

PRESS STATEMENT BY THE HON. MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE ON THE PLANNED INDUSTRIAL ACTION BY MEDICAL OFFICERS SPECIAL GRADE

Background

Government effective July 2003 adopted a Single Spine Salary Structure with a U-Nomenclature having eight levels ranging from U8 to U1 (with some Scales having incremental levels while others having fixed pay points).

Jobs grades in Government and corresponding pay are determined scientifically using set principles such as Job Qualification, Effort (mental and physical), experience, risks, responsibility), the Cost of Living, approved compression ratio, benchmark jobs and economic projections and the proportion of wage against other critical sector priorities.

Status of Implementing the approved pay targets

Cabinet under Minute No. 502 of (CT 2017) and 509 (CT 2017) approved pay targets for all jobs in the Public Service taking into account the above principles but also benchmarked jobs in South Africa, the United Kingdom, Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda.

Although majority of the Public Officers in the Public Service are earning as low as 18% of the approved pay targets since 2014, most of the Medical Officers have achieved their approved pay targets by 100% as demonstrated below:-

Position	Scale	Current (FY 2022/23) Salary	Approved Target	Percentage
Senior Consultant	U1SE	13,113,953	17,760,959	74%
Consultant	U1SE	12,321,555	13,910,526	89%
District Health Officer	U1E	6,500,000	10,162,570	64%
Medical Officer Special Grade/ Principal Medical Officer	U2	6,011,555	6,185,254	97%
Senior Medical Officer	U3	5,884,476	5,714,218	102%
Medical Officer	U4	5,408,476	5,074,662	106%

The pay for Medical Officers/ Dental Surgeons especially at the level of Medical Officer Special Grade/ Principal Medical Officer, Senior Medical Officer and Medical Officer based on the job weights above historically provide very small differentials.

The significant enhancement for Consultants and Senior Consultants was based on the highly specialized nature of their jobs, the weights of the jobs, benchmark of similar jobs with other countries and as a strategy for attraction and retention. In addition there was a consideration that the Specialized Hospitals, the National Referral Hospitals as well as the Regional Referral Hospitals do not have most of these Specialists.

Planned Industrial Action by Medical Officers Special Grade

Public Officers enjoy freedom of assembly and association in accordance with Section G-a, paragraph 3 of the Uganda Public Service Standing Orders 2021. The enjoyment of these rights and freedom takes into account the laid down procedures and through the established Public Service Labour Unions in tandem with Section 8(1) of the Public Service (Negotiating, Consultative and Disputes Settlement Machinery) Act 2008.

These procedures among others include notice of a strike accompanied by a certificate signed by the Chairperson of the Public Service Negotiating and Consultative Council stating that:

- a) ninety days have elapsed since the date of the report of the labour dispute to the Council; and
- b) the disputes settlement machinery has been exhausted.

In addition, the Sixth Schedule of the Public Service (Negotiating, Consultative and Disputes Settlement Machinery) Act 2008, gazettes health, sanitary facilities and hospitals are categorized as essential services.

The notice for industrial action by the Medical Officers Special Grade has not been formally received by Government.

Conclusion

The Medical Officers Special Grade are urged to formally register their complaints using the laid down procedures.

The Medical Officers Special grade are currently enhanced at 97% of the approved pay plan, therefore the planned strike is uncalled for.

The Medical Officer's pay is in fair in comparison to the general workforce in the Public Service. This includes including comparison with jobs in the private sector and the region. It also takes into account the cost of living in other countries within the region. In view of the performance of the economy, they rank among the best paid.

As the economy recovers from the shocks of COVID-19 and the geopolitical events, Public Officers are urged to remain patient as Government remains committed to implementing the approved pay plan.

The Medical Officers should fulfil the commitment they made before the enhancement in FY 2022/2023 to deliver services to the population.

This is therefore to urge the Medical Officers Special Grade to resume work.

Wilson Muruli Mukasa

MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE