

Public Service wage negotiations for 2022/23 to commence

A Special Council meeting was held on 12 April 2022 to agree to a timetable for wage negotiations to commence. Members will recall that PSCBC Resolution 1/2021 provided for the payment of a cash gratuity for employees employed in the public service for the financial year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. The agreement has now lapsed, however, clause 3.2 of the said agreement provides that if no agreement is reached by 31 March 2021 in respect of the current wage negotiations (2022/23-salary adjustment), this non-pensionable cash allowance will continue to be paid until a new agreement is reached by parties.

The negotiation process on matters of mutual interest (e.g., salary increases) is guided by clause 16 of the PSCBC Constitution and a subsequent protocol agreement (PSCBC Resolution 3/2017). This agreement allows parties to enter a pre-negotiation process, entailing the exchange of documents and sets timelines for the negotiation process. The following timetable was tabled for the engagements:

- 22 April 2022: Employer to provide its submission and documents that it wants labour to consider
- 29 April 2022: Labour submission and process agreements for the employer to consider
- 4 May 2022: Labour to table its demands
- 19 May 2022: Employer to respond to labour's demands
- 20 June 2022: End of negotiations

Labour accepted the timetable, however, the employer requested the date of 20 June 2022 to be moved to 30 June 2022. Labour will consider the employer's request and revert on 19 April 2022.

Border Management Authority (BMA)

The employer made a presentation on the BMA to kickstart the consultation process with labour as several Departments are affected by the establishment of this entity. On 26 June 2013, Cabinet resolved to establish the BMA, which culminated in the enactment of the *BMA Act* that is still awaiting a proclamation to be signed by the President of the country. The employer highlighted several matters in its presentation, including:

- The authority of the BMA and its functions
- The envisioned work of Border Guards

- The envisioned BMA corporate identity and the appointment of employees
- Complexities of the section 97 proclamation process

All the above matters are explained in the *attached* presentation. Labour raised serious concerns with the process as outlined in the presentation and subsequently indicated to the employer that it appears that labour is not part of the process and will only be consulted once the entire process is completed. Labour indicated to the employer that it needs more time to consult its principals on this matter and will revert only after wage negotiations are concluded. The employer agreed that only after the proclamation is signed and wage negotiations are concluded parties will engage on this matter. The employer, however, indicated that this transfer will be regarded as a section-197 process and that no official will be prejudiced.

The PSA will ensure that meaningful consultations will ensue once wage negotiations are concluded. The PSA requests members who are affected by this process to be vigilant and, if approached by the employer to be seconded to the BMA, to seek advice from the PSA before accepting any transfer/secondment.

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 safe and speedy recovery.

GENERAL MANAGER