

## Feedback: Departmental Bargaining Chamber meeting - 2 June 2021

### Transformation at NSG

It is a great pleasure to report that the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Transformation and Restructuring Task Team (TRTT) was unanimously adopted by all parties. The inputs submitted by the PSA were all incorporated as well as the proposal from the employer for the inclusion of two experts. The adoption led to consensus to convene the first TRTT meeting on 1 June 2021. The PSA nominated Aifheli Mashao as Deputy Chairperson from labour. The employer introduced G Mditshwa and F Nyaka as newly elected members of the Chamber and the TRTT. The following items were presented by the employer in the TRTT meeting:

- Micro organisational structure of NSG
- Migration Strategy
- Skills Audit
- Digital Transformation
- Change Management could not be presented owing a commitment of the presenter elsewhere.

The PSA raised concerns with the structure, regarding the removal of the two key posts of Chief Director: International Relations and Director: Corporate Services as well as on matters such as the benchmarking, or job evaluation of posts on the new structure, and reflection of unfunded posts on the new structure, amongst other. Furthermore, concerns were raised on the urgency of finalising the restructuring process as it is now affecting other areas of operation such as the signing-off of performance agreement for the current financial year. The frequency of the TRTT meeting was regarded as a priority and parties agreed in principle on the frequency of convening meetings, which would be discussed in forthcoming sessions.

### COVID-19 regulations and occupational health and safety (OHS) matters

The employer reported that the OHS Committee is operational and very active. All matters that are discussed in that Committee are communicated to staff through internal communications such as circulars and Departmental WhatsApp facilities. To date, there are 26 confirmed positive cases. There is no trend of increase in number of reported cases. The Department acknowledged the impact of the psychological effect on staff members who were and/or are infected, and loss of life next of kin. It was confirmed that

the Committee meets frequently to share reported information and statistics. It was stated that labour's representatives are being invited in all convened meetings. The PSA raised concern of not being invited to these meetings. It was divulged that upon enquiry from the responsible Director on appointment letters for PSA representatives, he responded in that nominees must themselves approach their principal for the issuing thereof. The employer undertook to immediately intervene and have letters served upon nominees.

The employer also reported that staff members were informed of stinking waterlog n the adjacent premises' excavations and the ultimate effect of the intended buildings upon finalisation of the structures. Nine staff members' application who applied for working from home were approved subject to strict adherence to the criteria as laid down by the Department of Public and Administration as well as according to expected performance and workplans agreed upon between incumbents and managers. Submission of detailed medical reports on the history of diagnosed diseases was considered as prerequisite for approval.

Staff members in most Directorates are rotating at a 50%-attendance sequence to accommodate social distancing in offices. The PSA raised concerns of some managers not adhering to strict protocols as outlined by the employer, with specific reference to injury on duty which may ensue. These instances are where supervisors are responsible for reporting occurrences to the Department of Employment and Labour and injuries are occurring at home as a workplace. Furthermore, whether such employees were informed of the need to divert their landlines to their cellphone to cater services for clients' needs. The employer undertook to engage the PSA and managers on the legalities of the raised issues.

The employer also reported on the issued DPSA Leave dispensation on days to be utilised by employees who are impacted by the pandemic for isolation and quarantine purposes as well as other related incidences. The PSA reported that some infected members were made to utilise their vacation/sick leave days. The PSA believed the result would affect their annual allocations of leave credits. The employer responded that the Policy was now amended to incorporate the said dispensation and ratified accordingly. It undertook to investigate such occurrences as alleged by the PSA. Specifics would be needed to reverse such captured leave transaction. National Treasury has created a code for COVID special leave link to be used in the Persal system for this purpose. Thus, confusion on categorisation of such COVID-related leave will be eliminated.

## **Policies**

The Bursary Policy and Business Continuity Policy were tabled and deferred to the Policy Task Team, which would be convened on 9 June 2021.

## **Misallocation of functions**

The PSA demanded job evaluation and/or benchmarking of all Call-Centre staff. An external service provider was preferred for fairness. The employer requested to be afforded sufficient opportunity to consult its principals. The employer reported that it has consulted other parties and requested that the item be deferred to the next Chamber meeting.

Members will be kept informed of developments.

GENERAL MANAGER