saint Lucia has been trying to cope with a national social and economic crisis caused by the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic and employing states of emergency as part of its crisis response.

1.4.3 National preparedness

Saint Lucia has a national institutional framework for disaster management covering preparedness, response and recovery. This framework comprises representatives from civil society, private and public institutions. They collaborate with each other to ensure the country is always in a state of national preparedness to take action before, during and after a disaster.

1.4.4 National disaster emergency response

According to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the primary aims of disaster response are rescue from immediate danger, and stabilization of the physical and emotional condition of survivors. Other important activities involved in national disaster response include disaster warning, evacuation of people, search and rescue, emergency assistance and damage assessment.³

1.4.5 Disaster recovery

Disaster recovery (DR) may be defined as an area of security planning that aims to protect an organization from the effects of significant negative events. It outlines the strategy to be adopted to enable an organization to maintain or quickly resume mission-critical functions following a national disaster.⁴

1.4.6 Pandemic

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines a pandemic as “an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people”.

² Kabeil, Magdy M., and Ahmad M. Kabil. “A Proposed Framework for Incorporating Big-Data Technology in National Crisis Management Center”, in *Advanced Methodologies and Technologies in Network Architecture, Mobile Computing, and Data Analytics*. Edited by Mehdi Khosrow-Pour, D.B.A., 616-631. Hershey, PA: IGI Global, 2019. <http://doi:10.4018/978-1-5225-7598-6.ch045>. For more information, see: <https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/a-proposed-framework-for-incorporating-big-data-technology-in-national-crisis-management-center/214647>. Last accessed 31 March 2021.

³ IFRC, *Responding to disasters*. For more information, see: <https://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/responding>. Last accessed 31 March 2021.

⁴ Tech Target Network, *Definition of disaster recovery (DR)*. For more information, see: <https://searchdisasterrecovery.techtarget.com/definition/disaster-recovery>. Last accessed 31 March 2021.

After assessing the behaviour of the coronavirus responsible for the COVID-19 disease, WHO officials concluded that the infectious disease, which has been spreading worldwide, met the criteria to be categorized as a pandemic.⁵

Effects

The word “Effect” as used in this report means a change which is brought about as a result or consequences of a human action by an individual or group. It also applies to result or consequences of a natural action arising from processes of the earth.⁶

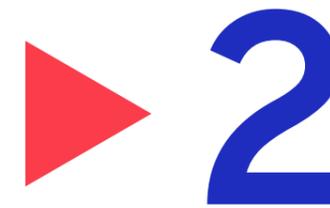
Impacts

The word “Impact” as used in this report is the result of a natural or human action that occurred when one object comes into forceful contact with another.⁷

⁵ *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 2011;89:540-541. doi: 10.2471/BLT.11.088815. For more information, see: <https://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/89/7/11-088815/en>. Last accessed 31 March 2021.

⁶ [vocabulary.com, Definitions of effect](https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/effect). For more information, see: <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/effect>. Last accessed 31 March 2021.

⁷ [vocabulary.com, Definitions of impact](https://www.dictionary.com/browse/impact). For more information, see: <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/impact>. Last accessed 31 March 2021.



Focus of the study

The Saint Lucia study focused on the collection and analysis of data on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the trade union movement. It also focused on the movement’s level of participation in national policy and decision-making and implementation of national resilience interventions. In addition, the study considered the present and persistent threat of natural disasters due to climate events, by assessing the existing plans and previous national responses to climate-related hazards and events experienced in the last three years, which is the period 2017–2019.

2.1 Study objectives

In keeping with the requirements of the terms of reference (TOR), the study sought to gather information (qualitative and quantitative) on the public health and socio-economic effects of the pandemic, and the impact of national responses and recovery actions on trade unions and their members.

The study also involved an analysis of information obtained, and an identification of the key issues and the lessons learned on disaster or crisis preparedness and management from a trade union perspective, in both the public and private sectors.

Finally, it aims to provide the trade unions with key information inputs for engaging in strategic planning and to guide them in their capacity-building interventions, and to support their institutional strengthening efforts for greater service and resilience.

2.2 Study principles

The study’s activities adhered to the following general principles:

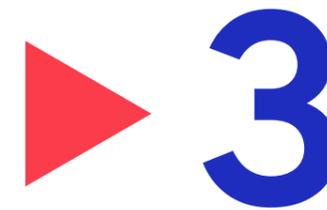
- Apply an evidence-based methodology to collect data from primary and secondary sources.
- Ensure the conduct of an independent review.
- Obtain stakeholder consent before interviewing them or publishing their information.
- Take the best interest of the trade unions and their members into consideration, at all times.

2.3 Critical assumptions

In carrying out the study, the consultant assumed the following:

- (a) The TUF and the NWU, which were identified by the ILO as key stakeholders, would be available to assist with in-country coordination of the study on behalf of its member trade unions.
- (b) Other targeted umbrella institutions, such as the SLEF, and the Saint Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association (SLHTA), would assist with coordination of the study.
- (c) Trade union bodies in Saint Lucia other than TUF and NWU would be willing to participate in the study.
- (d) Affected employees selected to participate in virtual discussions would be willing to give up their time to contribute to the exercise.
- (e) Representatives of public and private sector employers would be willing to give up their time to contribute to the exercise.
- (f) All stakeholder representatives would be available to participate in scheduled virtual discussions during the period Wednesday 23rd September to Monday 30th November 2020.
- (g) Stakeholder representatives would return completed questionnaires and submit other relevant information required for the study on a timely basis.

In many instances, these assumptions did not prove correct and as a result, there were several delays in data collection due to the unavailability of stakeholder representatives, as well as late submission of information such as completed questionnaires and gender statistics.



Categories of study participant

As a first step to meet the requirements of the TOR for the study, the consultant sought to identify the key stakeholders and placed them into four categories based on their role in disaster or crisis management. A description of each stakeholder category is provided in the sub-sections that follow, while Appendix II of the report features a list of the key stakeholder representatives consulted.

3.1 Trade unions and their members

In keeping with the requirements of the TOR, the consultant sought to engage all nine trade unions in the country to develop and execute the study. Six of these are affiliated to the TUF, namely: CSA; SLFSA; SLMDA; SLNA; SLTU; and SLWDWU.

The consultant also engaged officials from the other four trade unions. However, the Police Welfare Association (PWA) was the only union that participated in the exercise. The NWU could not participate due to time and staff constraints, but the consultant was able to interview a few members of the union who had been made redundant. The consultant was unable to obtain the participation of leaders of the Correctional Officers Welfare Association, while it was not possible to obtain information from the Saint Lucia Workers' Union as the organization is now defunct.

3.2 Public institutions

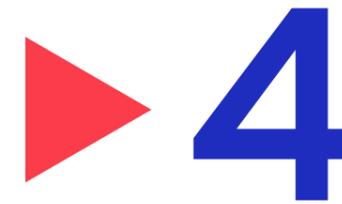
Public institutions represent the second category of key stakeholders identified and invited to participate in the study because of their traditional role in providing advice and institutional support to citizens / residents affected by natural or man-made disasters. Holders of relevant positions in targeted government agencies include the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) in the Ministry of Health and Wellness; the Director of the National Emergency Management Organization; the Communications Manager of the National Insurance Corporation (NIC); the Director of the Bureau of Health Education; and the Director of Gender Relations.

3.3 Private companies

Private companies represent the third category of stakeholders identified and invited to participate in the study because of their traditional role in employing workers who are affected by natural or man-made disasters. The consultant invited each participating company to name its HR Manager and up to five employees who had been affected by the pandemic to participate in a focus group discussion.

3.4 Credit unions

Credit unions fall into the fourth category of key stakeholders identified and invited to participate in the study because of their traditional role in providing financial assistance to members affected by natural or man-made disasters. Three of the largest credit unions – namely, the Saint Lucia Teachers' Credit Cooperative Limited, the Jannou Credit Unions and the Laborie Credit Union – were invited to nominate leaders to participate in a focus group discussion comprising government agencies, credit unions and private sector agencies. A list of key stakeholders consulted is presented in Appendix II of the report.



In-country coordination

In keeping with the TOR for the study, the consultant made every effort to work closely with leaders of the trade union movement in Saint Lucia, as suggested by the ILO. A synopsis of the collaboration between the trade union movement and the consultant is provided in the following sub-sections.

4.1 Trade Union Federation

The consultant contacted Julian Monrose (President) and Lisa Goodman (General Secretary) of the Trade Union Federation, to solicit their assistance with local coordination of the study. Both the President and the General Secretary confirmed their willingness to assist with the coordination of planned activities related to the trade union movement.

The TUF coordinated the distribution of information on the study among its member trade unions and requested that they confirm the names and contact numbers of the leaders and members who agreed to participate. The umbrella body also forwarded the information received from the union leaders to the consultant. The TUF also finalized arrangements for separate zoom meetings with the trade union leaders and a cross section of ordinary union members who were identified to participate in the study.

4.2 National Workers' Union

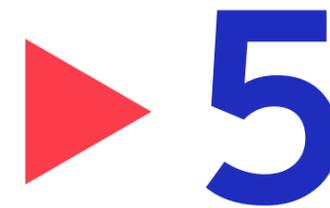
ILO also advised that the consultant approach the General Secretary of the National Workers' Union, to request assistance with national coordination of the study. Unfortunately, when contacted, the union official indicated that the union was unable to participate in the study due to staff constraints and other pressing matters. However, he expressed interest in obtaining the findings of the study and possible follow-up.

The consultant identified and interviewed some five members of the union, who were private sector employees affected by COVID-19 pandemic. During telephone interviews, these employees provided data on how the pandemic impacted their employment and domestic life.

4.3 Saint Lucia Employers' Federation

In addition to the designated officials of the TUF, the consultant obtained assistance from the Saint Lucia Employers' Federation, for national coordination of planned activities related to the private sector. The SLEF's Operations Officer, Marceline Joseph, assisted with the coordination of planned online discussions with the targeted HR managers and a sample of affected employees of private companies who are members of the Federation.

The SLEF distributed information on the study among its member companies and collected and forwarded the names and contact numbers of the HR managers and employees who agreed to participate in the consultations. The umbrella body also finalized arrangements for separate zoom meetings with the HR managers and a cross section of affected company employees.



Data collection methodology

The consultant worked with the designated union officials to structure and carry out data collection amongst the targeted respondents in the country. Details are provided in the sub-sections that follow, of specific collaborative methods and techniques used to structure and carry out the data collection.

5.1 Data sources

The consultant used various methods to collect data from primary sources, or directly from stakeholders with first-hand information on the issues being studied. Use of structured interviews was helpful where it was necessary to consult individual leaders from trade unions, government agencies, the private sector and credit unions. In cases where several individuals had to be consulted simultaneously, the consultant utilized online focus group discussions, questionnaires, and member surveys.

Documents studied and stakeholder representatives consulted are shown in the following appendices:

- Appendix I – List of base documents studied.
- Appendix II – Leaders of trade unions, public agencies, private companies, and credit unions consulted.
- Appendix III – Unionized members of trade unions and non-unionized employees consulted.
- Appendix IV – Sample questions for key stakeholder representatives.

5.2 Documents review

As part of the process of obtaining relevant data for the study from secondary sources, the consultant conducted a desk review of all base documents made available by leaders of key stakeholders or downloaded from various online sources. These documents contained information on policy initiatives, legislative provisions, strategies and action plans, annual progress and financial reports, newspapers, journals, and other relevant documents that comprised indirect information on disaster management and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Appendix I shows a list of the base documents studied and reviewed.

5.3 Telephone interviews

The consultant conducted telephone interviews with several individual stakeholder representatives, because of current national health protocols adopted by the Government of Saint Lucia in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

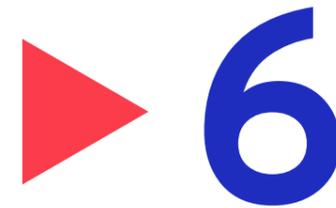
Individual stakeholder representatives who were interviewed via telephone included the CMO, the President of the Saint Lucia Cooperative Credit Union League (SLCCUL), the Director of the NEMO, and the Communications Manager of the NIC.

5.4 Online group discussions

The consultant conducted online group discussions with several stakeholder representatives using the Zoom platform. These sessions included: leaders and members of the trade unions in Saint Lucia; leaders of selected credit unions; HR managers and a select number of employees from private companies who are members of SLEF.

5.5 Stakeholder surveys

There were several instances where individual stakeholder representatives opted to complete the structured survey questionnaire rather than participate in a telephone interview. Stakeholders electing to return a completed survey questionnaire included: Caribbean Awning Production Company; the DGR; National Farmers Credit Union, and Saint Lucia Distillers Ltd.



Data presentation summary – Review of documents

This section provides a summary of data collected from desktop research about the role of public sector institutions and private sector companies in carrying out COVID-19 pandemic and disaster management. It also presents a summary of data collected from secondary sources such as the internet, existing plans, programmes, projects, and reports on public and private sector institutions.

6.1 Role of public institutions in crisis / disaster management

This section describes the constitutional responsibilities of the office of the Governor General, the legislative responsibilities of the Parliament, the executive responsibilities of the Cabinet of Ministers, and the operational responsibilities of the Bureau of Health Education, DDCs, the DGR, the DOL, the National Emergency Management Advisory Committee (NEMAC), NEMO, Ministry of Health and Wellness, the NIC, and the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force.

Table 6.1 below, provides a summary of the primary responsibilities of relevant public sector institutions in crisis and disaster management, with brief details on the role of each public institution following, thereafter.

► Table 6.1 Matrix of primary responsibilities in crisis / national disasters, by public institution

No	Public institution	Primary responsibility
1	Office of the Governor General	Declare a State of Emergency
2	Parliament of Saint Lucia	Enact and/or amend disaster-related legislation
3	Cabinet of Ministers	Approve disaster-related administrative and public policies
4	NEMO	Coordinate activities associated with natural and man-made disasters
5	NEMAC	Approve disaster implementation strategies, plans, programmes, or projects

No	Public institution	Primary responsibility
6	District Disaster Committees (DDCs)	Implement community-based disaster plans, programmes, and projects
7	Ministry of Health and Wellness	Arrange and supervise affected workers under quarantine and implement national public safety and health policies
8	Bureau of Health Education	Create awareness of national public safety and health policies
9	Royal Saint Lucia Police Force	Enforce the approved national safety and health protocols
10	Department of Labour	Coordinate industrial relations among employers, unions, and government
11	Department of Gender Relations	Implement gender-related policies, plans, programmes, and projects
12	National Insurance Corporation	Collect employer / employee contributions and pay benefits as required

6.2 Constitutional role of the Governor General's Office

Section 17 subsection 2(b) of the Saint Lucia Constitution Order No. 1901 of 1978, provides for the Governor General -- by proclamation to be published in the official Gazette -- to declare that a State of Emergency (SOE) exists, once satisfied that a public emergency has arisen because of the occurrence of any earthquake, hurricane, flood, fire, outbreak of pestilence or of infectious disease, or any other calamity. Between January 2017 and February 2020, the Governor General of Saint Lucia did not have any reason to declare a state of emergency in this regard, as the country did not experience any major earthquake, hurricane, flood, or fire.

On 23rd March 2020, the Governor General of Saint Lucia signed the declaration of a "State of Emergency" in the country due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, to remain in force from 23rd March 2020 to 31st May 2020.⁸ However, the Government of Saint Lucia sought a four-month extension of the SOE -- that is from 1st June to 30th September 2020 -- to allow authorities to move swiftly between the first and second phases of the pandemic. The government also gave the populace the assurance that it would continually monitor the situation and evaluate the country's performance, with a view to reducing the timeframe, if necessary.

In summary, it is noted that once the Governor General declares the SOE, all public, private and civil society organizations, including trade unions, must comply with the directives of the political directorate. At the same time, they have a responsibility to ensure that the rights of workers (whether unionized or non-unionized) are not violated by the authorities and their employers.

⁸ stlucianewsonline.com, *BREAKING NEWS: Saint Lucia declares state of emergency*. For more information, see: <https://www.stlucianewsonline.com/breaking-news-saint-lucia-declares-state-of-emergency/>. Last accessed 31 March 2021.

6.3 Legislative role of the Saint Lucia Parliament

Section 17(5) of the Saint Lucia Constitution makes provision for the House of Assembly and the Senate to approve resolutions within seven days, beginning with the date of the publication of the declaration. Section 17(6) also provides for a resolution approved by the House or Senate to remain in force for an initial period of 12 months, or shorter, as specified by Parliament. The initial resolution may be extended from time to time by a further resolution "not exceeding 12 months from the date of the resolution effecting the extension otherwise it shall lapse or cease to be in force".

A resolution approved by Parliament may be revoked at any time by a further resolution. In keeping with its legislative responsibilities, Parliament enacted separate legislation to manage the COVID-19 pandemic specifically, and national disasters in general. As described in the sub-sections that follow, each legislative instrument is administered by a public institution in a manner to ensure effective COVID-19 and disaster management.

6.3.1 COVID-19 (Prevention and Control) Act, No. 17 of 2020

On Friday 1st October 2020, the Government of Saint Lucia enacted the COVID-19 (Prevention and Control) Act, No. 17 of 2020, amidst complaints by several stakeholders such as the Bar Association, SLMDA, and the Saint Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association (SLHTA), that passage of the bill was being rushed without sufficient consultation.

The Act replaced the extended SOE, which was declared as part of measures put in place to curb the spread of the coronavirus. It was enacted to coincide with the end of the SOE on 30th September 2020, and will remain in effect for a period of two years. A key difference in the Act is that it removes the decision-making authority from the Prime Minister and places it with the Minister of Health and technocrats within the Ministry.⁹

6.3.2 Disaster Management Act, No. 30 of 2006

The Disaster Management Act, No. 30 of 2006, provides for the drafting of relevant regulations, and for addressing matters relating to the mitigation of, preparedness for, response to and recovery from emergencies and disasters in Saint Lucia. The Act also provides for the coordination of the activities of other agencies involved in emergency and disaster management.

6.3.3 The Labour Act, No. 37 of 2006 and Labour Act, No. 6 of 2011

The Labour Code, No. 37 of 2006, which came into force on 16th November 2006, was enacted to consolidate and reform legislation applicable to labour and industrial relations in Saint Lucia - taking into account existing local standards and international labour law standards - and to provide for related matters. In February 2011, the Parliament of Saint Lucia enacted the Labour Code (Amendment) Act, No. 6 of 2011, to amend the title and several sections of the Code to enhance the overall effectiveness of the legislation.

6.3.4 The National Insurance Corporation Act, No. 10 of 1978

The National Insurance Corporation Act, No. 10 of 1978, established the NIC to provide a social security mechanism to ensure the collection of payroll deductions and payment of short-term and long-term benefits to contributors to the National Insurance Fund. In 1984, the Finance Minister introduced the NIC Regulations No. 10 of 1978, to give effect to the legislation.

⁹ COVID-19 (Prevention and Control) Act, No. 17 of 2020. For more information, see: <https://www.stlucia.org/en/covid-19/>. Last accessed 31 March 2021.

6.3.5 Summary of legislative framework

Prior to December 2019, the Parliament had enacted three legislative instruments to address issues arising out of national disasters. They are:

- Disaster Management Act, No. 30 of 2006, which provided for the management of national disasters;
- Labour Code No. 37 of 2006 amended to the Labour Act No. 6 of 2011, which provides for the entitlements of employees and employers in the aftermath of a crisis or national disaster; and
- National Insurance Corporation Act, No. 10 of 1978, which establishes the basis for paying benefits due to workers based on their contributions to the corporation.

In addition, up to December 2019, Parliament had not enacted any specific legislative instrument to address issues arising out of a pandemic. However, in October 2020, Parliament enacted a COVID-19 (Prevention and Control) Act to provide the legal framework required to manage the response and recovery activities necessary to bring the pandemic under control.

6.4 Executive role of the Cabinet of Ministers

As the Political Directorate of the Executive Branch, the Cabinet of Ministers is responsible for approving public policies for the management of disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as exercising oversight on the provision of institutional support services to citizens.

6.4.1 Administrative policies

The Cabinet also approves administrative policies to guide the coordination and collaborative efforts of inter-agency spearheading the implementation of preparatory, response and recovery activities related to disasters and COVID-19 management. From time to time, the CMO and the Commissioner of Police are required to give regular briefings to the Cabinet of Ministers, to assist them in determining the necessity of adjusting the country's COVID-19 pandemic regulations.

6.4.2 Public policies

The Cabinet also approves public policies to guide the behaviour of citizens (including workers and trade union leaders) with respect to their involvement in preparatory, response and recovery activities related to disasters and COVID-19 management. Currently, policies exist to guide the decisions and actions of citizens, including workers and trade union leaders, on matters related to evacuation from low lying areas, the occupation of emergency shelters during disasters, distribution of emergency supplies, and assistance with housing.

6.4.3 Summary of administrative / public policies

Prior to October 2020, NEMO was the main agency with the approved institutional framework responsible for coordinating the implementation of all national disaster activities. However, given that the pandemic is predominantly a health concern, the Cabinet of Ministers approved of the establishment of a Command Centre within the Ministry of Health and Wellness to administer provisions of the COVID-19 legislation, and to manage the response and recovery activities necessary to bring the pandemic under control.

6.5 Operational role of public institutions

Saint Lucia has several public institutions with a legal mandate to perform functions that relate directly to the involvement of trade unions in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters. Twelve of the most prominent institutions identified include: the Bureau of Health Education, the DGR, the DOL, District Disaster Committees, Ministry of Health and Wellness, NIC, NEMAC, NEMO, and the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force.

Notably, the trade union movement is not formally represented on either the Command Centre or NEMAC, both of which make policy decisions on the management of the COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters. Apart from attending national meetings with social partners to receive briefings on the status of COVID-19 or a disaster, trade unions do not play any role in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic or a national disaster. The following subsections share further details about the role of each institution in managing the COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters.

6.5.1 The Department of Labour

One of the primary roles of the Department of Labour is the administration of the Labour Code, No. 37 of 2006. Other major responsibilities include the coordination of the tripartite relationship involving employers, trade unions and government to engender a stable environment and favourable industrial climate. Additionally, the DOL is required to develop and maintain a Labour Market Information System to facilitate the provision of information on the labour market.

With respect to the COVID-19 pandemic specifically, the DOL has been involved in the interpretation of relevant provisions of the Labour Act and Collective Agreements to provide advice to employers and employees on a wide range of employment policy matters. In response to the many challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, many employers were forced to make several operational adjustments to cope with issues such as declining sales, loss of clientele and level of business or force closures, in compliance with protocols introduced by government. Before making these adjustments, many employers would seek the advice of the Labour Commissioner and consult the union representatives on matters relating to paid or unpaid leave, occupational safety and health, employee rights as pertains to changes in terms and conditions of work, job rotation, overtime payments and work from home.

6.5.2 National Emergency Management Advisory Committee

Part III Section 8 of the Disaster Management Act provides for the establishment of the National Emergency Management Advisory Committee, which comprises the Minister responsible for disaster management as Chairperson, and another Minister or public officer nominated by the Minister to serve as Deputy Chairperson.

The Minister responsible for disaster management also nominates other representatives from: (i) the Police Force; (ii) the Special Service Unit; (iii) the Fire Service; (iv) the Ministry for Public Health and the Environment; (v) the Ministry for Public Works; (vi) the Ministry for Local Government; (vii) such other Ministries, Departments of Government and statutory bodies as the Minister responsible for disaster management thinks fit; (viii) such other persons or organizations as the Minister responsible for disaster preparedness and response thinks fit who volunteer or are required by law to perform functions related to the mitigation of, preparedness for, response to and recovery from emergencies and disasters in Saint Lucia.

6.5.3 The National Emergency Management Organization

Part II Section 3 of the Act makes provision for the establishment of the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO), headed by a Director "who shall be responsible to the Minister for coordinating the execution of government policy relating to the mitigation of, preparedness for, response to and

recovery from emergencies and disasters in Saint Lucia". Specific functions of NEMO are to develop, test and implement adequate measures to protect the population of Saint Lucia from the physical, social, environmental, and economic effects of both natural and man-made disasters. NEMO also is responsible for ensuring the efficient functioning of preparedness, prevention, mitigation, and response actions.

6.5.4 Disaster management committees and sub-committees

Part III Section 9 of the disaster management legislation provides for the NEMO Director, in consultation with NEMAC, to establish other committees and sub-committees charged with responsibilities, whether defined by geographical area or otherwise, in relation to the preparedness for, mitigation of, response to and recovery from emergencies and disasters in Saint Lucia. These committees and sub-committees are required to convene regular planning meetings, whenever an alert, a declaration of disaster, a declaration of a SOE, or a notice of evacuation is issued, or in the event or aftermath of an emergency or disaster.¹⁰

6.5.5 Ministry of Health and Wellness

The Office of the CMO, within the Ministry of Health and Wellness, monitors the international COVID-19 guidelines established by the World Health Organization (WHO), and the regional guidelines set by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). The CMO's office also reviews the application of COVID-19 guidelines in other countries and uses the lessons learnt from best practices to customize safety and health policies for the effective management of the COVID-19 pandemic in Saint Lucia.

In March 2020, the government announced that the CMO is the only authority to communicate Saint Lucia's response on public health matters, and that the CMO was the only authority to communicate any national response or any possible interruption in the normal management and daily operations of the public health service. As head of the COVID-19 Command Center, the CMO advises the Cabinet on the formulation of the COVID-19 response and recovery policy, monitors the implementation of planned programmes, conducts regular evaluation of the outcome of strategies adopted, and provides regular updates on the country's COVID-19 status.

6.5.6 The Bureau of Health Education

The Bureau of Health Education (BOHE) is responsible for providing leadership and direction to institutions and individuals in Saint Lucia on health-related matters during a period of disaster, including the COVID-19 pandemic. BOHE also is responsible for creating an awareness of public health policy, coordinating, and working in collaboration with other health institutions to encourage citizens to adopt and practice a healthy lifestyle.¹¹

6.5.7 Royal Saint Lucia Police Force

The Royal Saint Lucia Police Force (RSLPF) played a major role in supporting the implementation of the Government of Saint Lucia's response effort by enforcing the national Health and Safety Protocols outlined for the management of the COVID-19 response. Key tasks associated with this function were to ensure that all frontline workers, nationals, residents, and visitors alike, observe the following:

- Wear the necessary PPE as mandated by workplace management;
- Practice social distancing and other national Health and Safety Protocols in mass crowds or at workplaces;
- Participate in screening and COVID-19 testing when asked to do so by the relevant authorities; and
- Remain in self-quarantine or proceed to a government operated quarantine facility if required to do so.

6.5.8 Department of Gender Relations

The primary functions of the Department of Gender Relations (DGR), among other things, are to develop, review, interpret, implement, and monitor gender-related policies, plans, programmes and projects of the government. The DGR also is responsible for designing and facilitating the implementation of plans, programmes and projects that promote gender equity and equality, and for coordinating activities of gender mainstreaming into the national development agenda.

6.5.9 National Insurance Corporation

The National Insurance Corporation (NIC) was established under the National Insurance Corporation Act, No. 10 of 1978, to provide a social security mechanism to ensure the collection of payroll deductions and payment of short-term and long-term benefits to contributors to the National Insurance Fund. With respect to the management of disasters between 2017 and 2020, the NIC was not required to play any specific role.

However, as regards the COVID-19 pandemic, the NIC implemented an Economic Relief Programme (ERP), designed to provide income support for a period of three months - April, May and June 2020 - to NIC contributors directly affected by the coronavirus pandemic. According to the NIC, the amount payable under the approved ERP payment structure, is 50 per cent of monthly salaries between EC\$1,000 and EC\$3,000.

Therefore, under the ERP, if the salary of an employee is less than EC\$1,000, the amount payable is initially calculated at EC\$500. For employee contributors with a salary that is over EC\$3,000, the amount payable is capped at EC\$1,500. However, where employees receive financial assistance or income from their employers during the month or the period for which they are claiming, then the amount payable by the NIC will be reduced by the amount which the employer paid. The ERP payment is calculated based on data in the NIC's system, as well as information submitted by employers along with the information provided on the application. The NIC also indicated that the programme is meant to ensure all contributors get a minimum payout of EC\$500 per month, which can be a combination of payouts from employers and the NIC.

To qualify for payment under the ERP, applicants must satisfy the following conditions:

- Claimant was in employment in February 2020 and currently is out of work due to COVID-19.
- Claimant must have contributed to the fund for at least one month prior to 29th February 2020, or in the case of self-employed persons, must have paid at least one contribution within the last twelve months prior to 29th February 2020.
- Claimant is not in receipt of any other benefit from the NIC, other than Funeral Grant. Where claimant is in receipt of such a benefit, the higher amount - ERP or NIC benefit already being received - will be paid.

¹⁰ *The Disaster Management Act No. 30 of 2006*. For more information, see: https://www.preventionweb.net/files/9477_DisasterManagementAct.pdf. Last accessed 31 March 2021.

¹¹ Government of Saint Lucia. "Bureau of Health". *Ministry of Health and Wellness*. For more information, see: <http://www.govt.lc/ministries/health-wellness-human-services-and-gender-relations/bureau-of-health>. Last accessed 31 March 2021.

As of 20th October 2020, the NIC confirmed that it had received 18,853 applications and made a total of 68,904 payments amounting to some EC\$64,861,978.85 to qualifying contributors. The NIC also set 31st October 2020 as the deadline by which all employers had to submit information to facilitate the processing of payments on behalf of qualifying persons. The NIC also indicated that all persons who had applied for income support under the ERP prior to the deadline already had been paid.¹²

6.6 Entrepreneurial challenges of employers

Employers operating within both the public and private sectors played an innovative role in ensuring compliance with the provisions of relevant legislation governing COVID-19 and disaster management. They also adopted strategies, developed plans, and made policy decisions to deal with the challenges they face, in order to cope with the effects of COVID-19 and national disasters on their operations.

Under the Disaster Management Act, managers of ministries, departments, statutory authorities, and other public agencies are expected to carry out specific responsibilities as part of the national disaster preparedness, response and recovery effort. Table 6.2 is a summary of the crisis and disaster management responsibilities of public sector institutions and private sector companies - from preparedness stage through the response stage to the recovery stage.

► Table 6.2. Crisis / disaster management role of public and private sector employers

Stage	Public institutions / Private	Crisis / disaster management
Preparedness	Develop a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and submit to NEMO.	NEMO to review and approve the Business Continuity Plan (BCP).
	Submit fire section of the BCP to the Fire Department.	Fire Department to review and approve the fire section in the BCP.
	Establish Crisis and Disaster Preparedness Committees (CDPCs).	CMO and/or NEMO to advise on CDPCs operations.
	Organize staff drills in readiness for national disasters.	CMO and/or NEMO to advise on and observe the draft drills.
Response	Activate and appropriate provisions of the BCP when NEMAC issues the alert.	NEMO monitors provisions of the BCP.
	Attend post-crisis or disaster meetings with social partners to obtain information from relevant public agencies about the crisis or national disaster.	CMO and/or NEMO to disseminate relevant information about the crisis or national disaster at meetings of social partners or via the media.
	Develop and implement COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan (ERP).	CMO to disseminate relevant information about the requirements of the Emergency Response Plan (ERP).
	Provide institutional support compliance with approved policies, protocols, or provisions of the COVID-19 ERP.	CMO established protocols such as wearing masks, social distancing, washing hands and using PPEs.

¹² Government of Saint Lucia, *National Insurance Corporation's Economic Relief Programme (ERP) Payment Structure*. For more information, see: <https://www.stlucianic.org/erp-payment-structure/>. Last accessed 31 March 2021.

Stage	Public institutions / Private	Crisis / disaster management
	Provide institutional support to ensure compliance and implement appropriate provisions of the BCP.	NEMO established guidelines for emergency management at the organizational level.
	Restructure operations of the institution or company, if required, and notify union of plans and staff affected.	DOL to provide guidance on requirements of the labour law on lay-offs, redundancy, job rotation or pay cuts.
	Negotiate with the union plans for lay-offs, redundancy, job rotation or pay cuts.	DOL to monitor implementation of redundancy, job rotation, pay cuts or lay-offs and address complaints.
Recovery	Update and maintain the BCP.	NEMO to review and approve the updated BCPs.
	Donate / set up internal teams to assist with the distribution of emergency supplies and/or food.	NEMO encourages public and private organizations to contribute to the national recovery effort.
	Adopt administrative policies and institute measures to ensure compliance with national public policies.	CMO and/or NEMO monitors public institutions and private companies' compliance with approved public policy.
	Attend meetings of social partners convened by the CMO and/or NEMO to receive reports on the status of recovery.	CMO and/or NEMO to convene meetings with social partners to present status reports on the national recovery effort.

6.7 Managerial role of human resource managers

With respect to the COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters, the HR managers are responsible for acting on worker-related decisions of their public institutions and private companies.

Table 6.3 is a summary of the specific crisis and disaster management responsibilities of these managers at the preparedness, response and recovery stages of crisis and national disaster management.

► Table 6.3. Crisis / disaster management role of human resource managers

Stage	Responsibilities of human resource managers
Preparedness	Provide HR input to the BCP, including the fire section of plan.
	Coordinate the assignment of staff to be members of the CDPC.
	Assist with the organization staff drills in readiness for crises and national disasters.
	Submit regular reports on the level of preparedness for crisis and disaster management.

► Table 6.3. Crisis / disaster management role of human resource managers

Stage	Responsibilities of human resource managers
Preparedness	<p>Provide HR input to the BCP, including the fire section of plan.</p> <p>Coordinate the assignment of staff to be members of the CDPC.</p> <p>Assist with the organization staff drills in readiness for crises and national disasters.</p> <p>Submit regular reports on the level of preparedness for crisis and disaster management.</p>
Response	<p>Advise on staff required to activate and implement provisions of the BCP when NEMAC issues an alert.</p> <p>Attend post-crisis or disaster meetings with social partners when necessary, to obtain information from relevant public agencies about the crisis or national disaster.</p> <p>Advise on staff required to activate and implement the COVID-19 ERP.</p> <p>Provide HR support to ensure compliance with policies, protocols, or provisions of the COVID-19 ERP.</p> <p>Provide HR support to ensure compliance on implementing appropriate provisions of the BCP.</p> <p>Advise on restructuring operations of the institution or company if required; notify union of plans and staff affected.</p> <p>Spearhead negotiations with trade unions on benefits payments for staff affected by the restructuring.</p> <p>Implement agreements negotiated with the union on planned lay-offs, redundancy, job rotation or pay cuts.</p>
Recovery	<p>Provide advice on HR requirements to update and maintain the BCP.</p> <p>Coordinate the deployment of teams to assist with the distribution of donations of emergency supplies and/or food.</p> <p>Advise on administrative policies and institute measures to ensure staff compliance with national public policies.</p> <p>Attend meetings of social partners convened by the CMO and/or NEMO to receive reports on the status of recovery.</p>

6.8 Reporting role of unionized / non-unionized workers

Invariably, workers are the ones who will be most affected by the effects and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters. As such, unionized workers have a responsibility to promptly report to their union officials any issues of concern relating to their employment. Non-unionized workers, on the other hand, have a responsibility to report or register their complaints with the DOL.

Table 6.4 provides a summary of the specific crisis and disaster management responsibilities of unionized and non-unionized workers at the preparedness, response and recovery stages of crisis and national disaster management.

► Table 6.4. Crisis / disaster management role of unionized / non-unionized workers

Stage	Responsibilities of unionized / non-unionized workers
Preparedness	<p>Become familiar with the content of the BCP.</p> <p>Participate in staff drills organized by the CDPC.</p> <p>Assist with the implementation of assigned tasks in readiness for crisis/national disasters.</p> <p>Pay attention to regular reports circulated on the level of preparedness for crisis and/or disaster management.</p>
Response	<p>Act as required to implement provisions of the BCP or ERP when advised by management.</p> <p>Attend post-crisis/disaster staff meetings when necessary, to obtain relevant information from management.</p> <p>Assist with the implementation of activities related to the COVID-19 ERP or the national disaster BCP.</p> <p>Comply with the approved policies, protocols or provisions of the COVID-19 ERP and national disaster BCP.</p> <p>Inform the union, if notified by management of planned lay-offs, redundancies, job rotations or pay cuts.</p> <p>Seek advice from the DOL on any notice of lay-offs, redundancies, job rotations or pay cuts.</p> <p>Find out the terms of agreement negotiated by the union on staff lay-offs, redundancies, job rotations or pay cuts.</p> <p>Endorse terms of agreements negotiated by the union on planned lay-offs, redundancies, job rotations or pay cuts.</p>
Recovery	<p>Seek advice from the union on entitlements due to lay-offs, redundancies, job rotations or pay cuts.</p> <p>Seek advice from the DOL on entitlements due to lay-offs, redundancies, job rotations or pay cuts.</p> <p>Submit individual information to the NIC to facilitate the processing of personal benefits claimed.</p> <p>Ensure that management submits any staff information required to NIC for the processing of benefits claimed.</p>

6.9 Representational role of trade unions

For the purposes of this section of the report, trade unions are grouped as those representing workers in the public and private sectors.

Table 6.5 below, provides a summary of the specific crisis and/or disaster management responsibilities of trade unions at the preparedness, response and recovery stages of crisis and national disaster management.

► Table 6.5. Crisis / disaster management role of unionized / non-unionized workers

Stage	Responsibilities of unionized / non-unionized workers
Preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure employers comply with employment laws relating to workplace safety and healthy work environments. Study the content of the BCP and keep abreast with any changes made. Ensure that the union is represented on CDPC. Monitor the implementation of staff drills in readiness for crises and national disasters. Review reports on the level of preparedness for crisis and disaster management and follow-up on complaints.
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the activation and implementing of provisions of the ERP or BCP whenever NEMAC issues an alert. Attend post-crisis / disaster meetings with social partners when invited for updates on the crisis or national disaster. Advise members of concerns about activating and implementing the COVID-19 ERP. Advise members about concerns relating to policies, protocols, or provisions of the COVID-19 ERP or BCP. Represent members on restructuring operations of institutions or companies, if required, and notify those affected. Negotiate with institution or company officials on benefits payments for staff affected by the restructuring. Monitor implementation of agreements negotiated on staff lay-offs, redundancies, job rotations or pay cuts.
Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise union members on correct entitlements due to lay-offs, redundancies, job rotations or pay cuts. Meet with officials of institutions or companies to address inaccuracies in payment calculations. Lodge complaints with the DOL if payments disagreements are not resolved with the employer. Follow-up with NIC officials to discuss complaints about the personal benefits claimed and amounts received. Monitor staff rehiring practices to ensure fairness in the processing of members on staff lay-offs.

6.10 Financial support role of the credit union movement

The President of SLCCUL provided a general overview of the financial support which individual societies agreed to provide to members. The Laborie Credit Union, the Saint Lucia Teachers Credit Cooperative and the National Farmers Credit Union also responded to the questions on actions taken to support members.

Table 6.6 provides brief details of the specific actions of the credit union movement during the preparedness, response and recovery stages of the COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters.

► Table 6.6. Crisis / disaster management financial support role of the credit union movement

Stage	The credit union movement
Preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a BCP and submit to NEMO. Submit fire section of BCP to Fire Department. Establish CDPCs. Organize staff drills in readiness for national disasters.
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend meetings with officials of the Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA). Adopt common strategies designed to help members cope with the effects and impact of COVID-19.
Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant to members waivers and moratoriums, from three to nine months, on loan payments. Revise the interest rates on mortgage, commercial, vehicle and agricultural loans. Accelerate the processing of patronage refund and dividends payment to eligible members. Provide ongoing support to school feeding programmes in the various communities. Donate laptops and other education devices to help members with online education for their children/wards. Donate food supplies to members who lost jobs in the hospitality sector and other self-employed persons. Purchase a special issue of government bonds to support government's efforts to stimulate the economy and to obviate the need for government to cut the salaries of public officers and credit union members. Ensure that public officers and/or members of the societies continue to service their loans and avoid loan delinquencies.



Photo compliments: National Workers Union.

▶ 7

Data presentation summary – Stakeholder consultation

This section presents the data collected from stakeholder consultations in both the public and private sectors on the COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters. Feedback was received from HR managers, unionized and non-unionized workers, trade union leaders and the DOL, and has been organized and presented in tabular format. Details of the feedback received from these stakeholder representatives are discussed in the sub-sections that follow.

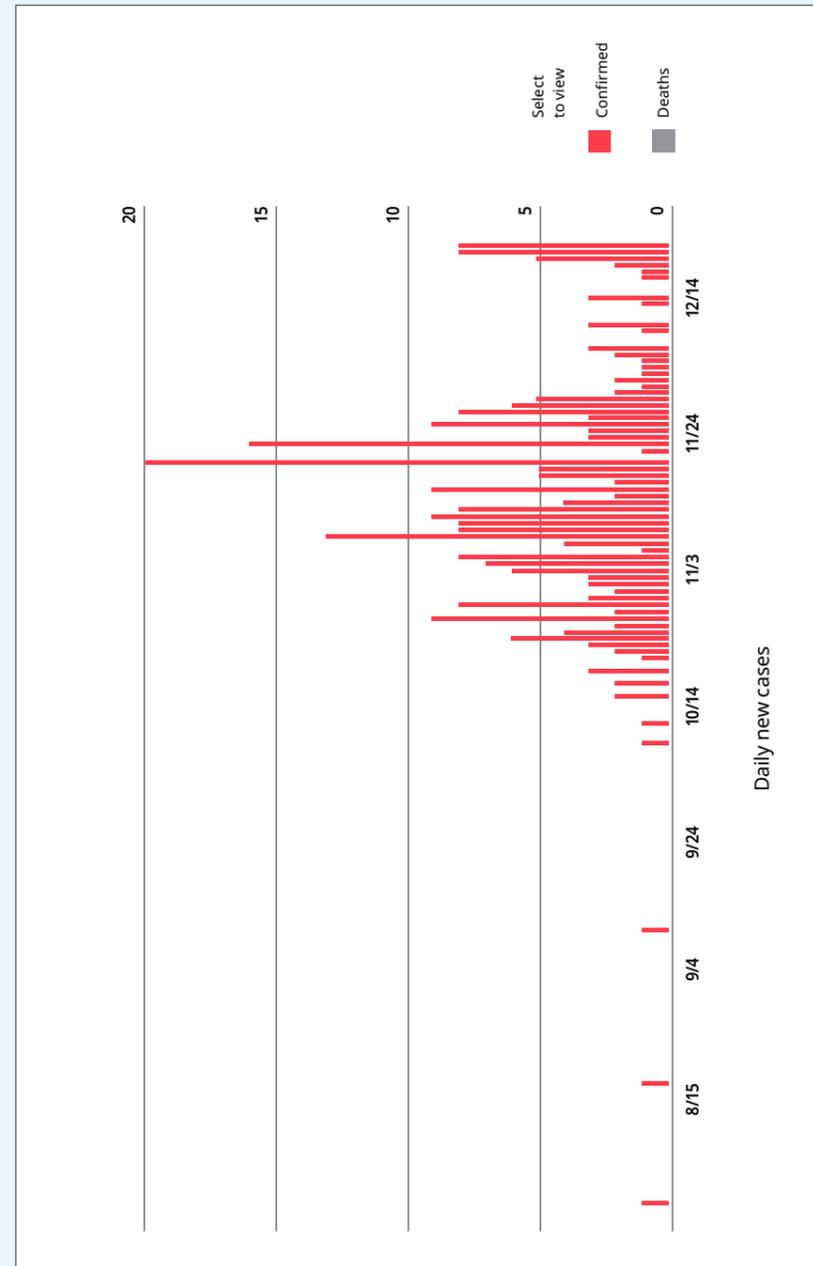
7.1 Data collected on the COVID-19 pandemic

Throughout the year, the CMO who is head of COVID-19 Command Centre, gave daily televised updates to the public on the number of persons tested for the virus. The CMO also indicated the number of confirmed cases, the total number of deaths and the number recovered. By 31st December 2020, the cumulative record of new cases in Saint Lucia stood at 353 confirmed cases, six deaths and 261 recovered persons. However, it must be noted that the data shared does not specify the total number of workers affected, nor is it disaggregated by gender.

Feedback from the Office of the Labour Commissioner also indicates that the office does not maintain data on the number of workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. It also does not maintain data on workers (disaggregated by gender) who sought assistance from the DOL.

Figure 7.1 below, illustrates reported trends on the number of COVID-19 confirmed cases, deaths or recovered patients nationally, for the period July to December 2020.

► Figure 7.1. Record of COVID-19 confirmed cases in Saint Lucia, from July to December 2020



Source: Ministry of Health and Wellness

7.1.1 Feedback from human resource managers

Data on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic was collected by obtaining feedback from HR managers from both public institutions and private companies, on a wide range of policy issues and decisions relating to business continuity. Questions were posed to the HR managers with a view to determining the strategies adopted, operational adjustments implemented, and decisions made regarding the terms and conditions for the continued employment of staff.

A total of 15 HR managers participated in the virtual meeting organized by the SLEF. Four of these managers were from public sector institutions, namely Invest Saint Lucia (ISL); the NIC; Saint Lucia Air & Seaport Authority (SLASPA); and the Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards (SLBS). Eleven of the participant managers were from private sector companies, namely: Bay Gardens Hotel; Caribbean Awning Limited; Caribbean Grains; CMA-CGM Saint Lucia Limited; J.E. Bergasse & Company Limited; KM2 Solutions; Lewis Industries; North West Limited; St. Lucia Distillers Ltd.; Sea Island Cotton Shop; and WINERRA.

Table 7.1 below presents details of the feedback received from the HR managers on the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, while the completed questionnaire is presented in Appendix V to the report.

► Table 7.1. Feedback received from human resource managers on COVID-19

No.	Question focus	COVID-19 pandemic
Q-1	<i>How did your company first learn about the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic?</i>	Through the media and additional research.
Q-2	<i>How did the company help employees cope with the initial threat of the COVID-19 pandemic?</i>	Supported employees by providing continued employment usually on reduced pay, granting soft loans where possible, keeping staff informed about the pandemic and providing material and health support. In some cases, organizations were restructured to adapt operations for the use of information technology to carry out critical functions.
Q-3	<i>Did you play any part in the early stage of national response to the COVID-19 pandemic?</i>	Participated in meetings of social partners; developed and implemented a COVID-19 Plan and updated the Business Continuity Plan.
Q-4	<i>How is the company involved in the current COVID-19 pandemic national recovery effort?</i>	Assisted with the distribution of emergency supplies / food, promoted hygienic practices, and ensured compliance with COVID-19 protocols.
Q-5	<i>What policies did the company adopt to support employees affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?</i>	Ensured employees complied with the COVID-19 protocols; adopted a staff separation policy to allow employees to work from home or in the office; and reviewed and updated processes of the Emergency Response Plan (ERP). Approved the payment of staff salaries directly to their personal bank accounts; reassigned employees exposed to the virus or asked them to work from home; and trained employees to use the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
Q-6	<i>Does the company keep gender-related statistics on employees affected by the COVID-19 pandemic who apply for and receive assistance?</i>	Most organizations do not keep gender-related statistics but many of them keep records of individual temperature tests.

No.	Question focus	COVID-19 pandemic
Q-7	What constraints limit the ability of the company to help employees affected by COVID-19 pandemic cope with the day-to-day challenges they faced?	<p>In some instances, the nature of the job did not allow certain staff to work from home, and some staff could not be transferred or retained as their functions ceased to exist.</p> <p>Some organizations found it difficult to comply with key provisions of the labour laws because of the high cost of providing adequate quantities of work equipment, purchasing and installing software and hardware to transition from public to home office, paying terminal benefits to staff made redundant, and creating a department to monitor computer tasks carried out at home office.</p> <p>It became more difficult to maintain sound employer/employee relations, as well as to interact directly with staff and exercise close supervision. Also increasingly challenging was the scheduling and managing meetings of staff and customers; maintaining self-motivated workers at home-based offices; and managing independent workers operating from home offices. It became necessary to strengthen the "work from home" policy adopted in the early stages of the crisis to cater for insurance, reporting performance evaluation, and to assign responsibility to staff for recording down time and reporting on agreed work deliverables.</p>
Q-8	What opportunities were available to companies and employees to help reduce the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic?	Organizations had to expand institutional support, transport, work tools and equipment; reorganize work processes; regularize "work from home"; update human resource policies; adopt a referral system for staff to obtain paid medical attention; supply adequate quantities of PPEs; maximize use of technology to save cost on physical office space; and improve time management by reducing travel time and work for extended hours.
Q-9	What reports have the company received from staff on economic impact on them and their households?	Staff reported loss of income due to unemployment of their spouses, children or siblings. They also had to find money to pay for childcare services and private lessons. In some cases, staff stated they had to engage in unpaid work by staying at home to care for their children, or they had to obtain extra work (another job) in order to earn additional income.

In sum, many heads of institutions in the public sector did not report any need to engage in layoffs or redundancies, because the government did not implement any major budget cuts or austerity measures. While most employers in the private sector reported facing significant loss of business, Lewis Industries, for example, reported a high demand for its services.

Depending on their revenue position, employers adopted a combination of strategies, such as: (a) the granting of paid or unpaid leave to their employees; (b) retaining staff who agree to accept a reduction in pay; (c) laying-off and rehiring staff as their financial capability improved; and (d) making some staff redundant based on the outcome of a company restructuring exercise.

7.1.2 Feedback received from unionized / non-unionized workers on COVID-19

Unionized employees have a duty and responsibility to report promptly to officials of their union, all issues of concern relating to COVID-19 or national disasters, as they happen. In the absence of union representation, non-unionized workers must report or register their complaints with the DOL. A summary of feedback received from unionized and non-unionized workers, follows.

Invariably, workers are usually the ones who will be the most affected by the consequences and impact of COVID-19 and national disasters. Some 14 employees from both the public and private sectors participated in the consultation. Eight of the employees who participated in the consultation were represented by trade unions, while six of the employees who participated in the consultations were not represented by trade unions.

The participant public sector employees were attached to Invest Saint Lucia, the NIC, SLASPA, SSDF, and SWMA. These employees are represented by the CSA, the NWU, the SLMDA, and the SLNA.

Private sector employees taking part in the consultation and who are represented by the NWU included Baron Foods, Caribbean Dispatch Services Limited, the Coconut Bay Hotel, and Saint James Club. However, those participant employees who did not have trade union representation, were attached to Bay Gardens Resorts, Caribbean Awning Limited, CMA-CGM Saint Lucia Limited, J.E. Bergasse & Company Limited, KM2 Solutions, Lewis Industries Limited, Saint James Club, Saint Lucia Distillers, Saint Lucia Reps/ Sun Tours Caribbean, Sea Island Cotton Shop, and WINERRA Limited.

Table 7.2 below, is a compilation of the workers' responses to the questionnaire on COVID-19 impacts. The completed questionnaire is presented in Appendix VII to the report.

► Table 7.2. Feedback received from human resource managers on COVID-19

No.	Question focus	COVID-19 pandemic
Q-1	First knowledge of threat	Through the local and international media.
Q-2	Help provided by unions to cope with the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic	<p>Trade union support took several forms. One activity involved meeting with employees to discuss options - such as reduction in pay, lay-offs or redundancy - to determine their preferences. The unions negotiated staffing issues with management and advised staff on the best option possible.</p> <p>Unions also requested income support for laid-off workers during the response stage, monitored rehiring practices during the recovery period to see that the laid-off workers got priority ahead of new non-unionized recruits. Unions also asked employers to allow laid-off employees to return to work where possible on a rotation basis, with modified working conditions and revised wages/salaries. They ensured that staff received personal protective equipment for work, and that managers submitted relevant staff information to NIC for them to benefit from the three-month Economic Relief Programme (ERP).</p> <p>In the initial stages, some unions provided financial assistance to members where possible, if they were retained on rotation, laid-off without pay or made redundant and were unable to meet day-to-day family commitments. They also helped workers cope with COVID-19 and discussed issues relating to job security and personal protective equipment for them.</p>

No.	Question focus	COVID-19 pandemic
Q-3	<i>Role played by unions at the response stage</i>	<p>Non-unionized workers did not benefit from union representation or assistance due to the lack of union presence in their workplaces. These workers explained that very often, they did not contact a union due to management intimidation and threats to their employment.</p> <p>Unionized workers stated that they were unaware that unions played any role at the early stages of national response. They commented that unions may be doing so quietly but did not share information with members. Several employees indicated awareness of meetings taking place between the DOL and the unions from June 2020, regarding workers who were made redundant, but noted this issue remains unresolved. They also were unaware of any engagement between the unions and government agencies to discuss government policy on the pandemic.</p> <p>In some cases, both unionized / non-unionized workers got little union support when private companies made more than 50 per cent of their non-unionized employees redundant. These workers believe that redundancy put them at a disadvantage when it came to accessing benefits from NIC going forward. Also, the NIC's ERP was a three-month, short-term assistance programme, paid for from their pension funds.</p>
Q-4	<i>What role are unions playing in the current national COVID-19 pandemic recovery effort?</i>	<p>Unionized workers stated that they were unaware of any role currently played by unions in the national recovery effort and did not believe government had invited unions to play any role in such an effort. In fact, many argued that government appeared to be doing everything within its Command Centre while excluding many important stakeholders. Generally, workers believed the union should have been playing a role and felt they needed to be more vocal about demanding it.</p> <p>Non-unionized workers claimed that they did not have any trade union support in the current COVID-19 pandemic recovery. Such workers had to rely on any support their employer / company was willing to provide. They also depended on the support of family and friends.</p>
Q-5	<i>What gender-related policies have unions adopted to help members affected by COVID-19?</i>	<p>Unionized workers were unaware of any union policies to deal with membership support. They were aware of talks between unions and management on redundancy payments due to staff but were concerned that redundant staff were re-employed on short-term contracts and at a lower wage, without union protection.</p> <p>Also, staff made redundant after March 2020 were unable to benefit from the ERP.</p> <p>Unions did not publicise overt gender-related policies in place to support members affected by COVID-19. However, some unions were known to have a bursary programme to assist members with school expenses.</p> <p>For non-unionized workers, the issue of union policy does not apply to them, so they had no choice but to "paddle their own canoe", as it were.</p>

No.	Question focus	COVID-19 pandemic
Q-6	<i>Do unions keep quantitative data (including gender statistics), on the number of members affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?</i>	<p>Many trade union members claimed to be unaware their unions kept statistics on workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some doubted they did, while others did not know or had not even thought about it.</p>
Q-7	<i>What constraints limit the ability of unions to help staff affected cope with the COVID-19 challenges?</i>	<p>Unionized workers believe the main constraint is limited financial resources.</p> <p>They are aware that most unions have a Scholarship Fund - which is used to provide annual scholarships awards to the children and wards of members - but there is little else.</p> <p>Unionized workers also maintain unions should be more proactive in helping to fashion policies at a national level, through which affected workers could access unemployment income support. While many union members understood that all unions have suffered a reduction in income as terminations and redundancies have affected membership subscriptions, these members also argued that unions should make every effort to assist members with expenses for books, uniforms, laptops, and anything related to the education of their children.</p> <p>Non-unionized workers, on the other hand, did not expect any type of assistance from trade unions, whether financial or otherwise. They tried to cope with their challenges as best as they could.</p>
Q-8	<i>What specific challenges faced by unionized/non-unionized workers in a COVID-19 environment?</i>	<p>All workers identified the lack of finances to purchase electronic devices / internet services for school children as a major challenge. They pointed to loss of wages, salaries and benefits as the reasons they were unable to meet their unavoidable monthly expenses. They also noted that the money provided under the ERP, sponsored by NIC, was inadequate. At the same time, they noted that contributors could not afford to deplete money out of the National Pension Fund. They also observed that lack of a government income support programme also made it difficult for workers to cope with their financial obligations.</p>
Q-9	<i>What opportunities are available for trade unions to help members affected by COVID-19?</i>	<p>Workers believe unions should have been able to mobilize assistance from regional and/or international agencies, and private organizations, among others. They felt unions should liaise with government, the NIC and employers to set up a National Disaster Fund and establish a National Trade Union Disaster Fund to be managed by the TUF. They also recommended that each union maintain its own DAF.</p>
Q-10	<i>Do unions maintain records relating to the economic impact of COVID-19 on members and their households?</i>	<p>Unionized workers were unclear as to whether their unions kept records about the economic impact on members and their households. A few workers stated that they had drawn the attention of union officials to the economic impact of COVID-19 on them and their households, but many workers had chosen not to share any information about their plight with their union.</p>

7.1.3 Feedback from trade unions leaders on COVID-19

The following sub-sections highlight responses received from participant trade union leaders about their involvement in the national response and recovery effort to the COVID-19 pandemic, as illustrated in Table 7.3. A copy of the completed questionnaire is shown as Appendix IX to the report.

► Table 7.3. Feedback from trade union leaders on COVID-19

No.	Question focus	COVID-19 pandemic
Q-1	<i>What was the involvement of Trade Unions during the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic and as it progressed to the recovery stages?</i>	Trade unions leaders reported that they first learnt of the COVID-19 pandemic from local or international news. Some confirmed that they were invited by the Ministry of Health and Wellness or the Ministry of Tourism to attend meetings with NEMAC and other social partners, to receive briefings on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders of the SLMDA and SLNA confirmed that as frontline workers, they were involved in both a professional and union capacity from the early stages of the pandemic up to the present. Other union leaders indicated that their officers had not participated in any of the meetings with NEMAC and the social partners.
Q-2	<i>Was the participation well prepared and coordinated?</i>	Trade union leaders agreed that the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Tourism had done a good job in coordinating the participation of trade unions in COVID-19 pandemic preparedness, response, and recovery activities.
Q-3	<i>Were unions able to include their concerns in response to planning and implementation?</i>	Leaders of the SLMDA and the SLNA stated that as frontline workers, they helped design public health policy, provided feedback on draft policies, assisted in putting health protocols together, and advised the government on PPE needs. While some other leaders confirmed that they had the opportunity to raise their concerns, they indicated that it was to a limited extent. A few unions stated that while their leaders have raised the concerns of the union, the authorities have not engaged them in any consultation.
Q-4	<i>Were unions able to include their concerns in recovery planning and implementation?</i>	As frontline workers, leaders of the SLMDA and the SLNA advised government on re-purposing the Victoria Hospital to serve as a "Respiratory Hospital" and to manage COVID-19 cases. SLTU leaders confirmed they were able to raise their concerns with the Ministry of Education but stated that it was to a limited extent. A few unions indicated that while their leaders have raised the concerns of the union, the authorities have not engaged them in any consultation. Nevertheless, all trade unions reported being active in ensuring that their members comply with the public health policy. As leaders, the trade unionists encouraged all union members to follow the established protocols adopted by the Ministry of Health and Wellness for their own safety, re-sensitized the members and sent them reminders.
Q-5	<i>Do unions have quantitative data on how many of their members / other workers were/are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?</i>	Leaders of the SLMDA and SLNA reported that they have data on members affected by COVID-19. They confirmed that three members each had been affected to date. All the other unions indicated that they did not keep any up-to-date records of cases, since this is a health matter.

No.	Question focus	COVID-19 pandemic
Q-6	<i>What are the specific challenges and/or opportunities that workers and their representatives face?</i>	Trade unions representing frontline workers indicated that one of the main challenges their members faced was the length of time in getting accustomed to the newly supplied PPE. Also, due to staff shortages at the Respiratory Hospital, the existing staff experienced work fatigue from many long hours of duty. Other challenges included difficulty in communicating with patients, and physical strain suffered from overwork and continuous public bashing. An issue of great concern was the inconsistent deployment of the limited available staff, resulting in poor resource management. However, trade unions had opportunities to negotiate special arrangements for their members. For example, trade unions representing frontline workers were able to negotiate for staff to stay at a designated hotel when on duty, to limit contact with family and friends. They also could encourage the hiring of new doctors and nurses and the rehiring of medical and nursing retirees as the need arose. Trade unions have supported the policy of staff working both at home and in office, as well as the use of modern technology to enhance communication, improve management and conduct virtual meetings, training and/or conferences.
Q-7	<i>What has been the economic impact on affected members and their households?</i>	TUF trade unions reported an increase in the loss of jobs, reduction in income and higher childcare costs. Members have had to rearrange work schedules to accommodate their children being at home for an extended period. Workers also had to place a greater focus on safety and health in the workplace, make greater use of carpooling, as well as reduce travel by public transport due to slower travel times by bus and higher costs. Non-TUF trade unions reported that their workers were entitled to medical healthcare at the expense of the government. In addition, members of these trade unions benefitted from separate group medical insurance schemes.
Q-8	<i>What are the (social) protections (such as for unemployment), guaranteed by law, and how they were implemented in practice during the crisis?</i>	In October 2004, Saint Lucia adopted a Social Protection Policy, which includes interventions from public, private and voluntary organizations, as well as informal networks, to support individuals, families, households and communities in their efforts to prevent, manage and overcome a defined set of risks and vulnerabilities. The policy seeks to achieve the minimum standard of living for those most in need. It also aims to provide "a clear framework for enhancing equity, efficiency and transparency in the delivery of social protection services" and "to promote synergies among agencies, programmes, and interventions". One trade union leader argued that the national social protection mechanisms are plagued by inertia, in that these programmes tend to be inactive or to remain unchanged for quite some time. Saint Lucia's social protection programmes include the provision of agricultural input subsidies, a school feeding programme, or a subsidized school transportation programme, and youth employment programmes. Of note: the COVID-19 pandemic brought all workers and their trade unions to the stark realization that the NIC Act makes no provision for the payment of unemployment insurance to workers who lost their jobs due to redundancy arising out of a pandemic or national disaster.

No.	Question focus	COVID-19 pandemic
Q-9	<i>What are the constraints that limit the ability of trade unions to help members affected by the COVID-19 pandemic cope with the day-to-day challenges they faced?</i>	<p>Most of the trade unions reported that they had limited finances and staff capacity to provide financial assistance, alternative employment advice and other institutional support to members. Those unions with finances accumulated in their special funds found that those budgets were depleted very quickly. A second major constraint was having limited staff to provide psycho-social or counselling support, and to advise members on entitlements to be paid by their employers in cases of lay-offs or redundancies.</p> <p>Most trade unions, particularly in the private sector, negotiated with employers for entitlements of payments of wages and benefits due to their members who were being laid-off or made redundant. In certain cases, some of the trade unions provided social services and direct financial assistance to their members from Special Disaster Funds.</p>

7.1.4 Feedback from the Labour Commissioner

The DOL is responsible for the coordination of the industrial relations services provided by the government. Table 7.4 is a summary of responses received from the Labour Commissioner to the study's questions about the department's involvement in the national response and recovery effort in the COVID-19 pandemic. A copy of the completed questionnaire is presented as Appendix XII to the report.

► **Table 7.4. Feedback from the Labour Commissioner on COVID-19**

No.	COVID-19 Question	Response
Q-1	<i>How did DOL first learn about the threat of the global COVID-19 pandemic?</i>	Through the media.
Q-2	<i>How did DOL help workers cope with the initial threats of the COVID-19 pandemic?</i>	Section 148 of the Labour Act was amended to allow for the extension of the lay-off period to a further 12 weeks. The extension allowed employers time to recover from the initial impact before initiating redundancies, while the employees' continuity of service was not interrupted.
Q-3	<i>What part did DOL play in the early stage of the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic?</i>	The DOL engaged in consultations with the Cabinet of Ministers, workers and their representatives, employers and their representatives, and civil society institutions.
Q-4	<i>How is DOL involved in the current COVID-19 pandemic national recovery effort?</i>	The DOL is not directly involved. It continues to work with employees and employers by providing legal advice on the provisions of the law with respect to the cessation of business because of the pandemic.
Q-5	<i>What is DOL's policy on providing support to workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?</i>	The DOL has no direct policy on providing support to workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

No.	COVID-19 Question	Response
Q-6	<i>Does the DOL keep gender-related statistics on workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic applying for and receiving assistance?</i>	The DOL keeps statistics only in relation to the total number of employees who are formally registered as being dismissed as a result of COVID-19 related-redundancies. At the time of this report, the total number of registered redundant employees was 4,715; however, this is not a disaggregated figure.
Q-7	<i>What challenges does DOL face in coping with needs of workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?</i>	The main challenges faced by the DOL are in the areas of job placement and enforcement, which would enable the immediate payment of termination benefits by employers to employees.
Q-8	<i>What opportunities are available to the DOL to help workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?</i>	None currently.
Q-9	<i>What reports have DOL received relating to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on workers and their households?</i>	None.

7.2 Data collected on national disasters 2017-2020

The consultant also collected data from the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO), on the national disaster experience in Saint Lucia between 2017 and 2020. Under the COVID-19 (Prevention and Control) Act, the Command Centre within the Ministry of Health and Wellness is assigned responsibility for the management of pandemic related activities, while NEMO retains full responsibility for the management of disaster-related activities, in keeping with provisions of the Disaster Management Act.

According to NEMO, Saint Lucia did not experience any national disasters that caused major damage to life and property between 2017 and 2020. However, the agency was unable to provide any aggregated data on persons affected by national disasters during the period under review.

Table 7.5 provides details of trends in disasters on NEMO's records for the calendar years 2017 through to 2020, under the categories of storms, floods, landslides, earthquakes, dengue, and COVID-19. The completed questionnaire is presented in Appendix VIII to the report.

► Table 7.5. Incidence of national disasters in Saint Lucia from 2017 to 2020

No.	Disaster	2017	2018	2019	2020
1.	Storms		Hurricane Kirk on 27th September 2018, caused extensive damage to the agricultural sector, affecting the livelihoods of several farmers.	Saint Lucia has been in the cone of uncertainty for many tropical cyclone events but was not impacted significantly for 2019.	
2.	Floods	Downtown Castries flooded many times and impacted the livelihood of several vendors and small businesses, but data has not been disaggregated.	Downtown Castries flooded many times and impacted the livelihood of several vendors and small businesses, but data has not been disaggregated.	Downtown Castries flooded many times and impacted the livelihood of several vendors and small businesses, but data has not been disaggregated.	Floods occurred in Dennerly, Micoud, Laborie, and Castries in 2020. They impacted the livelihoods of several persons, but data has not been disaggregated.
3.	Landslides	No information on the number of landslides for that period.	No information on the number of landslides for that period.	No information on the number of landslides for that period.	No information on the number of landslides for that period.
4.	Earthquakes	Several earthquakes recorded but no damages / losses reported.	Several earthquakes recorded but no damages / losses reported.	Several earthquakes recorded but no damages / losses reported.	Several earthquakes recorded but no damages / losses reported.
5.	Dengue*	57 cases.	102 cases.	20 cases.	801 case.s
6.	COVID-19				287 cases and 5 deaths on NEMO's record, as of 21st December 2020.

Source: *NEMO Secretariat, 21st December 2020, and *Ministry of Health and Wellness Weekly Syndromic Surveillance Report.

NEMO provided data on the trends in national disasters from 2017 to 2020. However, the NEMO official was unable to provide details of the number of male and female persons affected by disasters for the calendar years under review, as the data available was not disaggregated by gender. In the case of dengue fever, the Ministry of Health and Wellness declared an outbreak of dengue fever on 26th August 2020. The Ministry reported that as of 21st December 2020, the country had recorded some 801 confirmed cases and five deaths.

7.2.1 Feedback from human resource managers on national disasters 2017-2020

The 15 HR managers also provided valuable insights into the many challenges faced in respect of national disasters between 2017 and 2020, as summarized in Table 7.6 below. The completed questionnaire is presented in Appendix VI to the report.

► Table 7.6. Feedback from human resource managers on national disasters

No.	Question focus	National disasters, 2017 to 2020
Q-1	<i>Role of public / private organizations in climate-related hazards.</i>	They prepare and submit an Annual Disaster Plan to NEMO for approval and submit the fire section of the disaster plan to the Fire Service for auditing.
Q-2	<i>Support to employees to address social and labour issues.</i>	They provide financial and institutional support to the affected employees in the form of first aid training, salary advances, concessionary loans, and special donations to employees and their families.
Q-3	<i>Role in conducting Post-disaster Needs Assessments.</i>	They are only required to activate internal processes to assess damages to physical facilities or human resources and to document corporate needs.
Q-4	<i>Lessons learnt from the management of past and current disaster recovery processes.</i>	Each organization / company is required to compile an approved Disaster Plan; to assign trained personnel specific responsibilities; to conduct annual drills; and to activate the plan whenever NEMO issues a disaster warning or advisory.
Q-5	<i>Sensitization and education of employees on disaster preparedness, response and recovery.</i>	Staff meetings held; technology used to communicate and train staff; internal fire drills organized; staff advised on safeguarding equipment and supplies and maintaining up-to-date insurance policies for office tools and equipment.
Q-6	<i>Satisfaction with the institutional framework for managing national disasters.</i>	All human resource managers expressed general satisfaction with the advice given by NEMAC or NEMO and indicated that they also found the level of communication provided immensely helpful.
Q-7	<i>Concerns about the operations of NEMO with regard to preparations for disasters, provision of shelters, distribution of emergency supplies and provision of housing and other assistance to victims.</i>	The only concern highlighted was the level of political involvement in the distribution of emergency supplies and the provision of short-term housing and other assistance to victims of national disasters.
Q-8	<i>Social mitigation measures in place to reduce the impacts of disasters on employees</i>	Measures included reducing hours of work, allowing staff time off to take care of domestic matters, and issuing letters to financial institutions in respect of salary deductions for the payment of loans and hire purchase items.
Q-9	<i>Keeping gender-related statistics on employees who apply for and receive disaster assistance.</i>	Only a few of the participating human resource managers confirmed their organizations or companies kept gender-related statistics on employees who applied for and received disaster assistance.
Q-10	<i>Ways in which to improve future support to employees affected by major natural or man-made disasters.</i>	Training staff to enhance their ability to work remotely in the new normal. Accelerating the use of technology to manage data and hold virtual meetings, interviews, training and conferences, as well as updating human resource policies and protocols for disaster management.

7.2.2 Feedback from unionized / non-unionized employees on national disasters

Eight of the employees who participated in the consultations were represented by trade unions, while six of them were not represented by trade unions. Table 7.7 below, provides their responses to questions posed on national disasters issues. A copy of the completed questionnaire is shown as Appendix VIII.

► Table 7.7. Feedback from human resource managers on national disasters

No.	Question focus	National disasters, 2017 to 2020
Q-1	What role do the unions play in climate-related hazards?	Workers interviewed were generally unaware that unions played any role in helping to mitigate climate change hazards.
Q-2	What assistance have you received from your union to help address social and labour issues related to national disasters?	None of the workers were aware that the unions were helping their members address social and labour issues related to national disasters. They felt that union officials tend to focus on industrial relations issues such as overtime, while paying little attention to social issues.
Q-3	Do unions have quantitative data on the number of their members affected by the serious climate related hazards in the last three years?	Members reportedly did not request help on social matters such as flooding in the community or damage to the home of a worker, since the trade union movement has not established any policy to help members who have been affected by a natural or man-made disaster.
Q-4	What lessons can unions learn from the management of past and current disaster recovery processes?	Unionized employees stated that they did not think unions have kept quantitative data in the recent past or that they are doing so now. The general feeling is that the issue of data collection, storage and management is seldom addressed at the level of the membership.
Q-5	Do unions sensitize and educate their members on disaster preparedness, response, and recovery?	Unionized employees are of the view that since the unions have not been involved in national disaster management or mitigation, they could not have learnt anything from the disaster management and the recovery process. Workers claimed that they had never participated in any kind of organized sensitization or education activity on disaster preparedness, response actions, or COVID-19 measures, whether through seminars or any other activity. However, they believe that all unions should link up with government agencies to organize such sessions on national disasters.
Q-6	How satisfied are you with national preparations and provision of shelters, supplies and services for care, social mitigation measures to reduce the impacts and to increase the coping capacity and preparedness and the like, in the event of any type of major future natural or man-made disasters and health treats?	Both unionized and non-unionized employees claimed that they were not fully satisfied with national preparation and operation of emergency shelters, especially when it comes to the distribution of emergency supplies and the timeliness of information sharing to the public. They also are dissatisfied with the involvement of politicians in the distribution of emergency supplies to victims of national disasters. There have been many complaints among ordinary citizens (including workers), about the distribution of emergency supplies, particularly food and home repair materials.

No.	Question focus	National disasters, 2017 to 2020
Q-7	What social mitigation measures do unions have in place to reduce the impacts of disasters on members and to increase their capacity to cope with disaster preparedness, response, and recovery?	Unionized and non-unionized employees admitted to being unaware of any mitigation measures put in place by unions to reduce the impacts of disasters on citizens, as well as to increase the organization's capacity to cope with disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. They also were unaware the unions had put in place any policies to reduce the impact of national disasters on individual members and workers, generally.
Q-8	Do unions keep gender-related statistics on members who apply for and receive disaster assistance?	Unionized and non-unionized staff were unaware as to whether unions kept any gender-related statistics on members who apply for and receive disaster assistance. They felt that since women comprise most of the union membership, disasters will have more impact on women members than men.
Q-9	How can unions improve future support to employees affected by major natural or man-made disasters?	Unions must assess members' needs, improve communication with workers, and share information on the type of support they can provide. Workers should keep unions informed of their needs. Each union should establish a disaster fund and allocate financial resources to provide disaster support to workers. They also should be more proactive in helping members access help from government agencies and/or their employers.

7.2.3 Feedback from trade unions leaders on national disasters

The Office of the Prime Minister, through the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO), is responsible for coordinating the participation of all organizations - including trade unions - in the preparedness, response and recovery activities relating to national disaster management. For the purposes of the assessment, the consultant customized and posed up to 20 questions on disaster management to trade union leaders operating in both the public and private sectors.

The trade union leaders were questioned on the movement's involvement in the response and recovery efforts for national disasters, as well as for disaster management and preparedness, and their feedback has been summarized, organized, and presented in this sub-section. Their responses are presented in Table 7.8, while the completed questionnaire is shown as Appendix X in the report.

► Table 7.8. Feedback from trade union leaders on national disasters

No.	Question focus	National disasters, 2017 to 2020
Q-1	How effective was/is the Saint Lucia National Emergency Management Plan (including relevant national and/or sectoral plans), in addressing social and labour issues arising in the course of (a) the current health crisis, or (b) recent climate hazards / events?	The trade unions were aware of the National Emergency Management Plan and other relevant national and sectoral plans. They also were aware of the need for all public institutions to collaborate with NEMO to address social and labour issues arising during (a) the current health crisis, and (b) recent climate hazards / events.

No.	Question focus	National disasters, 2017 to 2020
Q-2	<i>What was the involvement of trade unions in planning for and response to climate-related events in the past three years?</i>	Saint Lucia had not experienced any major climate-related events between 2017 and 2019. Therefore, trade unions were not required to participate in planning for and responding to any climate-related events in that period.
Q-3	<i>What are the impacts of severe weather conditions in the Commonwealth of Saint Lucia?</i>	<p>Leave is normally cancelled for union members who are frontline workers but there may be cases where partners are affected. As frontline workers, doctors, nurses, police, and emergency medical service personnel spend longer hours on duty.</p> <p>Some teachers suffered the loss of teaching materials due to flooding, which put a financial burden on them to rebuild their stock of teaching materials. Classes also are disrupted whenever the schools designated as emergency shelters must be used.</p> <p>Many trade union members function as volunteers in DDCs, helping with the distribution of emergency supplies. In the aftermath of a national disaster, a long period of downtime tends to be very disruptive.</p>
Q-4	<i>Was/is there worker representation on the National Institutional Framework for National Disaster Management, and on regional bodies such as the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)?</i>	<p>Both TUF-member and non-member trade unions do not have permanent representation on any of the local and regional disaster emergency management bodies. However, they may be invited to attend meetings of the local committees from time to time, on a need-to-know basis.</p> <p>The non-TUF trade unions also do not have permanent representation on any of the local and regional disaster emergency management bodies.</p>
Q-5	<i>Were/are trade unions involved in Post Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNAs) or any other related assessment processes?</i>	None of the trade unions are formally required to assist NEMO and the DDCs to carry out PDNAs at the national level. However, trade unions carry out post-disaster assessments within their organizations to determine the level of damage to physical assets such as office buildings, machinery, tools and equipment.
Q-6	<i>What lessons can be learnt from the management of past and current disaster recovery processes?</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The need for unions to ensure that essential workers prepare their households for disasters, work in a personal capacity within the DDCs, and are trained in shelter management and inspection. 2. The need for unions to be more proactive if they wish to participate in the consultative process. However, the leaders felt the relevant public institutions do not have enough dialogue with social partners and need to encourage other views. They also felt that NEMO should hold post-mortem sessions at the end of each hurricane season to identify and address operational shortcomings. 3. The need for unions to be more proactive in formulating policy by developing position papers on key issues. Unions also should be able to play a more active role in mobilizing external technical and financial assistance by developing policy proposals for their regional and international partners on national disaster or crisis management.

No.	Question focus	National disasters, 2017 to 2020
Q-7	<i>Are the workers and citizens in general being adequately sensitized and educated on disaster preparedness, response actions, COVID-19 measures, and other related issues?</i>	<p>Respondents noted that trade unions have helped to sensitize and educate members in a limited way but not to the desired level. There is a great deal of room for improvement.</p> <p>NEMO personnel conduct worker sensitization and education sessions on disaster preparedness, response actions, and on COVID-19 measures. However, workers / citizens have not always paid attention or complied with requirements. Respondents also noted that sensitization and education activities are carried out only when events are imminent. They maintain there is need for greater effort in public education, as well as more in-depth training on the Education Act for all schools.</p> <p>The Ministry of Education has a designated officer and schools have developed Disaster Plans and carry out disaster drills.</p> <p>At the national level, the establishment of health and safety committees in the workplace is a requirement of the Labour Act, and a provision of collective agreements. However, many public agencies and private companies have not established such committees in place.</p>
Q-8	<i>What is the level of satisfaction with national preparations, provision of shelters, supplies and service for care, social mitigation measures to reduce disaster impacts, and to increase the coping capacity and preparedness, in the event of any type of major future natural or man-made disasters and health threats?</i>	<p>Generally, trade unions are satisfied with the national institutional framework in place, given limited resources available to undertake health or disaster emergency operations. Those unions with frontline workers always hope for the best, engage in ongoing dialogue with management given the resource constraints and the status of the hospital, which has a limit of about 10 patients for major casualties. Any number over that will overwhelm the system.</p> <p>The leaders also are of the view that NEMO is used as a place for assigning persons who are not needed elsewhere but overall, the staff are well trained for disaster management.</p>
Q-9	<i>How knowledgeable are workers' organizations about regional activities and initiatives relating to disaster / crisis risk preparedness and management?</i>	Trade union leaders indicated they did not receive any reports from NEMO or NEMAC on regional initiatives. They also pointed to a lack of meaningful dialogue between government and the social partners on issues related to disaster and crisis management. The process for disseminating and/or sharing information with unions as a critical stakeholder has not been regularized. They highlighted the need to re-examine the inherent institutional arrangements for disaster management.
Q-10	<i>What are the concerns of unions about NEMO's operations, with regard to preparations for disasters, provision of shelters, distribution of emergency supplies and provision of housing and other assistance to victims?</i>	Trade union leaders pointed out that currently, there are no formal arrangements for unions to be involved in any NEMO institution. In recent years, the unions have not had any major disaster victims reported among their members.

No.	Question focus	National disasters, 2017 to 2020
Q-11	<i>What are the social mitigation measures unions have in place to reduce the impacts of disasters on members, and to increase their capacity to cope with disaster preparedness, response, and recovery?</i>	<p>Institutions such as the DDCs, NEMAC, and NEMO make up an effective framework for policy making, planning and coordination of national preparedness, response, and recovery activities.</p> <p>Government issuance of PPE greatly improved the work environment and the standard protocols in place help with both disaster response and recovery.</p> <p>While trade unions have some social assistance programmes in place, they admit to having limited financial and human resource capacity to help affected members cope with major disaster preparedness, response, and recovery issues in post-disaster situations.</p>
Q-12	<i>What is the union's ability to improve future support to members affected by national disasters / crisis?</i>	<p>Leaders agreed that unions need to be much more proactive, to train members and to seek technical assistance support and institutional strengthening. They also felt unions need to consolidate their strengths and speak with one voice to demand a more prominent role in national crisis and disaster management.</p>

7.2.4 Feedback from Department of Labour

In addition to its role of coordinating the industrial relations services of the government, the DOL is involved in building resilience, albeit in a limited way. Responses received from the Labour Commissioner to the study's questions about the department's involvement in national disaster response and recovery efforts have been summarized, organized, and presented in Table 7.9 below. A copy of the COVID-19 questionnaire completed by the Labour Commissioner is shown as Appendix XI in the report.

► **Table 7.9. Feedback from the Labour Commissioner on national disasters**

No.	COVID-19 Question	Response
Q-1	<i>What role has DOL played in climate related hazards in the last three years?</i>	The DOL has been engaged in consultations with the ILO and inter-governmental agencies on building resilience.
Q-2	<i>What assistance does DOL provide workers to address social and labour issues arising out of national disasters?</i>	None currently.
Q-3	<i>What role does the DOL play in the conduct of Post Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNAs)?</i>	None currently.

No.	COVID-19 Question	National disasters, 2017 to 2020
Q-4	<i>What lessons have the DOL learnt from the management of past and current disaster recovery processes?</i>	Not currently.
Q-5	<i>How does the DOL sensitize and educate workers on disaster preparedness, response and recovery?</i>	Not currently included as part of the DOL's mandate.
Q-6	<i>How satisfied is the DOL with the institutional framework in place for national disaster management?</i>	No response.
Q-7	<i>What are the DOL's concerns about current arrangements regarding preparations for disasters, provision of shelters, distribution of emergency supplies and provision or housing and other assistance to victims?</i>	Not currently included as part of the DOL's mandate.
Q-8	<i>What social mitigation measures does DOL have in place to reduce the impacts of disasters on citizens and to increase its disaster preparedness, response and recovery coping capacity?</i>	None.
Q-9	<i>Does DOL keep gender-related statistics on workers applying for and receiving disaster assistance?</i>	No.
Q-10	<i>How can DOL improve future support to workers affected by major natural or man-made disasters?</i>	By collaborating with other government agencies in establishing public employment programmes.



8

Study findings on COVID-19 and national disasters

As defined in Section 1 of the report, the word “effect” means an immediate change which is brought about as a result of a human action taken by an individual or group. It also applies to the consequences of a natural action arising from processes of the earth. Analysis of the findings of the data presented in Section 7 concentrates on the public health and socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as on national disasters from 2017 to 2020.

8.1 Public health effects of COVID-19 and national disasters

Researchers describe the coronavirus as not just a public health crisis but an ecological disaster. According to the leaders of trade unions surveyed in this report, the COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters have had both positive and negative public health effects on the trade union movement. Table 8.1 below, summarizes the main public health effects observed in this regard.

► Table 8.1. Public health effects of COVID-19 / national disasters on trade unions

No.	Public health issues	Effect on the trade union movement
1	<i>Adherence to safety and health protocols.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Union leaders/members were forced to make use of PPEs. ▶ They had to modify their interactions with each other, employers and government officials in compliance with protocols put in place for the protection of the safety and health of workers and citizens.
2	<i>Accelerated use of modern technology.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Trade unions complied with the social distancing health protocol by reducing the use of face-to-face approach to meetings, conferences, training or consultations. ▶ They adopt measures to expedite the use of new technology such as the application of new techniques improve their day-to-day operations. ▶ New technological approaches used include holding virtual meetings, conferences, training and consultations using skype, zoom or team meeting platforms.

No.	Public health issues	Effect on the trade union movement
3	<i>Observing hygienic practices.</i>	The unions and the employers collaborated on hygienic practices required to comply with the national safety and health protocols put in place by government. Trade unions helped to create a greater awareness among their members of the hygienic practices that they need to observe and had to be more vigilant in monitoring conditions in the workplace to ensure that management put facilities in place that would enable workers to maintain proper hygienic standards.
4	<i>Improved methods of communication.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Union officials replaced traditional forms of verbal communication to take advantage of devices such as mobile telephones and landline phone to enhance daily conversation. ▶ In written communication unions leaders replaced the use of long letters with ongoing short exchange of messages via messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, twitter, Instagram, tok-tok and face book laced with diagrams, photographs, figures, charts, tables and other illustrations.
5	<i>Break in adherence to the democratic process.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ At least two unions had to break adherence to the democratic process by re-scheduling the holding of their biennial conventions and electing officers to new executives in order to comply with the requirement to limit the size of persons assembling in one location.
6	<i>Unfair treatment of employees.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Unions became aware that a few unscrupulous employers used the opportunity to take advantage of the virus situation to violate the rights of their workers particularly those who were non-unionized. These employers assigned employees (whom they knew were vulnerable), to work in exposed areas with little or no PPE. This meant that to keep their jobs, the workers had to take unnecessary risks, continue working in unsafe and unhealthy environments, incur additional expenses to procure their own PPEs. ▶ Furthermore, these employers made no arrangements to provide the workers with any of the personal protective equipment (PPEs) they needed and did not ensure that the workers observed the national protocols.
7	<i>Workplace stress.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Workers were insecure in their jobs, required to work long hours under situations of uncertainty, are fearful of losing their jobs and tended to suffer from workplace stress. ▶ Depending on the nature of the tasks performed, workers reported suffering from either physical, mental or psychological stress.

8.2 Socio-economic effects of COVID-19 and national disasters

The respondent (leaders and members of trade unions) noted that the COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters have had both positive and negative socio-economic effects on the trade union movement.

Table 8.2 below, summarizes the main socio-economic effects highlighted in this regard.

► **Table 8.2. Summary of socio-economic effects of COVID-19 on the trade union movement**

No.	Socio-economic issues	Effect on the trade union movement
1	<i>Membership and revenue stability of public sector unions.</i>	Unions representing public sector workers did not suffer from a significant decline in membership and revenue because central government and public agencies did not engage in retrenchment of public officers.
2	<i>Improved expenditure management.</i>	The loss of significant amounts of monthly revenue meant that the trade unions needed to find creative ways of managing their revenue and sustaining their operations. One method is the application of technology, which made it more economical for the trade unions to cut cost when holding annual general meetings, biennial conferences or member consultations. The unions also had to consider the computerization of the accounting and finance processes for planning and reporting purposes.
3	<i>Membership and revenue loss instability of public / private sector unions.</i>	<p>Unions representing private sector workers (particularly in the tourism), suffered from major decline in membership and revenue because several employers in the private sector restructured to downsize their operations mostly due to loss of business. As a result, these employers sent many unionized and non-unionized employees on paid or unpaid vacation leave, laid-off or made others redundant. Those employees who were retained on staff had no choice between accepting a reduction in pay or forgoing pay increases already agreed with the unions.</p> <p>These decisions and actions by public and private sector employers resulted in many of the trade unions losing large numbers of their membership at one time. These actions also dealt a very telling blow on local trade unions in that they suffered significant decline in monthly revenues.</p>
4	<i>Reversal of economic gains.</i>	Unions representing private sector workers found difficulty in ensuring that employers implement the provisions of several of the recently signed collective agreements with unions. Also, private sector unions and their members had to compromise by agreeing to forgo pay increases and give up long standing allowances or benefits negotiated over the years because most of the employers had lost the financial ability to pay.
5	<i>Loss of negotiated increases in pay and benefits.</i>	Before COVID-19, many trade unions had negotiated increases in pay and benefits for their members, but the provisions of the new Collective Agreement had not been implemented at the time. With COVID-19 cases on the rise, employers have been claiming loss of business and inability to pay. This meant that the unions had to convince members to forgo the implementation of the increases in pay and benefits due to them.

8.3 Impact of national response actions on trade unions

As used in this report, the word “impact” refers to the long-term results of policy decisions or actions taken at the national level by public and private sector officials and employers to address the many challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic or national disasters. Whereas the effect of COVID-19 or national disaster is considered to have immediate effects on trade unions, the impact of COVID-19 or national disaster response and recovery actions on trade unions can only be determined in the long-term.

This section examines the impact on trade unions of national policy decisions made and response actions taken by officials of public institutions in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic or national disasters, as summarized in Table 8.3.

► Table 8.3. Impact of national response actions on trade unions

No.	Response actions	Impact on the trade union movements
1	<i>Declaration of a State of Emergency.</i>	<p>SOE severely restricted the movements and assembly of trade union leaders and union members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Essential service workers, particularly those on the frontline were given special passes. ▶ Under the curfew guidelines, union leaders could not carry out industrial relations activities in the traditional manner such as such as conducting face-to-face meetings or negotiations with employers, handling grievance at the workplace, holding annual general meetings of members. ▶ Posed difficulties for workers in performing assigned duties where face-to-face contact, personal interaction between workers and their co-workers or with customers are required to be effective. ▶ Delayed the holding of biennial conventions and election of executive officers of two unions meant a shorten term of office for the new executive, and less time to complete their planned programmes. Delay in service delivery could have resulted in low productivity, poor health and economic activity, and an increase in poverty and hunger. ▶ Union offices had to remain closed in compliance with the national curfew and during that time, members could not access services provided by the union.
2	<i>Enactment of new legislation.</i>	<p>Key stakeholders complained that enactment of the COVID-19 (Prevention and Control) Bill ought to be delayed to allow government more time for consultation. While the movement chose not to formally comment on specific provisions of the bill, issues of concern which arose include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Access to the confidential records of citizens and workers. ▶ Right to consent before the release or transfer of confidential health records to other parties. ▶ Violation of individual rights with respect to the exercise of powers to search, detain and arrest. ▶ One negative impact of the new legislation, is that the RSLPF had to deploy officers islandwide to ensure citizens (including workers), comply with the provisions of the Act.

No.	Response actions	Impact on the trade union movements
3	<i>Modified governance institutional framework.</i>	Cabinet deemed the institutional framework established under the Disaster Management Act inadequate for the management of a health pandemic. Cabinet established a Command Centre within the Ministry of Health to manage activities related to the pandemic but made no provision for the participation of the trade union movement on the Advisory Committee. This lack of participation created discontent among union leaders because the main focus of the Command Centre is on safety and health issues while industrial issues do not feature high on the agenda.
4	<i>Adopt health protocol</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Social distancing ▶ Wear masks in public ▶ Hand washing ▶ Use of PPEs ▶ Few persons assembly 	<p>Impact of the health protocols on trade union leaders and union members include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Resorted to virtual methods of interaction barriers to comply with the social distancing protocol. ▶ Create awareness among leaders and members to comply with provisions of health protocols. ▶ Ensured that employers supplied adequate numbers of personal protective equipment to staff. ▶ Ensured that employers updated their cleaning regimes and upgraded hygienic facilities. ▶ Moved to hold more virtual events like AGMs, training, biennial conferences or meetings.
5	<i>Approved policies</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Closure of borders ▶ Economic shutdown ▶ Closure of schools ▶ Virtual activities ▶ Work from home 	<p>Impact of the national policies on trade union leaders and union members are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reduced visitor arrivals and virus cases but restricted the movement of union officials. ▶ Business closed/downsized resulting staff lay-offs/redundancy and union revenue loss. ▶ SLTU negotiated with MOE for teacher training and devices for virtual teaching and learning. ▶ Used apps such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Tik-Tok, and Twitter among others, for virtual communication. ▶ Supported adoption of a “work from home” policy but need to negotiate its strengthening. ▶ Forced workers to improve their ICT skills and become more technologically literate.
6	<i>Emergency Management Plan (EMP)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Required to prepare, activate, and implement a COVID-19 Emergency Management Plan (EMP). ▶ Monitored employer activation / execution of the COVID-19 Emergency Management Plan (EMP). ▶ Higher level of preponderance by unions for all forms of disaster awareness and consciousness.
7	<i>Employment relations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Handled member grievances/complaints relating to lay-offs, redundancy, job rotation or pay cut. ▶ Highlighted the fact that the mandate of trade unions extends well beyond the workplace.

No.	Response actions	Impact on the trade union movements
8	<i>NIC-Economic Relief Programme (ERP).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Required to assist members with submission of claims to the NIC to benefit from the ERP. ▶ Challenged to have members / employers submit all documents to the NIC by the set deadline. ▶ Increased calls for legislative amendments to include contributions for unemployment insurance.
9	<i>Credit union financial support programmes.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Granted relief to members via waivers, moratoria and revised interest rates on loans, accelerated payment of patronage refund/dividends and donation of food supplies and education devices. ▶ Raised the need to review and expand member services to provide for unemployment assistance.

8.4 Impact of national recovery actions on trade unions

The full impact of COVID-19 /national disasters recovery actions on trade unions can best be determined in the long-term. This review examines the policy decisions made and recovery actions taken by heads of public institutions as part of the COVID-19 pandemic and their likely impact on the operations of trade unions. Areas of focus include relevant legislation, the modified governance framework, the NIC economic relief programme, the Government Salary and Bonds Payment Offer, the Work from Home Policy, Climate Change and Severe Weather conditions, Employer/Trade Union Recovery Negotiations, Member Services, Trade Union Member Employment Levels, Post-Disaster Needs Assessment and COVID-19/Disaster Recovery Action Plan.

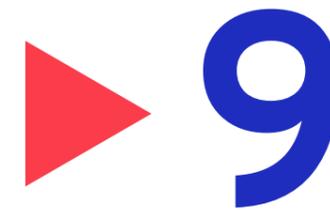
A summary of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters recovery actions on trade unions is presented in Table 8.4, below.

► **Table 8.4. Impact of national recovery actions on trade unions**

No.	Recovery actions	Impact on the trade union movements
1	<i>COVID-19 (Prevention and Control) Act.</i>	<p>Key stakeholders complained that enactment of the COVID-19 (Prevention and Control) Bill ought to be delayed to allow government more time for consultation. While the movement chose not to formally comment on specific the provisions of the bill, issues of concerns are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Access to the confidential records of citizens and workers. ▶ Right to consent before the release or transfer of confidential health records to other parties. ▶ Violation of individual rights with respect to the exercise of powers to search, detain and arrest.
2	<i>The Disaster Management Act.</i>	<p>This Act governs the management of emergencies and national disasters in Saint Lucia. One negative impact of the Act is the fact that trade unions do not have a formal role in what is a slow response process. Although they may be invited to meetings of the social partners in the event of an emergency, they play a limited role at the national level.</p>

No.	Recovery actions	Impact on the trade union movements
3	<i>The Labour Act.</i>	<p>The Act governs the relationship between the management of employer organizations and officials of trade unions. It provides for, among other things, the payment of termination benefits to workers on termination of employment due to redundancy. During the year, trade unions, particularly those representing workers in the private sector, stated that they were inundated with questions about entitlements in the event of lay-offs or redundancies.</p>
4	<i>The National Insurance Act.</i>	<p>Although the NIC Act makes no provision for the payment of unemployment benefits, the Board of the National Insurance Corporation agreed to collaborate with the Government of Saint Lucia to implement the three-month NIC Economic Relief Programme (ERP). The programme was a welcome relief to unions because they would not be able to sustain a similar programme, given the limited amount of accumulated in their respective "emergency disaster funds".</p>
5	<i>Modified governance institutional framework.</i>	<p>Cabinet deemed the institutional framework established under the Disaster Management Act inadequate for the management of a health pandemic. Cabinet established a Command Centre within the Ministry of Health to manage activities related to the pandemic but made no provision for the participation of the trade union movement on the Advisory Committee. This meant that its main focus is safety and health, and industrial relations issues are not high on the agenda.</p>
6	<i>NIC Economic Relief Programme (ERP).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The positive impact is that government collaborated with the NIC to provide economic relief to eligible workers who were contributors to the NIC in the form of income support. ▶ The short-term programme was designed to provide income support of up to 50 per cent of monthly salary between EC\$1,000 and EC\$3,000 for a period of three months (April to June 2020), to NIC contributors affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The total amount payable is capped at EC\$1,500. ▶ The negative impact is that many workers complained that the amount received was inadequate and the three-month timeframe was too short, while others claim that many deserving workers did not get the promised income support.
7	<i>Government salary and bonds payment offer.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Government salary and bonds payment offer.
8	<i>The work from home policy.</i>	<p>The work from home policy.</p>
9	<i>Climate change and severe weather</i>	<p>In the case of national disasters, the weather pattern in Saint Lucia includes an annual season of storms or hurricanes, which runs from June to December each year. During the past three years, Saint Lucia has experienced heavy rains but no major storms or hurricanes. Whenever NEMO gives the heavy rains alert, all citizens living in low lying areas (including unionized and non-unionized workers and trade union leaders), are required to comply with the provisions of standard evacuation policies that have been in place for several years to address problems of flooding and landslides, among other issues.</p>
10	<i>Employer / trade union recovery negotiations</i>	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic has redirected the attention of trade union leaders from normal monitoring of collective agreement administration to the negotiation of COVID-19 settlement packages on behalf of workers who were facing forced vacation leave, reduction in wages / benefits, lay-offs, or redundancy. Non-unionized workers are worse off because they must handle this process on their own, and to a large extent, they depend on the generosity of their employers to arrive at reasonable settlement packages.</p>

No.	Recovery actions	Impact on the trade union movements
11	Member services.	Most of the unions maintain a “disaster fund” to assist members when in need but the accumulated amounts are insufficient to provide support for any extensive period.
12	Trade union member employment levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Among the several workers who lost their form of employment were sole bread winners in the household, or in some cases, both bread winners became unemployed. ▶ Many workers have lost their jobs with little or no benefits and no idea when they will be able to return to work. ▶ The members lacked the capacity to pay the monthly membership dues and as a result, the unions experienced a significant decline in membership revenue to finance their activities.
13	Post-disaster needs assessment.	<p>According to the trade union leaders, they are not formally involved in any post crisis / national disaster needs assessment. NEMO is responsible for hiring professionals to assess damages to life and property, but each trade union conducts its own independent assessment of organizational damages.</p> <p>The trade unions can play a role in assessing the positive or negative impact of lay-offs and redundancy of workers (including their members) in areas such as loan delinquency, hunger, poverty, childcare, healthcare, homelessness, and domestic abuse.</p>
14	COVID-19 / disaster recovery action plan.	The COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters caused damage to life and property that results in pain and suffering among workers. One positive impact is that the trade unions have had to develop a Crisis / Disaster Recovery Action Plan that outlines strategies and activities planned for recovery from the effects of a crisis or national disaster.



Key issues analysis on disaster / crisis preparedness and management

This section of the report presents an analysis of the key issues identified with respect to the preparedness and management of national disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic. It also will examine the cross-cutting issues that need to be addressed. Further details of the consultant’s analysis of the “Preparedness Issues”, “Management Issues” and “Cross-Cutting Issues” are discussed from a trade union perspective in the subsections that follow.

9.1 Trade union perspective on crisis / disaster preparedness issues

The trade union leaders and members highlighted several critical issues that are of concern to them in relation to national crisis / disaster preparedness in Saint Lucia. There is a brief discussion on each of the key issues identified, namely constitutional provisions, legislative instruments, institutional frameworks, national action plan, public policy initiatives, information management and resource capacity.

9.1.1 Constitutional provisions

Section 17 of the Constitution of Saint Lucia makes adequate provision for the Governor General to declare a “State of Emergency”, once satisfied that a public emergency has arisen. The declaration covers crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic or national disasters and once published, all public, private and civil society organizations - including trade unions - are expected to comply with its provisions. In such situations, trade unions are expected to ensure that the rights of unionized and non-unionized workers are not violated by the authorities and their employers in any follow-up decisions made or actions taken to manage the crisis or the disaster.

9.1.2 Legislative instruments

In terms of preparedness, one can argue that like most countries in the world, Saint Lucia was not fully prepared from a legislation point of view, to cope with the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic. It should be noted that up to March 2020, the Disaster Management Act was the main legal instrument in force to cover the preparedness and management of national public emergencies. However, in October 2020, Parliament decided to enact the COVID-19 (Prevention and Control) Act, because the authorities determined that certain provisions of the Disaster Management Act were inadequate to effectively prevent and control what was essentially a globally transmitted infectious disease. Under the new legislation, the Minister of Health and the CMO assumed the main decision-making authority.

Several stakeholders including the Bar Association, the Saint Lucia Medical and Dental Association, and the Saint Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association asked the government to delay the enactment of the legislation to allow more time for consultation. It must be noted that unlike the aforementioned associations, the trade union movement did not lodge a formal complaint with government about the lack of consultation at that time. However, during the virtual meetings with the consultant, the leaders and members raised concerns about possible infringements on the rights of workers and undue restriction on freedom of assembly and association.

9.1.3 Institutional frameworks

Prior to March 2020, the Disaster Management Act established the institutional framework in place for crisis / disaster management. However, as can be seen below, the COVID-19 (Prevention and Control) Act, introduced a modified framework with a Health Crisis Command Centre and an Advisory Committee.

► Table 9.1. Modified framework of Disaster Management Act

Specific function	COVID-19 crisis management mechanisms	Disaster management mechanisms
Policy advice and strategic direction	NEMAC / Advisory Committee	NEMAC
Management and coordination	Command Centre	NEMO
Community level implementation	DDCs	DDCs

9.1.4 National emergency management plan

Trade union leaders confirmed that they are aware of the National Emergency Management Plan and other relevant national and sectoral plans. They also are aware of the need for public institutions to collaborate with NEMO / the Command Centre to address social and labour issues arising during the current health crisis or recent climate hazards or events. However, respondents highlighted an issue with the level and timeliness of participation at the response stage when their concerns can be addressed and factored into any national response plan.

9.1.5 Public policy initiatives

Trade union leaders representing frontline workers, namely SLMDA, SLNA and to some extent the PWA and SLFSA, confirmed that they have been involved in shaping public policy initiatives relating to the COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters. However, their participation is more in their professional capacities than from a trade union perspective.

9.1.6 Information management

Trade union leaders indicate that NEMO personnel conduct sensitization and education sessions on crisis / disaster preparedness, response and recovery. However, the unions are concerned these activities are carried out only when it is close to the event and believe NEMO must make a greater effort at public education of workers. In addition, the respondents noted that unions help to sensitize and educate members in a limited way, but they believe that given financial constraints, it is not to the desired level. However, if government provides institutional support, the unions maintain they can make a greater contribution to worker sensitization and education on crisis / national disaster management.

9.1.7 Resource capacity

Trade union leaders indicate that generally, the resources allocated by government to undertake health crisis and disaster emergency operations, particularly human and financial, are too limited. They believe that government needs to make more budgetary allocations for the implementation of crisis / national disaster activities.

However, it is noted that the leaders representing the frontline workers expressed general satisfaction with the level of national preparations. They confirmed that their unions are engaged in ongoing dialogue with the authorities to address resource constraints relating to personnel, budgetary, physical, material, information and technology issues.

9.2 Trade union perspective on crisis / disaster management issues

Trade unions leaders and members highlighted four critical issues that are of concern to them in relation to the management of national crises and disasters in Saint Lucia. Brief discussions follow on each of the key issues identified, namely national crisis / disaster planning, activity coordination, agency collaboration, and social partnership.

9.2.1 Crisis / national disaster response and recovery planning

Not all trade union leaders have had the opportunity to include their concerns in COVID-19 response planning and implementation. Some have been fully engaged with management; others have been engaged to a limited extent, while some have not been involved by management at all. With respect to COVID-19 recovery planning, the approach is generally quite similar, with the leaders of unions representing frontline workers being more involved than the others. In some cases, the unions indicated that they were engaged only after they wrote to management expressing their concerns, while others stated they are still awaiting some feedback from management on concerns raised about social and labour issues.

Over the last three years, Saint Lucia has not experienced any major climate-related events and NEMO has not had to activate disaster management mechanisms. As a result, the unions have not been called upon to participate in any disaster response or recovery activity.

9.2.2 Activity co-ordination

In the case of COVID-19, the majority of trade union leaders believe the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Tourism have done a fairly good job in coordinating the participation of trade unions in the preparedness, response and recovery activities. Nevertheless, they expressed concern about the selective approach used where some unions were invited to participate in certain crisis / disaster management activities while others were not.

As for the management of national disasters, the trade union leaders stated that extreme weather conditions have impacted many unions in a negative manner. They stated that during and after a disaster, frontline workers normally have their vacation leave cancelled and they spend longer hours on duty. SLTU leaders confirmed that very often teachers suffer the loss of teaching materials when their schools are flooded, and this puts a financial burden on them to rebuild their stock of teaching materials. Classes also are disrupted whenever the schools designated as emergency shelters must be used by NEMO and the District Disaster Committees (DDCs) to temporarily house persons affected by a disaster. In addition, many union members are active workers on the DDCs, as well as volunteers in the distribution of emergency supplies to affected persons.

9.2.3 Union collaboration

A major finding of the study is that the trade union movement is split into two factions, one which comprises members of the TUF, and the other which consists of non-TUF members. Judging from the study experience, indications are that leaders of the trade union movement continue to approach the issue of disaster response or recovery planning as a divided force. Because of the movement's failure to collaborate on disaster response and recovery, they have not been able to command permanent representation on any of the national crisis / disaster management bodies. Union leaders of the trade union movement are selectively invited to crisis / disaster management meetings from time to time on a need-to-know basis.

9.2.4 Social partnership and dialogue

Government has attempted to apply the concept of social partnership to crisis and disaster management by engaging the other social partners (such as employer and union representatives), in tripartite discussions or social dialogue. The approach used in Saint Lucia has been to convene national discussions or consultations at which senior public officers would make presentations on relevant crisis and disaster management issues. They then solicit feedback from the other social partners, arrive at a consensus on what needs to be done, and decide on the joint actions to be taken.

A critical issue for the unions is the lack of recognition of the entire movement as a major social partner, since not all members of the movement are invited to attend national briefings on COVID-19 and national disasters, nor are they represented under one umbrella at these sessions. This means the industrial relations issues do not factor in national response or recovery plans drawn up for the country by the Command Centre or NEMO.

9.3 Cross-cutting issues

Based on the results of the analysis, the consultant has identified several cut-crossing issues relating to COVID-19 and national disasters, to which the trade union movement should pay attention in the future. The most notable issues include education and awareness, gender equality, membership and revenue stability, and member support capacity.

9.3.1 Trade union education and awareness

Generally, trade unions allocate resources annually to conduct basic industrial relations training for their new and existing members. However, the trade union leaders indicate that trade unions lack the financial capacity to conduct specialized training on an ongoing basis covering topics on various aspects of the management of COVID-19 and national disasters.

9.3.2 Gender equality in the trade union movement

Gender equality is the fifth sustainable development goal (SDG 5), adopted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It focuses on the elimination of harmful practices against women and girls, narrowing the gender gap in the areas of employment, wages and salaries, poverty, illiteracy, property ownership, access to credit, training and development, political activism, and being victims of domestic violence.

In this report, gender equality is treated as another cross-cutting issue and examined with respect to equal access by men and women to resources and opportunities in the trade union movement, regardless of gender. It also focuses on concerns about the participation of workers in economic activities and decisions relating to public policy, the value placed on different human behaviors, and the treatment of worker aspirations and needs equally, regardless of gender. The consultant asserts that concerns must be addressed because they are applicable to the effects and impact of COVID-19 and national disasters on the trade union movement.

9.3.3 Gender-related statistics

The consultant invited all trade unions to nominate up to three leaders (President, Treasurer and General Secretary), and five ordinary members to participate in scheduled virtual discussions on the COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters. Efforts made to collect gender-related data from the trade unions were partially successful in that five out of eight TUF member unions submitted data, while the consultant is yet to receive the quantitative data from the three Non-TUF unions.

As can be discerned from gender-related statistics compiled in Table 9.2 below, more female executive officers, union employees and union members are likely to be affected by crises and national disasters than male, because of the gender composition of the trade union membership.

► **Table 9.2. Executive officers, employees, and members of trade unions in Saint Lucia, by gender**

Region	Executive officers			Unions employees			Union members		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
TUF member trade union									
Civil Service Association (CSA)	7	4	11	3	11	11	1 272	1 875	3 147
Saint Lucia Fire Service Association (SLFSA)									
Saint Lucia Medical & Dental Association (SLMDA)	2	7	9	—	2	2	93	139	232
Saint Lucia Nursing Association (SLNA)									
Saint Lucia Teachers Union (SLTU)	3	5	8	1	4	5	647	1 510	2 157
Total	12	16	28	4	17	21	2 112	3 524	5 336

► 10

Conclusions on lessons trade unions should have learned

Based on the findings of the study, the consultant has concluded that leaders and members of trade unions in both the public and private sectors should have learnt many lessons from their experiences in crisis / national disaster preparedness, responses, or recovery. The following are brief discussions on the lessons which should have been learnt by trade unions in the public and private sectors.

10.1 Lessons for trade unions on crisis / national disaster preparedness

With respect to crisis / national disaster preparedness, among the most notable areas the consultant identified are: (a) constitutional provisions; (b) governing legislation; (c) institutional framework; (d) national action planning; (e) public policy initiatives; (f) information management; (g) resource capacity; (h) trade union administration; and (i) national influence.

Table 10.1 summarizes the key lessons for the public and private sectors under these categories.

► **Table 10.1. Lessons learned from crisis / national disaster preparedness in the public / private sectors**

No.	Public sector lessons learned	Private sector lessons learned
1.0	Constitutional provisions	
1.1	When a "State of Emergency" is declared, all relevant response mechanisms such as NEMAC, NEMO and DDCs must be activated immediately. Public sector unions also must be proactive and use that period to undertake research, adopt strategies and prepare to address anticipated industrial relations issues.	When a "State of Emergency" is declared, all relevant response mechanisms such as NEMAC, NEMO and DDCs must be activated immediately. Private sector unions must be proactive and use the three-months declaration period to undertake research, adopt strategies and prepare to address anticipated industrial relations issues.

No.	Public sector lessons learned	Private sector lessons learned
2.0	Governing legislation	
2.1	Although the 2006 Disaster Management Act is useful for managing national disasters, it was found to be inadequate for the management of the national health crisis.	Government should allow sufficient time for consultation with key stakeholders on national legislative proposals before they are debated in Parliament and enacted into law.
2.2	Trade unions should insist on being recognized by government as a referral agency to provide comments on legislation involving and impacting industrial relations practice.	The trade union movement should not remain silent on important national issues that have an impact on the employment of their members and workers in general.
2.3	With joint action, public sector unions can have Ministry of Labour commit to convening a national consultation to review and update provisions of the existing Labour Act.	With joint action, private sector unions can have Ministry of Labour commit to convening a national consultation to review and update provisions of the existing Labour Act.
3.0	Institutional framework	
3.1	The framework established under the Disaster Management Act of 2006 was inadequate to manage the COVID-19 health crisis and needed to be modified, but should have made provision, for trade union representation.	The framework established under the Disaster Management Act of 2006 was inadequate to manage the COVID-19 health crisis and needed to be modified, but the new Act should have made provision for trade union representation.
4.0	Public policy initiatives	
4.1	Leaders of public sector unions should be invited to participate in national public policy formulation, in their own right, not only as professional public officers.	Leaders of private sector unions should be invited to participate in national public policy formulation, in their own right, to represent the interest of their members.
5.0	Workplace practices	
5.1	Leaders of public sector unions recognized the need to be vigilant and to monitor changes being implemented by managers of public agencies, to ensure the protection of the safety and health of members / workers.	Leaders of private sector unions recognized the need to be vigilant and to monitor changes being implemented in the by managers of private companies to ensure the protection of the safety and health of members / workers.
6.0	Worker challenges	
6.1	Public sector workers recognized the need to provide the leaders of their unions with timely information about the challenges they were experiencing at the workplace.	Private sector workers recognized the need to provide their union leaders with timely information about the challenges they were experiencing at the workplace.
6.2	Non-unionized workers in the public sector have not yet recognized the significance of union representation particularly at a time of crisis / national disaster.	Non-unionized workers in the private sector have not yet recognized the significance of union representation particularly at a time of crisis / national disaster.
7.0	Trade union unity / solidarity	
7.1	Leaders of public sector unions should have recognized that the best way to achieve desired results is to work together.	Leaders of private sector unions should have recognized that the best way to achieve desired results is to work together.

No.	Public sector lessons learned	Private sector lessons learned
8.0	Trade union administration	
8.1	Leaders of public sector unions should have recognized the serious limitations on the human resource capacity of staff of the union secretariats, and that there are constraints on the time of full-time executive officers to do union work.	Leaders of private sector unions should have recognized the serious limitations on the human resource capacity of staff of the union secretariats is hampering their ability undertake effective trade union work.
9.0	National influence	
9.1	Leaders of public sector unions should have recognized that by remaining silent on national issues that affect the livelihood of workers, they are not acting in the best interest of their members.	Leaders of private sector unions should have recognized that by remaining silent on national issues that affect the livelihood of workers, they are not acting in the best interest of their members.

10.2 Lessons for trade unions on crisis / national disaster management

On the issue of management of national crises and disasters in Saint Lucia, the consultant observes that critical areas are post crisis / disaster needs assessment; national crisis / disaster planning; activity coordination; agency collaboration; and social partnership.

Table 10.2 provides a summary of key lessons that trade union leaders and their membership in the public and private sectors should have learned.

► **Table 10.2. Lessons learned from crisis / national disaster management in the public / private sectors**

No.	Public sector lessons learned	Private sector lessons learned
1.	Post crisis / disaster needs assessment	
	Currently, NEMO hires professionals to conduct the post crisis / disaster needs assessments with a focus on damage to life and property. Trade unions should assess their organizational needs and share the data with NEMO if required.	Given the critical need for human resources to develop and execute crisis / disaster response and recovery plans, trade unions should be able to access such competencies either by receiving training to carry them out, or partnering with entities who can facilitate same.
2.	National crisis / disaster planning	
	Each public sector trade union needs a BCP for national disasters, in keeping with the requirements of the Disaster Management Act. Also, each union should have seen the need to develop and maintain a Health Emergency Management Plan to manage COVID-19 pandemic.	Each private sector trade union needs a BCP for national disasters, in keeping with the requirements of the Disaster Management Act. Also, each union should have seen the need to develop and maintain a Health Emergency Management Plan to manage the COVID-19 pandemic.

No.	Public sector lessons learned	Private sector lessons learned
3	Activity co-ordination Public sector unions should be more formally involved in the coordination of major activities associated with national crisis / disaster management to protect and advance the interest and the welfare of public officers.	Private sector unions should be more formally involved in the coordination of major activities associated with national crisis / disaster management to protect and advance the interest and the welfare of workers.
4	Union / agency collaboration Leaders of public sector unions should have seen the need to collaborate with all social partners to ensure successful implementation of planned crisis / national disaster response and recovery activities.	Leaders of private sector unions should have seen the need to collaborate with all social partners to ensure successful implementation of planned crisis / national disaster response and recovery activities.
5	Social partnership / dialogue Leaders of public sector unions should have seen the need to engage in social dialogue with managers of public agencies and other government officials, to address relevant crisis / disaster management issues.	Leaders of private sector unions should have seen the need to engage in social dialogue with employers / company management and senior government officials, to address relevant crisis / disaster management issues.



11

Summary conclusions and recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, the consultant has drawn a number of conclusions regarding the preparedness, response and recovery actions of trade unions to the COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters. Each conclusion is followed by a corresponding recommendation intended to address the issue highlighted.

The following sub-sections contain details and discussion of conclusions reached and recommendations made to address the various issues highlighted, with respect to each stage of the crisis / national disaster cycle.

11.1 Crisis / national disaster preparedness actions

Conclusions drawn regarding the disaster preparedness actions of trade unions to the COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters cover use of technology, compliance with health protocols, employer engagements, emergency management planning.

Table 11.1 below, provides details of the conclusions reached on preparedness to cope with a crisis / national disaster and the recommendations made to address them.

► Table 11.1. Conclusions on crisis / national disaster preparedness and recommended actions

No.	Public sector lessons learned	Private sector lessons learned
1.0	Crisis / national disaster preparedness	
1.1	► State of emergency: Once the Governor General declares a "State of Emergency", all trade unions should review and activate their BCPs or EMPs.	Leaders of trade unions should put appropriate procedures in place for reviewing and activating their BCPs or EMPs once the Governor General has declared a "State of Emergency".

No.	Public sector lessons learned	Private sector lessons learned
1.0	Crisis / national disaster preparedness	
1.1	<p>► State of emergency:</p> <p>Once the Governor General declares a “State of Emergency”, all trade unions should review and activate their BCPs or EMPs.</p>	Leaders of trade unions should put appropriate procedures in place for reviewing and activating their BCPs or EMPs once the Governor General has declared a “State of Emergency”.
1.2	<p>► Stakeholder consultation:</p> <p>Government should consult leaders of trade unions on national legislative proposals before they are debated in Parliament and enacted into law.</p>	Leaders of trade unions should be proactive and insist that government consult them on crisis and national disaster legislative proposals before they are debated in Parliament and enacted into law.
1.3	<p>► Institutional framework:</p> <p>Government should formalize the participation of the trade union movement in the institutional framework in place for crisis / disaster management.</p>	Leaders of trade unions should be proactive and insist that government formalize the participation of trade unions in the institutional framework for crisis / disaster management.
1.4	<p>► Crisis / national disaster planning:</p> <p>None of the trade unions have developed and maintained a comprehensive Crisis / National Disaster Plan that includes a section for business continuity and another for emergency management.</p>	The unions should jointly engage a professional to develop a model Crisis / National Disaster Plan. Each trade union should be required to customize the business continuity / emergency management components according to its needs.
1.5	<p>► Safety and health protocols:</p> <p>Trade union leaders, managers and support staff should comply with provisions of policies or protocols by adopting behaviour changes designed to protect their safety and health.</p>	Trade union leaders should document the procedures required to ensure that officers, managers, and support staff comply with provisions of policies for safety and health protocols.
1.6	<p>► Accelerated use of modern technology:</p> <p>COVID-19 has forced trade unions to accelerate the use of modern technology tools to communicate and hold virtual meetings, conferences and consultations using various applications such as Skype, Zoom or Teams.</p>	Trade unions leaders should continue to accelerate the use of modern technology tools to communicate and hold virtual meetings, conferences, and consultations, and to explore the use of applications such as Skype, Zoom or Teams.
1.7	<p>► Resource capacity:</p> <p>Trade unions need to have basic human, financial, physical, material, technology, and information resources in place to cope with crises and national disasters.</p>	Trade union leaders need to conduct an inventory of human, financial, physical, material, technology and information resources in place to cope with crises and national disasters.

11.2 Crisis / national disaster response actions

This section features conclusions drawn regarding the response actions of trade unions to the COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters, and cover assessing post crisis / disaster needs, upgrading communication methods, using technology for virtual events, engaging employers, observing hygienic practices, delivering member services, and keeping members informed.

Details are provided in Table 11.2 below, on the conclusions reached with regard to preparedness to cope with a crisis / national disaster, along with the recommendations made to address them.

► Table 11.2. Crisis / national disaster response conclusions and recommended actions

No.	Conclusion reached	Recommended actions
1.0	Crisis / national disaster preparedness	
1.1	<p>► Assessing post crisis / disaster need:</p> <p>Currently, NEMO hires professional to conduct the post crisis / disaster needs assessments with a focus on damage to life and property. Trade unions assess their organizational needs and share the data with NEMO, if required.</p>	Given the critical need for human resources to develop and execute crisis / disaster response and recovery plans, the trade union movement should be involved in conducting national assessments of the effects and impact on workers of such crises.
1.2	<p>► Upgrading communication methods:</p> <p>Executive officers, staff and members of unions adopted changes in work behaviour by reducing use of face-to-face communication methods with landlines / mobile phones for verbal communication, and incorporated messaging applications such as WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Tik-Tok or Facebook for written communication.</p>	Trade unions leaders should standardize the use of landlines, telephones, mobile phones and other more up-to-date devices for verbal communication. They also should formalize the use of messaging applications such as WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Tik-Tok or Facebook, where applicable, for written office communication.
1.3	<p>► Using technology for virtual events:</p> <p>Health protocols introduced by government to cope with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic forced at least two trade unions (CSA and SLTU) to reschedule the date of their Biennial Conventions. They also delayed the election of new executive officers by several months until virtual meetings were used to complete the process.</p>	Trade unions leaders should review provisions of their byelaws to formalize the use of virtual meetings for the conduct of their Biennial Conventions or Annual General Meetings of members, to avoid any delays in convening these conventions or meetings, as well as the election of officers to form new executives, in the future.
1.4	<p>► Engaging employers:</p> <p>Several reports received from employees (particularly the non-unionized) indicate that a few unscrupulous employers took advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic to violate workers' rights by requiring them to work in unsafe and unhealthy environments without the necessary personal protective equipment (PPEs).</p>	Unionized workers should bring to their union's attention all cases of unnecessary risks on the job without PPEs. The union should engage the employer to correct the situation. Non-unionized workers also should report any situations where they are being forced to take unnecessary risks on the job without PPEs to the Department of Labour, for the conduct of onsite inspections to determine same.

No.	Conclusion reached	Recommended actions
1.5	<p>► Observing hygienic practices:</p> <p>To comply with national health protocols, employers are expected to provide PPEs, put in place facilities, establish policies and procedures, and require their employees to observe standard hygienic practices in the workplace.</p>	Trade union leaders have a responsibility to create awareness among their members of national health protocols, and encourage them to observe the safety and health protocols put in place by complying with the hygienic practices.
1.6	<p>► Delivering member services:</p> <p>The health protocols put in place by government have restricted the movement of trade union leaders and their ability to deliver prompt and effective services to members.</p>	Trade union leaders need to find creative ways of effectively and efficiently delivering core industrial relations services to members, using enhanced administrative practices.
1.7	<p>► Keeping membership informed:</p> <p>Un-informed members will remain inactive. There were many instances where members affected by crises and national disasters claimed to be unaware of union policies or procedures on critical industrial relations issues.</p>	Trade union leaders need to compile "Membership Booklets" with information on the requisite policies or procedures, and use electronic newsletters to share timely guidance notes with members on industrial relations and crisis / national disaster best practices.

11.3 Crisis / national disaster recovery actions

This section highlights conclusions drawn regarding the recovery actions of trade unions to the COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters. They cover the issues of union membership / revenue loss, reversal of economic gains, improved expenditure management, collective agreement administration, member unemployment benefits, gender statistics, and economic relief or financial assistance.

Details are provided in Table 11.3 below, on the conclusions reached with regard to preparedness to cope with a crisis / national disaster, along with the recommendations made to address them.

► Table 11.3. Conclusions on crisis / national disaster recovery and recommended actions

No.	Conclusion reached	Recommended actions
1.0	Crisis / national disaster recovery	
1.1	<p>► Declining union membership:</p> <p>To cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, managers of public agencies and private companies scaled down their operations when they began to lose business. They sent some staff on approved vacation or laid-off workers or made others redundant, while retaining a few employees on reduced pay, thereby causing many unions to lose several members at one time.</p>	Trade unions leaders do not keep up-to-date quantitative data on the number of members lost due to staff lay-offs, redundancies and pay reductions. The recommendation is that union leaders maintain a "Register of Members" with records showing membership loss due to termination, whether through redundancy, retirement, or dismissal for cause or otherwise.
1.2	<p>► Union revenue loss:</p> <p>Trade unions losing large numbers of their members due to staff lay-offs, redundancies, or outright terminations, resulted in a major reduction in their monthly revenues.</p>	Trade unions should maintain accurate accounting records and produce financial statistics on the increase or decrease in their monthly revenues.
1.3	<p>► Union expenditure management:</p> <p>The loss of significant amounts of their monthly income forced trade unions to identify creative ways of managing their remaining revenue and sustaining their operations.</p>	Trade unions could cut operating cost by using modern technology to communicate, host major events, maintain financial data and member statics, among other activities.
1.4	<p>► Reversal of economic gains:</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic caused a reversal in many of the economic gains (wages, salaries, and benefits) negotiated successfully by union leaders on behalf of workers over the years.</p>	Trade union leaders and members should act in solidarity with each other to avoid a complete erosion of the benefits they had negotiated successfully on behalf of their members over the years.
1.5	<p>► Collective agreement administration:</p> <p>Many employers indicated their inability to implement the provisions of collective agreements due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their business and requested a re-negotiation of the terms and conditions.</p>	In light of the impact of the health pandemic, trade unions should engage employers in new negotiations, with a view to arriving at satisfactory revised packages of pay and benefits on behalf of members.

No.	Conclusion reached	Recommended actions
1.6	<p>► Payment of unemployment benefits:</p> <p>NIC announced that eligible workers who contributed to the corporation's insurance fund and are entitled to benefit from a three-month Economic Relief Programme (ERP), should submit their claims within the set deadline date.</p>	Trade unions leaders should provide advice to eligible members on the submission of their claims to the NIC and ensure that employers submit the required staff information to the corporation on time, for the processing of the staff claims.
1.7	<p>► Financial assistance to affected members:</p> <p>Only some trade unions maintain "disaster assistance funds", but their members were not clear about the policy governing access to the funds.</p>	All trade unions should develop and maintain contributory "crisis / disaster assistance funds" with approved guidelines on how eligible members could access to the funds.
1.8	<p>► Gender-related statistic:</p> <p>The study revealed that many trade unions do not document or keep up-to-date gender-related records with respect to membership, employees, or executive officers.</p>	Trade unions leaders should put systems in place to keep up-to-date gender-related records on membership, employees, or executive officers, and produce monthly reports on same.
1.9	<p>► Workplace stress:</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters have caused many workers to suffer from workplace stress due to long hours of work, job insecurity or fear of losing their jobs.</p>	Trade unions should establish a system for members to report workplace stress. They also must dialogue with employers on addressing and reducing stressful situations in the workplace, which would help their members.

► 12

The way forward

This study has revealed many critical issues about the status of the trade union movement which, if addressed, can change the landscape of the movement in Saint Lucia. It is recommended that ILO shares the findings of the study with the trade unions / workers, employer organizations and relevant government institutions for extensive discussion and feedback. It also is anticipated that the proposals made in this report will be accepted and modified as necessary and implemented, to bring about meaningful change for the enhancement of worker representation in Saint Lucia, both in times of normalcy and in crisis / disaster situations, as part of a national effort to improve the quality of life for all.

In addition, it also expected that non-unionized workers will benefit from the lessons learnt and will appreciate the need to become unionized to protect their personal interests and achieve a greater sense of job security. Unionized workers, too, should have a much better understanding of the challenges their unions face, and thus would be more responsible in sharing information about workplace issues concerning safety, health, and general welfare.

Ultimately, trade unions are best placed to assess the usefulness of the report as far as the effects and impact of crisis / national disasters are concerned, to promote the benefits on trade unionism, as well as to intensify the call for all workers in Saint Lucia to be unionized. The unions must seize the opportunity to engage other social partners in meaningful social dialogue for recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, with a view to charting a more realistic path with a place for all sectors - public and private entities and civil society - to ensure Saint Lucia's sustainable development.

On a final note, this report presents specific proposals intended to guide the future development of a strategic plan for the trade union movement, as well as for the institutional strengthening and capacity-building of the TUF and the trade unions which participated in the exercise. Synopses of recommendations for the strategic planning, institutional strengthening and capacity-building issues are discussed in the following sub-sections.

12.1 Focus areas for future strategic plan development

Several areas of focus have been identified for the future development of a strategic plan for the trade union movement.

Table 12.1 below, provides a listing of the key results areas, along with a description of the various topics proposed for the strategic plan.

► Table 12.1. Key results areas proposed for developing a trade union movement strategic plan

No.	Key results area	General description
1.0	Legal and policy compliance	
1.1	Disaster Management Act.	Provides for preparedness, response and recovery from emergencies and disasters .
1.2	COVID-19 (Prevention and Control) Act.	Provides for the prevention and control of the pandemic.
1.3	The Labour Act.	Provides for the management of labour and industrial relations.
1.4	The National Insurance Corporation Act.	Provides for a social security mechanism and payment of benefits to contributors.
1.5	Industrial relations policies.	Public policies introduced from time to time.
2.0	Legal and policy compliance	
2.1	TUF Byelaws.	Legal instrument governing the operations of the federation.
2.2	Trade union byelaws.	Legal instrument governing the operations of each registered trade union.
3.0	The movement's membership	
3.1	TUF Byelaws.	Recruit, benefits subscribe, develop, information, participate terminate.
3.2	Trade union byelaws.	Recruit, benefits subscribe, develop, information, participate terminate.
4.0	Trade union organization	
4.1	Organizational structure.	Number of core programme units and administrative support units.
4.2	Establishment size.	Number of positions at management, professional, technical or administrative levels.
5.0	Board governance	
5.1	Board officers.	Role and responsibilities of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, among others.
5.2	Board functions.	Review of key functions stated in byelaws.
5.3	Board committees.	Review the approved charter and operations of each committee.
6.0	Trade union management	
6.1	Work programme and budget.	Prepared by management for approval of the Board.
6.2	Programme implementation.	Coordination, resource management, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting.

No.	Key results area	General description
6.3	Administrative secretariat	Management of revenue, expenditure, databases, correspondence, payroll, among others
6.4	Member services	Core services comprising all industrial relations activities
6.5	Administrative support service	Comprising finance, human resource management, clerical, janitorial, among others
7.0	Industrial relations practice	
7.1	Collective bargaining / negotiations.	Preparation for and conduct of negotiations and signing of collective agreements.
7.2	Collective agreement administration.	Monitoring the implementation of the provisions of collective agreements.
7.3	Grievance handling.	Hearing staff complaints, following-up with supervisors / managers to resolve them.
7.4	Gender equality and equity.	Equal access to resources and opportunities to participate in decision-making.
7.5	Vulnerable groups.	Considering the disable, the poor, the elderly and single mothers.
7.6	Worker education / skills development.	Focus on employment law and policy, job competences and professionalism.
7.7	Occupational health and safety.	Creating safe and healthy working conditions for men and women employees.
7.8	International labour standards.	Focus on workers' rights, working conditions, wages / salaries, and job security.
7.9	Strategic partnerships.	Network of local, regional, and extra-regional partners in the trade union movement.
7.10	Reporting to members.	Review performance, audit finances and submit Progress & Financial Report.
8.0	Decent work	
8.1	Employment.	Nature of business operations, for example labour intensive as against capital intensive.
8.2	Rights.	Rights of employer / employees recognized by law and in collective agreements.
8.3	Social protection.	Review of the Saint Lucia Social Protection Policy of 2015.
8.4	Social dialogue.	Ongoing engagement between employers and trade unions to address workplace issues.

12.2 Focus areas for institutional strengthening of the union movement

Based on the findings of the study, there are several shortcomings identified in the resource capacity at the level of the TUF Administrative Secretariat, as well as at the level of the Administrative Secretariat of each participating trade union. The resource capacity issues that need to be addressed cover critical areas of operations such as financial, human, physical, material, and information and technology resources.

It is proposed that as a first step, ILO can consider assisting the trade union movement in Saint Lucia with the implementation of a two-phase institutional strengthening programme. Phase 1 will address the shortcomings related to the provision of common services at the level of the TUF Administrative Secretariat, while Phase 2 will address the shortcomings related to the provision of member services at the level of the Administrative Secretariat of each participating trade union.

With regards to the TUF, the study found that there is need to strengthen the resource capacity within the Administrative Secretariat in several areas to enable the umbrella body to deliver effective shared common services to the trade union movement in Saint Lucia. Similarly, there is need to strengthen the resource capacity within the Administrative Secretariat of each participating trade union to enable them to deliver effective industrial relations services to their members.

Table 12.2 identifies gaps in the operations of the TUF Administrative Secretariat and those of the participating trade unions and gives proposals to help improve operational services.

► **Table 12.2. Gaps in trade union operations and proposals for institutional strengthening**

No.	Institutional strengthening issues identified	Proposed institutional strengthen activities
1.0	Human resources	
1.1	Currently, the TUF General Secretary manages the Administrative Secretariat with no administrative staff support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Hire a Programme Coordinator to plan, implement and report on the institutional strengthening and capacity-building activities. ► Hire a Data Analyst to collect, store and manage trade union data
1.2	Currently, executive officers of most trade unions are carrying out the industrial relation functions.	Assess the minimum staff requirements of each participating trade union and take steps to recruit them
2.0	Financial resources	
2.1	Currently, the TUF receives an annual subvention from government to provide services to members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► TUF needs to establish an annual fees structure to cover provision of basic services to member unions to augment the subvention.
2.2	TUF does not generate any additional revenue from annual membership subscription. Ideally, each trade union should have an annual membership dues structure from which it generates revenue for the delivery of services to members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► The Secretariat also should be tasked with preparing proposals to mobilize funds from other sources for training / capacity-building. <p>Each participating trade union must assess its minimum budget requirements for the delivery of core and support services to members, and take step to strengthen revenue generation.</p>

No.	Institutional strengthening issues identified	Proposed institutional strengthen activities
3.0	Physical resources	
3.1	The current TUF administrative office lacks the operating systems, technology, tools, and equipment necessary to be effective.	TUF needs to establish a trade union centre to accommodate member unions without a formal office. It should upgrade its office facilities, operating systems, tools, technology, and equipment to enhance secretariat administration and trade union services.
3.2	At present, many trade unions do not operate a functioning administrative office with up-to-date operating systems, technology, tools and equipment necessary to be effective.	Each trade union must assess its requirements for office space and facilities and take step to have a properly functioning administrative office with up-to-date operating systems, technology, tools, and equipment necessary to be effective.
4.0	Material resources	
4.1	The current TUF administrative office needs an adequate amount office supplies, including stationery, to function effectively.	TUF should compile an inventory of material requirements for the administrative office to ensure that it is provided with an adequate amount office supplies, including stationery, annually.
2.2	Trade unions to operate an administrative office and determine the amount of office supplies, including stationery, needed to function effectively.	Each trade union should compile an inventory of annual material needs (including office supplies and stationery), to operate an administrative office effectively.
5.0	Technology resources	
5.1	The TUF administrative office lacks technological capacity to collect and store labour related data for use in service when required.	TUF should install databases for office administration to collect and store labour related data and internal / external networks for use in communication and delivering services to members and workers.
5.2	Participating trade unions lack the technological capacity to collect and store labour related data for use in office administration service delivery when required.	Trade unions should install databases to collect and store labour related data and internal / external networks for office administration use in communication and delivering services to members when required.
6.0	Information resources	
6.1	The TUF administrative office lacks capacity to collect and store relevant data on the trade union movement for use when required.	The TUF needs to assess the information needs of the trade union movement and strengthen its capacity to collect and store relevant data for use when required.
6.2	The participating trade unions neither collect nor maintain up-to-date gender-related data on crisis or national disaster issues	The participating trade unions should assess their respective information needs and take steps to strengthen capacity to collect and store gender-related data on crisis / national disaster issues, for use as required

12.3 Focus areas for capacity-building interventions

Capacity-building interventions are focused at the level of the TUF and at the participating trade unions level. Target groups include the executive officers, employees, and ordinary members of the participating trade unions.

Programmes will comprise: (a) a series of competency-based training to take the form of workshops, seminars, and short courses; (b) ongoing exposure for executive officers, managers, support staff and members to participate in national, regional, and international meetings, conferences and consultations; and (c) hands-on activities that combine field visits, worker exchanges and professional attachments.

Table 12.3 provides a list of the gaps identified and the proposed capacity-building initiatives, according to target group.

► **Table 12.2. Gaps in trade union operations and proposals for institutional strengthening**

No.	Capacity-building gaps identified	Proposed capacity-building activities
1.0	Executive officers	
1.1	Legal compliance obligations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review of trade union obligations to comply with provisions of relevant legislation relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, Disaster Management, labour relations and national insurance benefits. ▶ Review trade union obligation to comply with provisions of its constitution.
1.2	Trade union governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Leadership role of the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. ▶ Review of framework for formulating trade union policy. ▶ Review of the trade union administrative and political structure.
1.3	Trade union networking and solidarity.	Review of the importance of establishing and maintaining strategic partnerships with local, regional, and international trade unions.
1.4	Collective bargaining and negotiations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Preparation for and conducting of negotiations and signing Collective Agreements. ▶ Administration of Collective Agreements.
1.5	Gender equality.	Each participating trade union must assess its minimum budget requirements for the delivery of core and support services to members, and take step to strengthen revenue generation.
1.6	Human and trade union rights.	Right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, and right to work and education opportunities.
1.7	Strategic planning.	Consulting key stakeholders and developing a strategic plan.
1.8	Sustainable development goals (SDGs).	Focus on: No 1 – No. Poverty, No. 2 – Zero Hunger, No. 3 – Good Health and Well-being, No. 4 – Quality Education, No. 5 – Gender Equality, No. 8 – Decent Work, No. 10 – Reduce Inequality, No. 13 – Climate Action, and No. 16 – Peace and Justice, Strong Institutions.

No.	Capacity-building gaps identified	Proposed capacity-building activities
1.9	Management accountability reporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Monitoring and evaluating operational performance and auditing accounts. ▶ Preparing and submitting progress and financial reports for consideration.
2.0	Secretariat managers	
2.1	Union management.	Review and update the roles and responsibilities of managers of trade unions.
2.2	Job descriptions for managers.	Review and update requirements / duties outlined in current job descriptions.
2.3	Programme planning and budgeting.	Preparation of annual operational plans, programmes, projects, and budgets.
2.4	Programme implementation.	Coordinating the implementation of plans, programmes, projects, and budgets.
2.5	Occupational safety and health.	Focus on hazards in the workplace such as chemical, physical, biological, psychological, ergonomic and accidents.
2.6	Crisis and disaster management.	Focus on the COVID-19 pandemic and national disasters.
2.7	Information Communication Technology.	Focus on telecommunications and the use of computer hardware and software.
2.8	Financial management.	Revenue collection, expenditure management and accounting records.
3.0	Secretariat support staff	
3.1	Professional and technical.	Modules to build competencies based on duties outlined in job descriptions.
3.2	General administration.	Modules to build competencies based on duties outlined in job descriptions.
4.0	Secretariat support staff	
4.1	Member orientation and development.	<p>Modular programmes to cover various topics including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Principles of trade unionism. ▶ The employment contract. ▶ Employer rights and responsibilities. ▶ Worker rights and responsibilities. ▶ Worker complaints, role of shop stewards and union grievance handling. ▶ Role and functions of the labour department.

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Appendices

- Appendix I. Base documents reviewed.
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- Appendix XII. National disaster questionnaire completed by the Labour Commissioner.

► Appendix I. Base documents reviewed

No.	Title of document	Publisher	Date
1.	COVID-19 pandemic policies.	Ministry of Health and Wellness	March 2020
2.	Recommendation No. 205 on employment and decent work for peace and resilience: What role for trade unions?	International Labour Organization (No. 646852)	12th October 2018
3.	Just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all – Policy Brief.	International Labour Organization (No. 647648)	22nd October 2018
4.	Workers guide to employment and decent work for peace and resilience: What role for trade unions.	International Labour Organization (No. 716841)	28th August 2019
5.	COVID-19: What role for trade unions.	International Labour Organization (No. 739546)	24th March 2020
6.	Disaster Management Act, No. 30 of 2006.	Government of Saint Lucia	6th October 2006
7.	Saint Lucia Labour Act, No. 37 of 2006.	Government of Saint Lucia	6th October 2006
8.	Saint Lucia Labour Code (Amendment) Act, No. 6 of 2011.	Government of Saint Lucia	3rd May 2011
9.	COVID-19 (Prevention and Control) Act, No. 17 of 2020.	Government of Saint Lucia	30th September 2011
10.	Declaration of the State of Emergency (23rd March – 31st May 2020).	Government of Saint Lucia	23rd Mar 2020
11.	State of Emergency Extension (1st June – 30th September 2020).	Government of Saint Lucia	23rd Mar 2020
12.	Saint Lucia Constitution Order 1978 No. 1901, Section 17 (2)(b).	Government of Saint Lucia	20th December 1978

► Appendix II. Stakeholder representatives consulted

No.	Organization	Name of official	Designation
1.0	Trade Union Leaders		
1.1	Saint Lucia Trade Union Federation	Julian Monroe	President
1.2	Saint Lucia Trade Union Federation	Lisa Goodman	General Secretary
1.3	Civil Service Association	Criprian Montrope	President
1.4	Civil Service Association	Claude Paul	General Secretary
1.5	Fire Service Association	Alyn Roserie	President
1.6	Fire Service Association	Warn Augustin	Treasurer
1.7	Fire Service Association	Trevor Hunte	General Secretary
1.8	Saint Lucia Medical & Dental Association	Merle Clarke	President
1.9	Saint Lucia Nurses Association	Alicia Baptiste	President
1.10	Saint Lucia Nurses Association	Sherline Duncan	Treasurer
1.11	Saint Lucia Nurses Association	Amanda Lucien	General Secretary
1.12	Saint Lucia Police Welfare Association	Travis Chicot	President
1.13	Saint Lucia Police Welfare Association	Zachary Joseph	General Secretary
1.14	Seamen, Waterfront & General Workers Union	Michael Mc Combie	General Secretary
1.15	Saint Lucia Teachers' Union	Utilda Joseph	Treasurer
1.16	Saint Lucia Teachers' Union	Chantal Peters	General Secretary
2.0	Relevant government agencies		
2.1	Ministry of Health and Wellness	Belmar-George	Chief Medical Officer
2.2	National Emergency Management Organization	Doreen Gustave	Director
2.3	Department of Gender Relations	Janny Joseph	Director
3.0	Private sector companies	Designation	Company
3.1	Laudra Maurille Willie	HR Manager	Bay Gardens Limited
3.2	Uthelca Joseph	HR Manager	Winnera Limited
3.3	Mc Carson Bledman	HR Manager	J.E. Bergasse
3.4	Shana Clifford	HR Manager	St. Lucia Distillers

No.	Organization	Name of official	Designation
3.5	Nancy Joseph	HR Manager	Caribbean Grains
3.6	Peter Salvator	HR Manager	CMA-CGM St. Lucia Ltd
3.7	Thecla Fitz-Lewis	HR Manager	Lewis Industries
3.8	Cecilia John	HR Manager	KM2 Solutions
3.9	Sadia Charles	HR Manager	Sea Island Cotton Shop
3.10	Joanna Biscette	HR Manager	SLASPA
3.11	Christie Lucien	HR Manager	Caribbean Awning
3.12	Sydarina Alexander	HR Manager	SLBS
3.13	Nicole Du Bouly	HR Manager	Invest Saint Lucia
3.14	Allison Delmede	HR Manager	NIC
3.15	Christie Haycinth	HR Manager	Northwest Limited
4.0	Credit unions		
4.1	Laborie Cooperative Credit Union	Lucius Ellevic	General Manager
4.2	National Farmer's Cooperative Credit Union	Zelka Martin	Human Resource Manager
4.3	Saint Lucia Cooperative Credit Union League	Gilroy Satney	President
4.4	Saint Lucia Teachers' Credit Cooperative Limited	Martina Belizaire	Immediate Past President

► Appendix III. Unionized and non-unionized employees consulted, by bargaining agent

No.	Employee name	Employer	Bargaining agent
1.	Gale Dalsou	Saint Lucia Air & Seaport Authority (SLASPA)	Civil Service Association
2.	Jacqueline Allain	Saint Lucia Social Development Fund (SSDF)	Civil Service Association
3.	Shilton Charles	Solid Waste Management Authority (SWMA)	Civil Service Association
4.	Yvonne Edwin	Fisheries Department	Civil Service Association
5.	Layota Martial	Saint Lucia Social Development Fund (SSDF)	Civil Service Association
6.	Merle Clerke	The Respiratory Hospital	Saint Lucia Medical & Dental Association
7.	Senetta Vigee	The Respiratory Hospital	Saint Lucia Nurses Association
8.	Janetha Walker	The Respiratory Hospital	Saint Lucia Nurses Association
9.	Amarantha Adrian	The Respiratory Hospital	Saint Lucia Nurses Association
10.	Nickus Smith	Saint Lucia Reps/Suntours Caribbean	No Union Representation
11.	Pearl Joseph	KM2 Solutions	No Union Representation
12.	Sharon Dowdy	Lewis Industries	No Union Representation
13.	Dauna Fitz	Lewis Industries	No Union Representation
14.	Kerdell Samuel	J.E. Bergasse	No Union Representation



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► Appendix IV. Sample questions for key stakeholder representatives

In terms of the scope and key considerations of the study, the intention was to obtain responses to, inter alia, the following guiding questions:

1. What was / is the involvement of trade unions during the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic and as it progressed to the recovery stages?
2. Was the participation of trade unions in these efforts well-prepared and coordinated?
3. Were unions able to include their concerns in response planning and implementation?
4. Were unions able to include their concerns in recovery planning and implementation?
5. Do unions have quantitative data on how many of their members / other workers were / are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?
6. What are some of the specific challenges and/or opportunities that workers and their representatives faced?
7. What has been the economic impact on affected members and their households?
8. What are the (social) protections (unemployment, etc.) guaranteed by law and how were they implemented in practice during the crisis?
9. Do unions have quantitative data on how many of their members / other workers were affected by the serious climate-related hazards in the last three years?
10. How effective was / is the Saint Lucia National Emergency Management Plan (including relevant national and/or sectoral plans) in addressing social and labour issues arising in the course of (a) the current health crisis, or (b) recent climate hazards and events?
11. What was the involvement of trade unions in the planning for and response to climate-related events over the past three years (namely, the period 2017 to 2019)?
12. What are the impacts of severe weather in the Commonwealth of Saint Lucia?
13. Was / is there workers' representation on National Emergency Committees and other bodies (for example, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO), National Emergency Executive Committee and its Task Force for Recovery)?

14. Were / are trade unions involved in the Post Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNAs) or any other related assessment processes?
15. What lessons can be learnt from the management of past and current recovery processes?
16. Are workers, and citizens in general, being adequately sensitized and educated on disaster preparedness, response actions, COVID-19 measures, and other related issues?
17. What is the level of satisfaction with national preparations and provision of shelters, supplies and services for care, social mitigation measures to reduce the impacts and to increase the coping capacity and preparedness etc., in the event of any type of major future natural or man-made disaster and health threats?
18. How knowledgeable are workers' organizations about regional activities and initiatives relating to disaster / crisis risk preparedness and management?

► Appendix V. COVID-19 pandemic questionnaire completed by human resource managers

Below is feedback shared by the HR managers to the questions posed about the COVID-19 pandemic.

Q-1. How did your company first learn about the threat of the global COVID-19 pandemic?

All companies first learnt of the pandemic through the local media but some conducted research and sought to get additional information from Ministry of Health (MOH), the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), and the World Health Organization (WHO). Feedback provided by these managers provided valuable insights into the many challenges faced in respect of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Q-2. How did the company help employees cope with the initial threats of the COVID-19 pandemic?

The participating companies indicated that they helped employees cope with the initial threats of the COVID-19 pandemic by doing a combination of the following:

- Offered to keep employees on reduced pay and granted soft loans to those needing the assistance.
- Arranged separate transportation for employees.
- Kept all employees on the job except for the week of shut down mandated by the government.
- Allowed employees to take their annual vacation when the volume of business was low.
- Shared information from the MOH with staff about observing the COVID-19 pandemic protocols.
- Provided facilities such as hand sanitizers, contact barriers, face masks and gloves, and limit customers.
- Ensured employees followed the established guidelines of MOH / PAHO for safety and protection.
- Restructured the company due to loss of business and monthly revenue.
- Reviewed all salaries due to loss of revenue, laid off some employees and made others redundant.
- Engaged a company doctor and referred employees for medical attention and testing for symptoms.
- Approved a "work from home" policy and scheduled staggered employee vacation leave.
- Attended a meeting of social partners with the CMO and studied the presentation on COVID-19.
- Updated the BCP and developed and implemented a COVID-19 Plan.
- Identified staff at risk and established and implemented a "work from home" policy.

- ▶ Arranged employee rotation, ordered cell phones and laptops and routed calls to staff, as necessary.
- ▶ Stepped up cleaning and established a Safety Team to check and monitor compliance with protocols.
- ▶ Met with the Labour Commissioner to discuss options in light of loss of business opportunities.
- ▶ Introduced and maintained standard guidelines for visitors and adopted a customer contact policy.
- ▶ Developed and implemented a COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan (ERP).
- ▶ Conducted an environment analysis to venture into other opportunities using online technology.
- ▶ Conducted a national search for local partners to pursue new business opportunities.
- ▶ Laid-off staff for an extended period and set up an hourly work scheme for those who resumed.

Q-3. Did you play any part in the early stage of national response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

The majority of participating companies indicated that they attended meetings with the social partners, including the Saint Lucia Chamber of Commerce (SLCC) and the Saint Lucia Manufacturers Association (SLMA). They followed presentations made by officials from the Ministry of Health and the Department of Labour on the COVID-19 pandemic.

Q-4. How is the company involved in the current COVID-19 pandemic national recovery effort?

The participating companies indicated that they are involved in the current COVID-19 pandemic national recovery effort in the following manner:

- ▶ Produced additional boxes for essential services.
- ▶ Shifted to Just-In-Time (JIT) ordering and changed approach to product planning.
- ▶ Increased intake of food boxes (for example, supplies, pizza boxes for small businesses).
- ▶ Interested in PPE supplies and materials for the office.
- ▶ Provided tools for work from home and covered cost related to internet services.
- ▶ Maintained official protocols and ensured frequent cleaning within the office.
- ▶ Purchased face masks and provided hand sanitizers to employees in essential services.
- ▶ Conducted training and ensured staff adhered to protocols.
- ▶ Limited direct interaction between staff and customers.

Q-5. What policies did the company adopt to support employees affected by COVID-19?

Several companies and public agencies participating in the study indicated that as at the date of the meeting with the consultant, they had tested their employees for coronavirus, with the situation varying from one or more employee still awaiting test results, to no employee being affected, or one employee testing positive. Most companies adopted policies to support employees in the event they were infected by the COVID-19 virus. The following are the common policies which companies adopted:

- ▶ Encouraged employees with flu-like symptoms to take the COVID-19 test and if the results were positive, encouraged them to stay at home.
- ▶ Paid for employees to take the test and if their results were negative, allowed them to resume work.

- ▶ Closed the office if an employee tested positive on the job, and ensured all other employees were tested.
- ▶ Implemented a staff separation policy that allowed employees to work from both home and in the office.
- ▶ Reviewed and updated the processes associated with the ERP.
- ▶ Approved the payment of staff salaries via a personal bank account to reduce interaction with the public.
- ▶ Ensured that all employees adhered to the standard protocols instituted by the Ministry of Health.
- ▶ Reassigned employees who had been exposed to the virus or asked them to remain at home.
- ▶ Trained employees to make full use of the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provided.

Q-6. Does the company keep gender-related statistics on employees affected by the COVID-19 pandemic who apply for and receive assistance?

Very few companies maintained statistics on employees affected by the COVID-19 pandemic who applied for and received assistance. Some kept records of the temperature test but nothing else.

Lewis Industries experienced a high demand for their sanitation services and as a result, the company has had its highest level of recruitment and training for new staff.

In the last three months (at the time of writing this report), the company had provided support to a total of 10 employees out of a staff complement of 80 persons and had hired 15 new employees.

Q-7. What constraints limit the ability of the company to help employees affected by the COVID-19 pandemic cope with the day-to-day challenges they face?

The following are the main constraints identified by companies as limiting their ability to help employees affected by the COVID-19 pandemic cope with the day-to-day challenges they faced:

- ▶ Inability to work from home given the nature of the job which involves the processing of claims.
- ▶ Inability to transfer or retain certain employees because their functions no longer exist.
- ▶ Inability to provide adequate quantities of work equipment such as mobile phones, laptops, or internet.
- ▶ The high cost of compliance with requirements of administering key provisions of the labour laws.
- ▶ Cost of electronic work processes to transition from office to home software / hardware.
- ▶ Cost associated with the termination of existing staff and the recovery of tools and equipment from them.
- ▶ The human relations, direct interaction rapport and close supervision.
- ▶ Cost of creating a workforce department with responsibility to monitor home-based computer transactions.
- ▶ Procedures involved in viewing desktops via installed software and / or scheduled meetings in the office.
- ▶ The challenge of maintaining a self-motivated home office and the level of office independence required.

- ▶ Need to review the “work from home” policy to cater for insurance, reporting and performance evaluation.
- ▶ Assignment of responsibility to staff for recording down time and reporting on agreed work deliverables.

Q-8. What opportunities do the companies have to help employees affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?

The opportunities ranged from: providing corporate support, transport, work tools and equipment; reorganizing the work arrangements to regularizing the “work from home” policy; updating other human resource policies; adopting a referral system for employees to obtain paid medical attention; providing employees with adequate quantities of PPEs; making greater use of technology to save cost on physical office space; and improving time management to assist employees with saving on travel time and working for extended hours.

Q-9. What reports have the company received from employees relating to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on them and their households?

The reports received by the company from employees on the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on them and their households generally covered the following:

- ▶ Spouse, children, or siblings lost jobs resulting in domestic pressures and financial strain.
- ▶ Closure of schools meant parents were required arrange for childcare services or engage teachers for separate lessons.
- ▶ Employees needed more time to attend to their children who were forced to remain at home due to the closure of schools.
- ▶ Employees needed opportunities for extra work to earn additional income to make up for loss of job by another member of the family.

Based on the gravity of the issues highlighted in the reports, the company would negotiate and sign brief agreements with the affected employees needing assistance.

▶ Appendix VI. National disasters questionnaire completed by human resource managers

Feedback received from the HR managers to the questions posed about disaster management is presented below.

Q-1. What role has the company / organization played in climate related hazards such as hurricanes or droughts, in the last 3 years?

All companies are required to prepare and submit an Annual Company Disaster Plan to NEMO for approval. The Fire Service also is required to conduct an audit of the fire section of those plans.

Q-2. How does the company help its employees address social and labour issues arising out of national disasters?

The companies help their employees address social and labour issues arising out of national disasters by providing financial and institutional support to the affected employees in the form of first aid training, salary advances, concessionary loans and special donations to employees and their families.

Q-3. What role does the company play in the conduct of Post Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNAs)?

Companies activate their internal processes to assess damages to physical facilities or human resources, and to document corporate needs.

Q-4. What lessons have the company learnt from management of past and current disaster recovery processes?

It is important for each company to have an approved Disaster Plan in place, to assign trained personnel with specific responsibilities, to conduct annual drills, and to activate the plan whenever NEMO issues a disaster warning or advisory.

Q-5. Does the company help sensitize and educate its employees on disaster preparedness, response and recovery?

Methods used by companies to help sensitize and educate its employees on disaster preparedness, response and recovery are as follows:

- ▶ Hold meetings with managers and utilize the intranet and memos to communicate and train staff.
- ▶ Organize internal fire drills, advise employees, take steps to safeguard equipment and supplies.
- ▶ Maintain up-to-date insurance policies and services and claims business losses when necessary.

Q-6. How satisfied is the company with the institutional framework (for example, NEMAC, NEMO, District Disaster Committees), in place for managing national disasters?

The companies have expressed general satisfaction with NEMO. They regard the advice and communication to be very helpful.

Q-7. What concerns the company about NEMO's operations as regards preparations for disasters, provision of shelters, distribution of emergency supplies and provision of housing and other assistance to victims?

The companies did not have any major issues with the operations NEMO specifically. However, they were concerned about the level of political involvement in the distribution of emergency supplies and the provision of housing and other assistance to victims of national disasters.

Q-8. What social mitigation measures does the company have in place to reduce the impacts of disasters on employees and to increase its capacity to cope with disaster preparedness, response and recovery?

Social mitigation measures the company has in place to reduce the impacts of disasters on employees include reduction of hours of work, allowing time off to take care of home and domestic issues and the issuance of letters to financial institutions in respect of loans and hire purchase items.

Q-9. Does HRM keep gender-related statistics on employees who apply for and receive disaster assistance?

Very few of the participating companies keep gender-related statistics on employees who apply for and receive disaster assistance.

Q-10. How can the company improve future support to employees affected by major natural or man-made disasters?

- Ability to work remotely (get used to it becoming the new normal)
- Use of technology (data management)
- Update corporate policies (protocols for disaster management)
- Company / customer relations
- Recruitment methodology
- Technology skills, more creative, computer literacy
- Virtual interviews (via Skype, Zoom)
- Personal use (pay utility bills)

► Appendix VII. COVID-19 questionnaire completed by unionized and non-unionized workers

Eight of the employees who participated in the consultations were represented by trade unions while six of them were not. Responses to the questions posed on COVID-19 and national disasters are presented below.

Q-1. How did employees first learn about the threat of the global COVID-19 pandemic?

Both unionized and non-unionized employees stated that they first learnt of the threat from the local and international media.

Q-2. How did unions help members / workers cope with the initial threats of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Some ways in which unions helped members cope with the initial threats of the COVID-19 are as follows:

- Held a meeting with employees who notified them that the companies were about to reduce their pay, lay-off staff or make them redundant, to determine their preferences with respect to keeping their jobs or being temporarily laid-off, negotiating with management and getting back to the staff.
- Advising employees of the best options, such as accepting redundancy and payment of severance.
- Negotiating some level of income for workers who were laid-off during the response stage but were unable to secure such a payment.
- Monitoring company rehiring practices during the recovery period to ensure laid-off unionized workers got priority, but the company tended to hire more non-union workers.
- Negotiating with the companies to allow laid-off employees to return to work where possible, on a rotation basis, and with changes in the working conditions, including the wages / salaries.
- Ensuring that the companies provided staff with personal protective equipment (PPE) and submitted relevant information to NIC for staff to benefit from the three-month Economic Relief Programme (ERP).
- Assisting employees (where possible) who were retained on rotation, laid-off without pay or made redundant, and who were unable to meet their day-to-day family commitments.

Some unions were unable to do much in the initial stages to help workers cope with the situation, or take advantage of the opportunity to discuss issues of job security and personal protective equipment for them.

Non-unionized workers did not benefit from any union assistance due to the lack of union presence in the workplaces. Several workers thought about contacting a union, but failed to do so due to intimidation by company management and threats to their employment.

Q-3. What part did unions play in the early stages of the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Most workers are unaware that the unions played any role during the early stages of the national response. They indicated that the unions may have been doing so quietly but have not shared this information with members.

Several employees claim that while they are aware of meetings taking place between the Department of Labour and the unions regarding workers who were made redundant, this issue remains unresolved. Otherwise, they are unaware of any engagement between the unions and government agencies to discuss government policy on the pandemic.

In some cases, companies made more than 50 per cent of their non-unionized employees redundant. These workers also believe that redundancy has put them at a disadvantage regarding what they may be able to access from NIC going forward. They noted that the NIC's Economic Relief Programme (ERP) was a three-month short-term assistance scheme paid for from the pension funds of employees.

Q-4. What role are unions playing in the current national COVID-19 pandemic recovery effort?

The majority of workers claim to be unaware that the unions are currently playing any role in the national recovery effort. They do not think that government has invited the unions to play any role in such an effort. In fact, many argue that government appears to be doing everything within its Command Centre while many important stake holders are excluded. Generally, the workers believe the unions should be playing a role and must be more vocal about demanding it.

Since the non-unionized employees did not have the option of trade union support in the current COVID-19 pandemic recovery, they had to rely on any support that the company was willing to provide or to depend on the support of family and friends.

Q-5. What gender-related policies have unions adopted to support members affected by COVID-19?

The unionized employees stated that they were unaware of any union policies to deal with membership support. However, they indicated awareness of talks between the unions and the management of the different companies on the redundancy payments due to employees according to law. In a few cases, some of the redundant staff were re-employed on short-term contracts, at a lower wage, with no union protection.

Union employees who were made redundant after March 2020, were not able to benefit from the limited income support given by the NIC. This is because their application would have been submitted after the March 2020 deadline. None of the unions were involved in making these decisions or have policies in place to support members affected by COVID-19. Some have a bursary programme to assist a few members

with school expenses for their children, but even this type of support has been scaled back in the present circumstances. This programme has not yet been extended to members affected by COVID-19 or those who have lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic.

Unfortunately, the issue of union policy does not apply to the non-unionized employees. They have no choice but to "paddle their own canoe" as it were, without institutional support from a recognized trade union and for that matter, their only recourse is the Department of Labour.

Q-6. Do you know whether unions keep quantitative data (including gender statistics), on the number of members affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?

Most trade union members claim to be unaware their unions kept statistics on workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some doubt they do, while others did not know, or had not even thought about it or applied.

Q-7. What constraints limit the ability of unions to help members/workers affected by COVID-19 cope with the daily challenges they face?

Many trade union members suggested that limited financial resources were the main constraint limiting the ability of unions to help members affected by COVID-19. Most unions have scholarship funds from which they provide annual scholarships awards to the children and wards of members.

These unionized workers believe the trade unions should be more proactive in helping to fashion policies at a national level, through which affected workers can access some kind of unemployment income support. Many union members say they recognize all the unions have suffered a reduction in income since terminations and redundancies have affected membership subscriptions. However, these members feel the unions should make every effort to assist members with expenses for books, uniforms, laptops and other items related to their children's education.

In the case of the non-unionized workers, they do not expect any type of assistance from trade unions whether financial or otherwise. They normally try to cope with their challenges as best as they could.

Q-8. What specific challenges do you face as a worker in a COVID-19 environment?

Specific challenges faced by unionized / non-unionized workers in a COVID-19 environment include:

- Lack of finance to purchase the electronic devices required to access on-line learning for their school children.
- Inability to mobilize financial support to cover the cost of internet services for school children.
- Loss of a regular wage / salary and benefits to meet their unavoidable monthly expense.
- The Economic Relief Programme (ERP) sponsored by NIC was inadequate and the expenses were taken out of the National Pension Fund of contributors which workers said the country cannot afford to deplete.

The absence of a central government sponsored income support programme makes it more difficult for workers to cope with their financial obligations.

Q-9. What opportunities are available to the union to help members affected by COVID-19?

Opportunities available for trade unions to help members affected by COVID-19 are as follows:

- Mobilize financial assistance from regional and international agencies and private organizations to support a TUF-coordinated trade union COVID-19 / disaster assistance programme.
- Collaborate with central government, the NIC and employers to establish a National Disaster Fund to help workers affected by a pandemic or a national disaster in the future.
- Come together to establish a National Trade Union Disaster Fund to aid members affected by a pandemic or a national disaster in the future.

Each union is expected to maintain a Disaster Assistance Fund (DAF), from which it could make donations of electronic devices, books and other school supplies to members for their children / wards.

Q-10. Do unions maintain records relating to the economic impact on members and their household?

Unionized members are unclear whether their unions maintain records relating to the economic impact on members and their households. Although a few members drew the attention of union officials to the economic impact of COVID-19 on them and their households, many chose not to share that information with their unions.

► Appendix VIII. National disasters questionnaire completed by unionized and non-unionized workers

Q-1. Have unions played a role in climate-related hazards such as hurricanes in the last 3 years?

Workers interviewed were unaware that unions played any role in helping to mitigate climate change hazards.

Q-2. What assistance have you receive from your union to help address social and labour issues related to national disasters?

None of the workers were aware that the unions were helping their members address social and labour issues related to national disasters. They felt that union officials tended to focus on industrial relations issues (such as overtime) and paid little attention to social issues.

Members reportedly do not request help on social matters such as flooding in the community or damage to the home of a worker, since the trade union movement has not established any policy to help members who have been affected by a natural or man-made disaster.

Q-3. Do unions have quantitative data on the number of their members affected by the serious climate related hazards in the last 3 years?

Unionized employees stated that they do not think unions have kept quantitative data in the recent past or that they are doing so now. The general feeling is that the issue of data collection, storage and management is seldom addressed at the level of the membership.

Q-4. What lessons can unions learn from the management of past and current disaster recovery processes?

Unionized employees are of the view that since the unions have not been involved in national disaster management or mitigation, they could not have learnt anything from the disaster management and the recovery process.

Q-5. As a worker, are you being adequately sensitized and educated on disaster preparedness, response actions, COVID-19 measures and other related issues?

Both unionized and non-unionized employees claim that they have never participated in any kind of organized sensitization or education activity on disaster preparedness, response actions, COVID-19 measures - whether through seminars or any other activity. However, they believe that all unions should link up with government agencies to organize such sensitization or education sessions on national disasters.

Q-6. How satisfied are you with national preparations and provision of shelters, supplies and services for care, social mitigation measures to reduce the impacts and to increase the coping capacity and preparedness, in the event of any type of major future natural or man-made disaster and health treats?

Workers claim that they are not fully satisfied with national preparation and operation of emergency shelters, especially when it comes to the distribution of emergency supplies and the timeliness of information to the public. These employees also are very dissatisfied with the involvement of politicians in the distribution of emergency supplies to victims of national disasters. There are many complaints among ordinary people (including workers), about the distribution of emergency supplies, particularly food and home repair materials.

Q-7. What social mitigation measures do the unions have in place to reduce the impacts of disasters on citizens and to increase their capacity to cope with disaster preparedness, response, and recovery?

Unionized and non-unionized employees commented that they were unaware of any mitigation measures put in place by unions to reduce the impacts of disasters on citizens and to increase the respective organization's capacity to cope with disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. They also are unaware that unions had put in place any policies to reduce the impact of national disasters on individual members and workers, generally.

Q-8. Do unions keep gender-related statistics on members who apply for and / or receive disaster assistance?

Unionized and non-unionized employees do not appear to know whether the unions keep any gender-related statistics on members who apply for and receive disaster assistance. They believe that since most of the union membership are women, disasters will generally have more impact on women members than men.

Q-9. How can unions improve future support to members affected by natural or man-made disasters?

Both unionized and non-unionized employees believe that communication between unions and workers can be more effective if unions communicate with members and non-members immediately following national disasters, to share information on the type of support they are able to provide. Unions need to gather information on affected workers and what assistance they might need. Unions also should establish their own "disaster relief funds" and allocate financial resources to provide disaster support to workers. In addition, they must be more proactive in helping members access help from government agencies or their employers.

Given that many locations in the country are vulnerable to annual storms, hurricanes, flooding and landslides, the union should always be at the forefront of efforts to ascertain how particular disasters have affected workers in their various locations and at their various workplaces. Unions also should establish a clear policy regarding responses to these extreme weather events and should dedicate financial resources - if even in a token amount - to be used as a basis for mobilization of additional resources. Unions can improve their support of their respective membership impacted by natural disasters in the future by:

- Changing their attitude to one showing more interest in workers' general well-being rather than in union dues.
- Having a dedicated disaster preparedness and recovery policy.
- Being quick to act in times of disaster to identify members' needs.
- Dedicating financial and human resources to disaster recovery when needed.
- Working and engaging with membership in finding ways to partner with other organizations in terms of disaster management.
- Showing more concern about how workers are affected and recognizing that they need assistance from their unions, which cannot be obtained elsewhere.

► Appendix IX. COVID-19 questionnaire completed by trade union leaders

Responses received from trade union leaders to the study's questions about their involvement in the national response and recovery effort to the COVID-19 pandemic have been summarized, organized and presented in the sub-sections that follow.

Q-1. What was the Involvement of Trade Unions during the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic and as it progressed to the recovery stages?

All trade unions leaders reported that they first learnt of the COVID-19 pandemic from local or international news. Some unions attended meetings with NEMAC and other social partners, at the invitation of the Ministry of Health and Wellness or the Ministry of Tourism, to receive briefings on the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders of the SLMDA and SLNA confirmed that they were involved - both as professionals and as a union - from the early stages of the pandemic up to the present time, while leaders of other trade unions indicated that their officers have not participated in any meetings with NEMAC and the other social partners.

Q-2. Was the participation well-prepared and coordinated?

It is noted that the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Ministry of Tourism are jointly responsible for coordinating the participation of trade unions in the preparedness, response and recovery activities relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Union leaders agree that the ministries have done a good job in coordinating their participation in the COVID-19 pandemic preparedness, response, and recovery activities.

Q-3. Were unions able to include their concerns in response planning and implementation?

Leaders of the SLMDA and the SLNA reported helping in the design of public health policy, providing feedback on draft policies, assisting in putting health protocols together and advising on the PPE needs of staff. Some other leaders confirmed that while they have raised their concerns, it was to a limited extent or that the authorities have not engaged them in any consultation.

Q-4. Were unions able to include their concerns in recovery planning and implementation?

The leaders of the SLMDA and the SLNA actually helped design public health policy, provided feedback on draft policies, assisted in putting health protocols together and advised the government on PPE needs. While some other leaders confirmed that they had the opportunity to raise their concerns, they indicated that it was to a limited extent. A few unions indicated that while their leaders have raised the concerns of their respective unions, the authorities had not engaged them in any consultation. Nevertheless, all trade unions have been active in ensuring that their members comply with the public health policy. As leaders, the trade unionists encouraged all union members to follow the established protocols adopted by the Ministry of Health and Wellness for their own safety, as well as re-sensitized their members and sent them reminders about the protocols.

Q-5. Do unions have quantitative data on how many of their members / other workers were / are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?

Among member trade unions of the TUF, only the SLMDA and SLNA reported that they have data on members affected by COVID-19. All other unions stated that they do not keep up-to-date records of cases.

Q-6. What are the specific challenges and / or opportunities that workers and their representatives face?

Trade unions representing frontline workers indicated that one of the main challenges their members faced is that it took time to become accustomed to the newly supplied Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Also, due to staff shortage at the Respiratory Hospital, the existing staff experienced work fatigue from being on duty for exceedingly long hours. Other challenges included difficulty in communicating with patients, and physical strain suffered from overwork and continuous public bashing. A more common challenge identified was the claim of inconsistent deployment of the limited staff, which resulted in poor resource management.

Notwithstanding the many challenges faced, trade unions also have an opportunity to negotiate special arrangements for their members. For example, trade unions representing frontline workers were able to negotiate for staff to stay at a designated hotel when on duty to limit contact with family and friends. They also could encourage the hiring of new doctors and nurses, as well as the rehiring of medical and nursing retirees as the need arises.

Trade unions have supported the policy of staff working both at home and in office and the use of modern technology to enhance communication, improve management and conduct virtual meetings, training and/or conferences.

Q-7. What has been the economic impact on affected members and their households?

Trade unions reported an increase in the loss of jobs, reduction in income and increase in the cost of childcare. Members have had to rearrange work schedules to accommodate their children who are at home for an extended period. Workers also have had to place a greater focus on safety and health in the workplace, make greater use of carpooling, reduce travel by public transport due to slower travel time by bus and higher transportation costs.

Leaders of non-TUF unions such as the PWA, SLMDA, and SLNA indicated that the persons they represent are entitled to medical healthcare at the expense of the government. Members of these trade unions also benefit from separate group medical insurance schemes coordinated by their members.

Q-8. What are the (social) protections (unemployment, among others), guaranteed by law and how were they implemented in practice during crisis?

Government adopted a Social Protection Policy in October 2004, which includes all interventions from public, private, voluntary organizations and informal networks to support individuals, families, households and communities in their efforts to prevent, manage and overcome a defined set of risks and vulnerabilities.

The policy seeks to achieve the minimum standard of living for those most in need, with a systematic guarantee. It also aims to provide “a clear framework for enhancing equity, efficiency and transparency in the delivery of social protection services”, and “to promote synergies among agencies, programmes, and interventions”.

Trade unions leaders argued that the national social protection mechanisms in place are plagued by inertia. Specifically, these programmes tend to be inactive or to remain unchanged for quite some time. These social protection programmes include the provision of agricultural input subsidies, youth employment programmes, a school feeding programme, as well as a subsidized school transportation programme.

Trade unionists noted that the COVID-19 pandemic brought all workers and their trade unions to the stark realization that the NIC Act makes no provision for the payment of unemployment insurance to workers who lost their jobs due to redundancy arising out of a pandemic or national disaster.

Q-9. What are the constraints that limit the ability of trade unions to help members affected by the COVID-19 pandemic cope with the day-to-day challenges they face?

Most of the trade unions reported that they had limited finances and staff capacity to provide financial assistance, alternative employment advice and other institutional support to members. Those unions with accumulations in their special funds found that the limited finances which they had in the budget had been depleted. A second major constraint was limited staff to provide psychological assistance or counselling, and to advise members on entitlements to be paid by their employers in cases of lay-offs or redundancies.

Most trade unions, particularly those in the private sector, negotiated with employers for entitlements of payments of wages and benefits due to their members who were being laid-off or made redundant. In certain cases, some of the trade unions provided social services and direct financial assistance to their members from “special disaster funds”.

► Appendix X. National disaster questionnaire completed by trade union leaders

The Office of the Prime Minister is responsible for coordinating the participation of all organizations (including trade unions) in the preparedness, response and recovery activities relating to national disaster management in Saint Lucia. For the purposes of this assessment, the consultant customized and posed some 20 questions on disaster management issues to leaders of trade unions operating in both the public and private sectors.

Responses received from those leaders have been summarized, organized, and presented in the subsections that follow. The complete Questionnaire is found in Annex 2 of the assessment report.

Q-1. How effective was / is the Saint Lucia National Emergency Management Plan (including relevant national and/or sectoral plans), in addressing social and labour issues arising in the course of (a) the current health crisis, or (b) recent climate hazards / events?

The trade unions are aware of the National Emergency Management Plan and other relevant national and sectoral plans. They also point to the need for all public institutions to collaborate with NEMO to address social and labour issues arising during (a) the current health crisis or (b) recent climate hazards/events.

Q-2. What was the involvement of trade unions in the planning for and response to climate-related events over the past three years?

Saint Lucia experienced no major climate-related events between the years 2017 and 2019. Therefore, trade unions have not participated in planning for and responding to any climate-related events during that period.

Q-3. What are the impacts of severe weather conditions in the Commonwealth of Saint Lucia?

Leave is normally cancelled for union members who are frontline workers but there may be instances where partners are affected as frontline workers such as doctors, nurses, police, and emergency medical service personnel spend longer hours on duty. Teachers often suffer the loss teaching materials from their schools due to flood waters washing them away, which puts a financial burden on teachers to rebuild their stock of teaching materials. Classes also are disrupted whenever the schools designated as emergency shelters must be used.

Many union members also work in District Disaster Committees (DDCs) as volunteers and help with the distribution of emergency supplies. Trade unionists noted that in the aftermath of a national disaster, whenever there is a long period of downtime it tends to be disruptive.

Q-4. Was / is there worker representation on the National Emergency Advisory Committee (NEMAC), the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO), and regional bodies such as the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)?

Both the member trade unions of the TUF and non-members do not have permanent representation on any of the local and regional disaster emergency management bodies. However, they may be invited to attend meetings of the local committees from time to time, on an as-needed basis.

Q-5. Were / are trade unions involved in Post-Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNAs) or any other related assessment processes?

None of the trade unions are formally required to assist NEMO and the DDCs to carry out PDNAs at the national level. However, the trade unions report conducting PDNAs within the organizations to determine the level of damage to physical assets such as office building, machinery, tools and equipment.

Q-6. What lessons can be learnt from the management of past and current disaster recovery processes?

Leaders of trade unions representing frontline workers identified the need to ensure that essential workers prepared their households for disasters, work in a personal capacity within the DDCs, and are trained in shelter management and inspection. Another lesson learnt is the need for unions to be more proactive if they wish to participate in the consultative process. However, the leaders felt that the relevant institutions do not have enough dialogue with social partners and need to encourage other views. NEMO also need to hold postmortem sessions at the end of each hurricane season to identify and address operational shortcomings.

Some leaders believe that the unions can be more proactive in formulating policy by developing position papers on key issues. They also feel unions should be able to play a more active role in mobilizing technical and financial assistance to develop policy proposals on national disaster or crisis management.

Q-7. Are the workers and citizens in general being adequately sensitized and educated on disaster preparedness, response actions, COVID-19 measures, and other related issues?

Trade union leaders noted that NEMO personnel conducted worker sensitization and education sessions on disaster preparedness and response actions, as well as on COVID-19 measures, but workers did not always pay attention or comply with requirements. Trade unions help to sensitize and educate members in a limited way, but the trade unionists agree there is a great deal of room for improvement. According to the respondents, NEMO conducts the training close to the event but needs to make a greater effort in public education and awareness among trade union leaders and workers.

At the school level, respondents felt the Ministry of Education should focus the training on a more in-depth assessment of the provisions of the Education Act for all schools. The Ministry of Education has a designated officer to assist schools with the development of disaster plans and the conduct of disaster drills. At the national level, the Labour Act and trade union collective agreements make provision for the establishment of health and safety committees in the workplace, but many public agencies and private companies are yet to establish these.

Q-8. What is the level of satisfaction with national preparations, provision of shelters, suppliers and service for care, social mitigation measures to reduce the impacts and to increase the coping capacity and preparedness etc., in the event of any type of major future natural or man-made disaster and health threats?

Trade unions are generally satisfied with the national institutional framework in place given limited resources available to undertake health or disaster emergency operations. The unions with frontline workers always hope for the best and engage in ongoing dialogue with management given the resource constraints and the status of the hospital, which has a limit of about ten patients for major casualty. The respondents indicated that any number of emergencies above ten patients will overwhelm the system.

The leaders also are of the view that NEMO is used as “a place for assigning persons who are not needed elsewhere” but say despite this, the staff are well trained for disaster management.

Q-9. How knowledgeable are workers’ organizations about regional activities and initiatives relating to disaster and crisis / risk preparedness and management?

The trade union leaders indicate that they do not receive any reports from either NEMO or NEMAC on regional initiatives. There is a lack of meaningful dialogue between government and the social partners on issues related to disaster and crisis management. The process for disseminating and/or sharing information with unions as a critical stakeholder has not been regularized. They highlighted the need to re-examine the inherent institutional arrangements for disaster management.

Q-10. What are the concerns of unions about NEMO’s operations as regards preparations for disasters, provision of shelters, distribution of emergency supplies and provision of housing and other assistance to victims?

Trade union leaders pointed out that currently, there are no formal arrangements within NEMO operations for trade unions to be involved in any NEMO activities. In recent years, the unions have not had any major disaster victims reported among their members.

Q-11. What are the social mitigation measures unions have in place to reduce the impacts of disasters on members and to increase their capacity to cope with disaster preparedness, response, and recovery?

Institutions such as NEMAC, NEMO and the DDCs make up an effective framework for policy making, planning and coordination of national preparedness, response, and recovery activities. Respondents report that the government’s issuance of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) has greatly improved the work environment and the standard protocols in place help with both disaster response and recovery. While the trade unions have some social assistance programmes in place, they have limited financial and human resource capacity to help affected members cope with major disaster preparedness, response, and recovery issues in post-disaster situations.

Q-12. What are union’s ability to improve future support to members affected by national disasters / crisis?

Respondents agree that unions need to be much more proactive with regard to training members and seeking technical assistance and support for institutional strengthening, in order to consolidate their strengths and effectively speak with one voice to demand a more prominent role in national crisis and disaster management.



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► Appendix XI. COVID-19 pandemic questionnaire completed by the Labour Commissioner

The Labour Commissioner heads the industrial relations services provided by the DOL.

Q-1. How did DOL first learn about the threat of the global COVID-19 pandemic?

Through the media.

Q-2. How does DOL help workers cope with the initial threats of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Section 148 of the Labour Act was amended to allow for the extension of the lay-off period to a further 12 weeks. Though not a direct "help" to the workers, the extension allowed employers time to recover from the initial pandemic impact before initiating redundancies, while the employees' continuity of service was not interrupted.

Q-3. What part did DOL play in the early stage of the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

The DOL engaged in consultations with the Cabinet of Ministers, workers and their representatives, employers and their representatives and civil society institutions.

Q-4. How is DOL involved in the current COVID-19 pandemic national recovery effort?

The DOL is not directly involved. It continues to work with employees and employers by providing legal advice on the provisions of the law with respect to the cessation of business because of the pandemic.

Q-5. What is DOL's policy on providing support to workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?

The DOL has no policy on providing support to workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Q-6. Does the DOL keep gender-related statistics on workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic applying for and receiving assistance?

The DOL keeps statistics only in relation to the total number of employees who are formally registered as being dismissed as a result COVID-19 related-redundancies. Total number of registered redundant employees to date is 4,715; however, this figure is not disaggregated.

Q-7. What challenges does DOL face in coping with needs of workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?

The main challenges faced by the DOL are in the areas of job placement and enforcement that would enable the immediate payment of termination benefits by employers to employees.

Q-8. What opportunities are available to the DOL to help workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?

None, currently.

Q-9. What reports have DOL received relating to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on workers and their households?

None.

► Appendix XII. COVID-19 pandemic questionnaire completed by the Labour Commissioner

Q-1. What role has DOL played in climate related hazards in the last 3 years?

The DOL has been engaged in consultations with the ILO and inter-governmental agencies on building resilience.

Q-2. What assistance does DOL provide workers to address social and labour issues arising out of national disasters?

None currently.

Q-3. What role does the DOL play in the conduct of Post Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNAs)?

None currently.

Q-4. What lessons have the DOL learnt from the management of past and current disaster recovery processes?

Not currently.

Q-5. How does DOL sensitize and educate workers on disaster preparedness, response and recovery?

Not currently included as part of the Department's mandate.

Q-6. How satisfied is DOL with the institutional framework in place for national disaster management?

No response.

Q-7. What are the DOL's concerns about current arrangements regarding preparations for disasters, provision of shelters, distribution of emergency supplies and provision or housing and other assistance to victims?

Not currently included as part of the Department's mandate.

Q-8. What social mitigation measures does DOL have in place to reduce the impacts of disasters on citizens and to increase its disaster preparedness, response, and recovery coping capacity?

None.

Q-9. Does DOL keep gender-related statistics on workers applying for and receiving disaster assistance?

No.

Q-10. How can DOL improve future support to workers affected by major natural or man-made disasters?

By collaborating with other government agencies in establishing public employment programmes.

