

Feedback: Departmental Bargaining Chamber - 31 May 2022

Reorganising: Supply Chain Management Section

The employer reported that a bi-lateral meeting, held on 23 March 2022, agreed to form a task team to facilitate the implementation plan. Labour submitted two representatives each to form part of the task team. A closed-up report be submitted to the DBC for adoption.

Appointment of science and technology representatives (STR) abroad

The PSA previously raised a concern about the appointment of STR without following the recruitment and selection policy. The Minister previously appointed representatives for abroad assignments in terms of the Public Service Regulations instead of the recruitment and selection policy. The bi-lateral meeting on 23 March 2022 agreed that the recruitment and selection policy must be amended to include the process to appoint STR. The PSA maintained that the selection process must be transparent and fair.

Health and safety: Head office building

The employer reported that an OHS assessment was conducted periodically, and various recommendations were made. The PSA objected to the assessment conducted as it failed to address the challenges of ventilation and roof leakages. The PSA requested that an urgent meeting be convened with the OHS committee and Public Works to resolve the matter.

OHS compliance and COVID-19 regulations

The employer reported that the current health and safety protocols will continue to be implemented until proper advice is received from the Department of Health. The Department will continue to implement the risk assessment register and mitigating factors against the scourge of the COVID-19 pandemic. There were three positive Covid-19 cases reported in the last quarter. The Department will implement a 50% return to work on a rotational basis. The Department further approved the remote working arrangement during the winter season owing to the coldness of the building. The Department will issue internal communication to outline the specific details of the remote working arrangements.

Departmental vacancy report

The employer reported that there are 114 vacant posts with a 22.83% vacancy rate. The PSA raised a concern about the high rate of vacancy rate and urged the employer to implement urgent measures to

improve the situation. The employer noted the concern and committed to provide labour with an implementation plan to comply with the 10%-vacancy rate target.

Changes in leadership

The PSA observed that there were constant changes in leadership. The PSA argued that such conduct destabilised operations and service-delivery processes in the Department. The employer indicated that it did not have a mandate on the matter and requested to consult its principals. It was agreed that the matter would be deferred to the special DBC meeting.

Bullying and intimidation

The PSA received reports that employees were bullied and intimidated by management. There are a lot of grievances lodged pertaining to acts of bullying and intimidation. The PSA urged the employer to derive intervention measures to prevent such act of misconduct. The parties agreed to convene a bi-lateral meeting to discuss the specific reported cases.

Observer status guidelines

The PSA raised a concern that the employer was dishonest and disingenuous by making amendments to the guidelines that were adopted by the DBC. The PSA requested the employer to submit the amendments at the special DBC for deliberation before any implementation could take place.

Members will be informed of developments.

The PSA wants to take this opportunity to wish all employees who are unwell owing to COVID-19 a speedy recovery.

GENERAL MANAGER