KINGSTON, Jamaica — President of the People's National Party (PNP), Dr Peter Phillips, has called on Governor General, Sir Patrick Allen, to declare a national day of prayer as Jamaica battles the Corona Virus.

In his budget presentation today, in Parliament, Phillips pointed out that the majority of Jamaicans continue to believe in a higher power and that the time has come for us to extend our collective faith as we seek His intervention to overcome current challenges.

“Let us remember the Almighty Power of God who leads forth in beauty over all this fair land, Be thou our ruler, guardian, guide and stay. It would be of comfort to our god-fearing people if this country was to declare a National Day of Prayer at a time such as this. I propose to write to his Excellency the Governor General, hopefully with the support of the Prime Minster, that he declares such a day,” he told the House.

Phillips said the day of prayer will be in accordance with the rules outlined by the government relating to the assembly of individuals in specific spaces and locations and specifically in families and homes across the island.

Phillips made the call after outlining a raft of suggestions to address the anticipated COVID-19 fallout.

He said apart from the possible devastating impact of the physical health of Jamaicans, the economic effects must be considered.

He noted that the island has already begun to see the impact in the main productive sectors, such as tourism shows that both stop-over and cruise shipping numbers have been seriously affected.

Demand for bauxite and alumina have already been curtailed and bauxite prices continue to fall, Phillips said.

The opposition leader said port operations have been and will be further affected as they are currently on a downward trajectory.

He said these signals of decline across various sectors can be characterized as a perfect storm of a deep economic recession given the structure of Jamaica's economy.

“Our small and medium sized companies, our workers and their families will be most harshly affected by the economic disruptions caused by the global pandemic. If we are to prevent a lasting fall-out which will cripple the economy even after the immediate health crisis has passed, we need to immediately consider and implement an extensive set of fiscal and monetary responses,” he said.