

Guyana Public Service Union

“rights at work - Ending Poverty & Inequality”

PRESIDENT **Patrick M. Yarde**

GENERAL SECRETARY



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Established 8th June, 1923.

IN REPLYING PLEASE QUOTE DATE
HEREOF AND No. **PSU: 135/5**

May 6, 2010

Dr. Jennifer Westford, MD, MP
Minister of Public Service
Ministry of Public Service
Waterloo Street
GEORGETOWN

Dear Minister Westford,

Re: Rescinding of Circular #12 of 2009: Increase in Wages and Salaries – 2009.

With reference to the above subject, the Guyana Public Service Union (GPSU) calls on the Government of Guyana to rescind PSM Circular #12 of 2009: Increase in Salaries and Wages – 2009 dated 29th December, 2009, and reinstate and honour the commitments expressed in PSM Circular # 10 of 2009: Increase in Wages and Salaries – 2009 dated 11th December, 2009.

This representation is made without prejudice to the GPSU's position regarding the arbitrary imposition of salary increase in conflict with relevant and legally-binding Collective Agreements and ILO Conventions. In this context, the GPSU sincerely believed that the Government's Tax Free Hardship Award of \$4000 per month, which was paid to workers, in 2008 was in recognition of the economic difficulties encountered globally and domestically, and the inadequacy of the earnings of employees within the Public Service in receipt of remunerations below \$50,000 to meet the challenges imposed by such an environment. In the circumstances, we felt that the Government's action was both a tangible and sensitive gesture, cognizant of the need to bring some relief to the most vulnerable groups of Public Service employees.

It is clear to us that the economically difficult situation persists today and will continue in the foreseeable future. Even if it does not, as the GPSU has consistently argued, the wages and salaries of public servants are well below that required to purchase a minimum basket of goods. The tax free hardship award was seen as an effort to bridge the yawning gap between the cost of living and remuneration public servants. It is therefore unconscionable and unreasonable for the Government to deny this relief to new entrants to the Public Service. As a Government that professes to have a close relationship with the working class and devoted to promoting their interest, we believe that such discriminatory action was taken without taking into consideration the plight of the workers generally and that of new entrants in particular.

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

May 6, 2010

The imposition of Circular No. 12/2009 puts new entrants at a severe disadvantage as well as denying them a more favourable remuneration to lessen the impact of a challenging economic environment. Certainly, this move will not motivate them to devote all of their energies to producing in an efficient manner.

The Union's appeal for the reinstatement of Circular No. 10/2009 is also being made from a cost perspective. As the number of new entrants to the public service is small, the additional cost of incorporating the hardship award into the salary scale will be negligible in an annual wage bill that exceeds \$12 billion dollars. Not to do so would disrupt the relationship of the actual scales and the remuneration some persons are receiving. This would create further problems, even as we collaborate to solve pressing ones such as bunching.

We trust that the merits of our representation would be recognized and speedy action would be taken to correct the situation since we were approached and continue to be approached by several employees who are victims of Circular No. 12 as well as persons who recognize the implications when they are promoted.

Yours sincerely,

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 Patrick Yarde
 PRESIDENT/CEO

Cc. His Excellency
 Mr. Bharrat Jagdeo
 President of the Cooperative
 Republic of Guyana
 Office of the President

Hon. Samuel Hinds, MP
 Prime Minister
 Cooperative Republic of Guyana
 Office of the Prime Minister

Dr. Ashni Singh, MP
 Minister of Finance
 Ministry of Finance

Mr. Manzoor Nadir, MP
 Minister of Labour
 Ministry of Labour

Dr. Nanda Gopaul
 Permanent Secretary
 Office of the President