



Introduction

This bulletin is an update on the current 2015/16 public service wage negotiations at the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC).

On 26 March 2015, we reported that the public service wage negotiations had resumed the previous day, to continue with engagements in trying to improve on the offer which was put on the table by the employer. We also indicated that after deliberations the employer revised their offer as reflected below which they called their last offer;

Salary Adjustment

The employer tabled a 4, 8% plus 1% which would take us back to the original 5, 8% which was withdrawn earlier. They still maintained the multi-term agreement based on Inflation plus 0, 5% for the outer years

Medical Aid-GEMS

This is the only area where a significant move was made by the employer, in fact labour demand has been met fully. The employer is now offering 28, 5% increase to the subsidy.

Housing Scheme

The employer is now offering R1100 across the board for all eligible employees irrespective whether you are paying a bond, renting or staying in a communal land. The clause that people will forfeit the allowance at some point has been removed.

The leadership of COSATU Public Service Unions namely NEHAWU, SADTU, POPCRU, DENOSA met on the 26th March 2015 to discuss the revised offer, including the proposal from the employer for parties to enter into a voluntary mediation if there is no agreement on the revised offer. The leadership mandated the negotiators to go back and further engage the employer with the view to improve what is currently on the table. That was informed by the fact that on the Salary adjustment and Housing Allowance, we were still far apart as labour demands remain 10%

salary adjustment and R1500 housing allowance. On leaves, the employer agreed to 5 days family responsibility leave for parents with children who have special needs. Paternity leave of 3 days will be introduced.

On the 27th March 2015 our negotiators as mandated by the COSATU JMC went back to continue with negotiations. However, the employer indicated that they would not engage further as they have exhausted their mandate with the offer on the table and insisted that we consider the mediation process they suggested earlier.

We requested to come back on Monday, 30 March 2015, to respond to the proposed process, to our surprise the employer decided to immediately declare a dispute refusing our negotiators to go and get a mandate on their proposal. That act from the side of state negotiators is unprecedented just the like the withdrawal of the initial offer that was on the table.

Where to from here?

In terms of the constitution of the PSCBC a dispute of this nature must be conciliated within 30 days and if there is no resolution parties can exercise their rights and in this case unions can choose to go on strike. Comrades are reminded that our national public service bargaining forum on 25 March 2015, decided that we must maintain tight communication with members as we prepare for the battle ahead if there is no resolution on the dispute.

In this regard we shall be convening mass meetings in all our branches, workplaces and town based meetings where it is possible. In the addition to the above the JMC in its meeting on Monday the 30th March, decided to convene joint PECs/Bargaining Forums in all provinces. The detail program will be communicated in due course.

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