

Guyana Public Service Union

"RIGHTS AT WORK - ENDING POVERTY & INEQUALITY"

PRESIDENT **Patrick M. Yarde**

GEN. SECTY. (**ag**) **Deborah Murphy**



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Established 8th June, 1923.

IN REPLYING PLEASE QUOTE DATE
HEREOF AND No. **PSU: 111/2/4**

October 24, 2011

Dr. Nanda Gopaul
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Public Service
C/o Office of the President
Shiv. Chanderpaul Drive
GEORGETOWN.

Dear Dr. Gopaul,

Displeasure with Negotiations for Increases in Salaries and Allowances for Public Service Workers

The Guyana Public Service Union (GPSU) would like to bring to your attention, yet again, the Union's displeasure with the tardiness and apparent insensitivity of the Government in addressing merited increases in salaries and allowances of public officers. We consider this inaction to be most uncaring and unfeeling, in as much as it is frustrating and a display of bad faith in dealing with such important negotiations.

As you are no doubt aware, the GPSU submitted proposals for increases in wages, salaries and allowances for 2011 on 24th Sept, 2009 (over two years ago) and we are now in the 10th month of 2011 (October) and there is not even the appearance of a serious attempt to address this outstanding matter in an environment of economic hardship - where public workers have had to contend with declining real income, in the face of an unrealistic wage and wage increases over the past 10 years. As a consequence, they have been forced to borrow, moonlight and/or take second and third jobs, just to meet daily expenses, or otherwise curtail their consumption in view of escalating cost of consumer and other items. Many of them have been forced to meet the additional cost of employment as a result of grossly inadequate allowances that are paid to compensate them for financing and or providing compulsory employment requirements, such as meal allowances for nurses, a condition of service for nurses, since they cannot leave the employment venue while they are on duty.

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Dr. Nanda Gopaul
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Public Service

October 24, 2011

The current meal allowance of \$4000 has been in force since 1996 (15 yrs ago) when the minimum wage was \$7,337 per month, while commuted travelling allowances, the highest rates (with comprehensive insurance) \$9,096 per month has been there since 1995 (16 yrs ago) when the price of gasoline was below \$200 per gallon, which, at today's price, cannot even full even the smallest car tank nor meet the cost of a used, much less new, tyre.

I should like to remind you that the Union had issued an ultimatum of one month to the Government in letter dated December 23, 2010 of which it can enforce at any time. However, we have opted to exercise restraint and in our meetings, the most recent being Thursday October 20, 2011, we have urged resolution of this matter in accordance with our Agreement for Avoidance and Settlement of Disputes.

We call on the Government to acknowledge and mitigate the worsening plight of public sector workers through the expeditious conclusion of merited increases in salaries and allowances. As a responsible Union and partner in development, we are prepared to negotiate in good faith a package of increases that would not only bring relief to the workers but also recognizes the need to redress the long hiatus of no or low increases over the years.

Sincerely,

.....
Patrick M. Yarde
President/CEO

cc. His Excellency
President Bharrat Jagdeo

Hon. Prime Minister
Samuel Hinds, OE

Dr. Jennifer Westford, MD, MP
Minister of Public Service

Hon. Dr. Ashni Singh, MP
Minister of Finance

Hon. Manzoor Nadir, MP
Minister of Labour