



Union of Bus Industry Workers

Corner J.B Pitchen and James Russel Streets, Grand River North West
affiliate of General Workers Federation-GWF
Tel/Fax: 211-6820.

Attention

Hon. R. Padayachy, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development
Hon. Alan Ganoo, Minister of Transport and Light Rail

This 17 May 2023

Dear Sirs,

The *Union of Bus Industry Workers (UBIW)*, the only bus transport union, uniting bus transport employees, from all the bus companies and individual bus owners, is writing this urgent letter, as we are in the presence of troubling information of a serious crisis prevailing in the bus public transport industry.

We are of view, that this crisis and its persistence can cause serious prejudices to the interest of some 5000 employees working in the industry and many of whom are unionised with the UBIW.

As you are aware the bus transport industry is the main public transport service of the country, financed to the tune of around 70% by public funds to ensure a good bus transport system, as well providing free bus service to students, senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

The UBIW fully support the principle that the state subsidise bus transport and the provision of free transport to students, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities. But **the state cannot transfer its social responsibilities burden onto the workers of the bus industry**, by letting transport workers living under permanent threats of potential non-payment of end of month salaries, by curtailing of work conditions of employees, causing discrimination by denying the payment of Rs 1000 Allowance in all employees of private bus companies, and in denying the payment of a proper salary increase of at least 21%, in the context of the Collective Bargaining negotiations underway between the Bus Companies and the UBIW.

In light of the above, the UBIW is requesting:

that an Urgent Tripartite meeting, State-Employers-Unions, be called by the Government in the coming days,

- to address the crisis presently prevailing in the bus transport industry, and
 - to ensure that the interest of bus transport employees are safeguarded, both in terms of their end of month salaries, security of employment as well as the grant of a salary increase of at least 20% for year 2021-2023 to all transport employees and ensuring non-discrimination practice in working conditions.

You will concur with us, that all employees providing *public services* have been granted salary increases either by way of PRB report or Salary Commissioner Review. Thus, it is a legitimate expectation for transport employees who are providing a *public services* to the population, to be paid a wages adjustment and work conditions review, similar to other employees of the public sector.

You will also concur with us, that allocation of public fund should be disbursed in a non-discriminatory manner. Why should certain big conglomerates and companies, operating on a purely private interest and not providing public service, be granted huge allocations of public funds, while bus transport industry be squeezed?

We would very much appreciate urgent actions from your part given the crisis situation.

In the meantime, the UBIW has no other alternative, than to prepare the mobilisation of transport employees to defend their legitimate interests.

Your sincerely,



Saleem Bacsou (President) & **Alain Kistnen** (Secretary) & **Ashok Subron** (Negotiator)
UBIW