

2. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 To ensure acceptability, transparency and continuity, the Bureau as usual, pursued on its consultative approach while interacting with its stakeholders. A communication strategy was established to transmit maximum information through clarification/explanation and to seek views, as well as active participation, on pertinent issues to review working conditions in the Public Sector. The Bureau equally voiced the merits and demerits of proposals and sounded stakeholders of possible options that would be considered for inclusion in the Report.

Operational and Functional Arrangements

- 2.2 Before embarking on the preparation of the Report, the Bureau mobilised its human resources into teams to deal with both administrative and technical issues. Technical staff were designated as Desk Officers and organised in panels to receive and provide information to all parties concerned. Further, our database was updated gradually and thoroughly upon receipt of information that has been requested from stakeholders. The support staff in collaboration with the technical team were required to arrange meetings and do the follow up on requests for postponements or otherwise.

Research

- 2.3 As an in-built core activity of the Bureau, research in the fields of remuneration practices, pay systems, grading structures, conditions of service and civil service reforms, among others, was conducted to keep pace with the evolving environment both at the local and international level. The findings of the research were discussed during brainstorming sessions in-house and relevant parts were retained for further discussion during consultation with stakeholders. This exercise was on-going until the publication of the Report.

Preliminary Meetings

- 2.4 Upon obtention of Government's approval for the preparation of the 2021 PRB Report, preliminary meetings were scheduled with representatives of the main Federations, namely Federation of Civil Service and Other Unions (FCSOU); State and Other Employees Federation (SEF); Federation of Public Sector and Other Unions (FPSOU); Federation of Parastatal Bodies and Other Unions (FPBOU); All Civil Service Employees and Other Unions Federation (ACSEF); Mauritius Labour Congress (MLC); Federation of Progressive Unions (FPU); All Workers Trade Union Federation (AWTUF); Independent Unions Federation (IUF) and General Workers Federation (GWF). These meetings served as a platform to impart maximum information on the calendar of activities and approach to be adopted in the preparation of the Report and most importantly, to reinforce the existing collaborative working relationship.

Collection of Data

- 2.5 With a view to updating existing records, data on various aspects of organisations were sought. The Bureau issued its first Circular on 02 May 2018 to all Heads of Ministries/Departments, Parastatal and Other Statutory Bodies, the Private Secondary Schools, the Local Authorities and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly requesting them to submit information on their organisations' Vision, Mission and Objectives, updated Customer Charter, Organisational Chart indicating, in hierarchical order, the different grades and their respective establishment size. They were also invited to designate an officer occupying a position at senior level in their organisation as contact person and facilitator to assist, amongst others, in submitting the required information, making appropriate arrangements for site visits, filling of Job Description Questionnaires and attending to all surveys with accuracy. Despite a closing date was set for the submission of the required information, many organisations inadvertently submitted the required documentation beyond the date limit and this slowed down the progress of the work. Reminders were subsequently issued for the obtention of the required information but there was a poor response from some organisations.
- 2.6 Another Circular was issued on 02 May 2018 inviting Federations to submit their views/observations and proposals on Conditions of Service prior to holding meetings with them. In making their submissions, they were requested to give their views/comments on general issues such as Reforms, Performance Management System, Training and Staff Development, Salary Ratio, Flexi-time, creation of grades outside the PRB/Addendum Report, Contractual Employment, excess supply of overqualified candidates, e-Government and new conditions of service that would lead towards an improvement in service delivery. The Bureau expected to receive the above proposals by 30 June 2018, the deadline set for submission of their memoranda. As certain Unions could not respond to the content of this Circular on time, the Bureau issued a final reminder on 24 August 2018. Some flexibility was allowed through a further delay upon request from Federations.
- 2.7 Via a Circular dated 07 June 2018, representatives of Staff Associations/Unions were apprised that the Bureau proposed to hold consultative meetings and discussions as regard the publication of the forthcoming PRB Report on Review of Pay and Grading Structures and Conditions of Service. To this end, they were invited to submit their representations/proposals pertaining to the grades they represented. They were also advised that while framing their submissions, they might consider, among others, qualifications, duties and responsibilities, training requirements, skills and competencies, levels in the hierarchy and change in work processes. The deadline for submission of information was set as at 07 August 2018.
- 2.8 Upon obtention of submissions from Federations, Unions and Management, respectively the Bureau started its series of consultative meetings as from 18 March 2019. Given that the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms (MPSAIR) is the implementing body, its representatives were convened to attend all meetings with Management. All proposals falling within the realm of the

Bureau were examined and discussed during the different meetings held and parties were given indications of the demands that could be acceded to and also those which needed further examination. Throughout the deliberations, stakeholders were reminded of the complex environment and difficult economic context within which the current review exercise was being carried out and the key considerations of affordability and sustainability to which the Bureau would adhere to. It is worth mentioning that in view of several requests for postponement of meetings from representatives of Union/Staff Association and even Management of certain organisations, the Bureau on occasions had to operate after normal working hours during weekdays and on Saturdays to give them the opportunity to make their oral submissions.

Surveys

- 2.9 The Bureau carried out a series of surveys on specific issues to collect factual information and gauge the effectiveness of the recommendations made in the 2016 PRB/Addendum Reports. The aim was, among others, to identify any problem arising out of implementation and to assess the advisability of bringing amendments to the existing provisions and introducing new conditions of service in the Public Sector.
- 2.10 Areas that were covered by our surveys include, *inter alia*, Recommendations made in the 2016 PRB/Addendum Reports which have not been implemented; Travelling and Car Benefits in the Public Sector; Recruitment and/or Retention; Part-time Employment in the Public Sector; Communication Facilities; Training and Development in the Public Sector; Flexible Hours of Attendance and Flexitime Working Arrangement in the Public Sector; Work from Home in the Public Sector; and Salary Ratio/Relativity.
- 2.11 In view of the fact that the country was in sanitary confinement to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the closing date for the submission of information for certain surveys was extended to 15 June 2020. Additionally, secondary data were also used for decision taking.
- 2.12 The findings of the surveys are summarised and presented under the relevant chapters of this Volume.

Workshops/Site Visits

- 2.13 In the context of this Report, officers of the Bureau attended 21 workshops and carried out around 51 site visits.
- 2.14 During the period June to September 2018, Technical Staff of the Bureau attended workshops/site visits organised by Federations/Unions to provide explanations and clarifications on recommendations of the previous PRB Reports. Union members were also provided with a template, designed by the Bureau, to facilitate Federations/Unions to make their representations in the context of the Report. Members were advised to be "SMART" in their representations to ease processing and decision taking.

- 2.15 Formal site visits were also effected by officers of the Bureau whenever it was deemed necessary and also at the request of Management or staff side to take cognizance of working conditions and environment, work processes and the impact of new technologies, among others.
- 2.16 Queries were answered by giving plausible clarification/explanation on operational and functional responsibilities, work arrangement and working conditions. Where necessary, the Bureau requested officers of the Occupational Safety and Health Unit of the MPSAIR to identify "*de visu*" the prevailing working conditions.

Consultative Meetings

- 2.17 Consultations with the stakeholders have been a conspicuous landmark in the preparation of the Report and bringing innovation/amelioration to the conditions of service and working environment of public officers. The preparation of this Report required the holding of some 800 meetings with different parties including around 52 meetings at the Bureau with staff of different grades in relation to individual representations. Consultative meetings were held in the first instance with FCSOU, SEF, FPSOU, FPBOU, FPU, GWF, AWTUF, ACSEF, IUF, MLC and AWF. Their views and comments were sought on general issues, such as Pensions; Performance Management; Training and Development; e-Government; National Minimum Wage, among others.
- 2.18 Thereafter, Unions/Staff Associations of Public Sector Organisations were convened at the Bureau to discuss on their representations. Representatives of Federations, to which these Unions/Staff Associations are affiliated, were also present during some meetings. Ample time was given to the staff side to make their representations. In addition, Unions/Staff Associations were requested to liaise with officers concerned of the Bureau for further clarifications/queries, if any.
- 2.19 The Bureau also scheduled meetings with Management of Ministries/Departments/Organisations whereby representatives of the MPSAIR were present to answer to queries relating to schemes of service and implementation of our recommendations. For meetings with Parastatal Bodies or Local Authorities, a representative of the relevant parent ministry was equally invited to attend same to provide clarifications, if any.

Representations of Stakeholders

- 2.20 Both oral and written representations/submissions have been taken on board in framing our recommendations. In general, the main representations from the staff side/Federations related, among others, to: claims for better salaries; improvements in the conditions of service; creation of additional levels and merger of grades; payment of allowances; training to be job-oriented instead of generic; grant of special privileges and incremental credits; upgrading of qualification requirements; review of mode of appointment (selection/promotion); simple writing to facilitate interpretation and avoid ambiguities; monitor implementation of PRB recommendations; form part of Standing Committees recommended by PRB and

even High Powered Committee; reducing the gap between employees at the lower levels and those at the higher levels; trading off parts of the benefits into monetary gain; conducive working environment with emphasis on Health and Safety; and restyling of grades.

- 2.21 On the other hand, Management submissions pertained to, *inter-alia*, redesigning of organisation structure; reviewing of the total reward system; defining the accountability boundaries in the Public Sector; usage of technology to promote a paperless environment; attracting and retaining talents; implementation of the Performance Management System; Public Sector Management Reforms; and Training and Development.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

- 2.22 The Bureau collected a customer feedback after the completion of each consultative meeting with stakeholders. The purpose was to gain insights and inputs on the way consultations were being held and to bring corrective measures if need be. Any novel method proposed by stakeholders was considered to improve our consultative approach to gain accurate information for the betterment of the Report. The survey feedback form was collected and analysed after each meeting.
- 2.23 Feedbacks gathered revealed that the dissatisfaction among stakeholders was quasi in-existent while 44% of stakeholders were satisfied with the way the Bureau examined and discussed representations as compared to 56% who were very satisfied. Further, the main proposals made by stakeholders for the betterment of the service at the Bureau's level were, amongst others, request to hold regular informative/interactive meetings; continue to adopt an open door policy; conduct of regular site visits; proposals to be granted due attention; continue giving valued advice; comparison be made with organisations performing in similar field at international level; meetings/seminars be organised regularly; have a representative of Management during consultative meetings; and conduct awareness session in the context of the Report.
- 2.24 The Bureau has positively acknowledged the above inputs of all parties concerned. Subject to relevance, importance and justification, we adopted new strategies, which fall within our mandate, to subsequently consolidate the cordial relation in the carrying out of our activities.

Visit to Rodrigues

- 2.25 A visit to the Island of Rodrigues was organised for consultations with Unions and Management and for the conduct of surveys and site visits. A team comprising Survey Officers conducted interviews and wrote job descriptions for some 110 incumbents, out of 150 sampled ones, covering all grades falling in the Workmen's Group. Simultaneously, another team comprising the Ag. Director, Ag. Deputy Director, Ag. Principal Job Analyst and a Job Analyst along with representatives of the MPSAIR had consultative meetings with the Unions and Management. All the Unions at the RRA and individuals who wished to depone were given the opportunity to make their case *viva voce* before the panel chaired by the

then Ag. Director. Some Unions were assisted by members of their respective Federations. Six site visits were also carried out to take cognizance of the organisational set up and working conditions.

Methodology for Job Description Questionnaires

2.26 In the context of every general review, a few selected employees of almost all grades are given the opportunity to duly fill in a Job Description Questionnaire, which is then submitted to the Bureau. For this exercise, we adopted a random stratified sampling method in order to ensure adequate representation of each grade under review, as per the updated lists of employees classified by grades and postings which were submitted by the various Ministries, Departments and Organisations in the Public Sector including Rodrigues Regional Assembly. A 10% systematic random sample was drawn from each stratum. The whole population of a grade was in principle, surveyed whenever the population was less than twelve. Around 5000 Job Description Questionnaires were issued to non-manual grades and about 2200 interviews were carried out in respect of manual grades for the purpose of writing job descriptions by the Technical staff of the Bureau.

Job Evaluation

2.27 Both analytical and non-analytical techniques of job evaluation have been used in the determination of job relationships. Maximum factual information was gathered on the different grades under review through interviews, self-written Job Description Questionnaires, schemes of service, on the site observations and written submissions received, among others.

2.28 To ensure a consistent and objective evaluation, the point rating system was used where jobs are broken down into their core components which are referred to as factors. Each factor was measured individually and given a value to indicate the relative importance of each one. A total score was then derived by adding together all the values allocated to each factor yielding the overall value of the job. Benchmark grades and benchmark hierarchies were assessed and a rank order of jobs was established. For the sake of transparency and acceptability, the job evaluated structure was sent to the main Federations to obtain their views. There were no dissenting opinions expressed regarding the established job relativity.

Constraints

2.29 In the course of the preparation of this Report, several constraints were encountered which, in one way or another, delayed the work progress. Some of them are highlighted hereunder:

- Lack of timeliness and accuracy in the submission of Memoranda by some Unions and Management.
- Memoranda submitted and processed by officers of the Bureau were not canvassed during consultation. Instead, new submissions were put forward on the date of meeting scheduled/during meetings.

- Some meetings, scheduled with Unions and Management, were postponed at the last moment without reasonable cause and stakeholders were not readily available for a replacement.
- Delay in obtention of relevant information and data from our diplomatic missions because of COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Change in managing team of certain parastatal bodies.
- Departure of several staff of the Bureau aged above 60 on Early Voluntary Retirement in the course of the preparation of the Report.
- The national sanitary confinements in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Bureau did not obtain Work Access Permits (WAP) for some officers while others were encouraged to work from home.
- Much time was spent on verification of information submitted with a view to reducing errors as very often incomplete or wrong information were furnished by stakeholders. In the same breath, in many cases additional information/document/statistics from union members and Management were submitted with much delay. In some instances, requested information were not submitted despite several reminders.
- The delay in obtaining the views of our main stakeholder on General Conditions of Service.

2.30 These factors, among others, which were beyond our control impacted on our scheduled time frame to listen to all our stakeholders and the moreso, to properly assess some issues that required further information.

Master Salary Scale

2.31 A Master Salary Scale with incremental progression has been devised as hereunder:

Rs 10250 x 175 - 10775 x 200 - 11775 x 205 -12595 x 230 -13975 x 250 - 15225 x 260 - 17825 x 275 - 18925 x 300 - 19525 x 325 - 21475 x 375 - 22225 x 400 - 23425 x 525 - 26050 x 675 - 27400 x 825 - 35650 x 900 - 37450 x 950 - 42200 x 1300 - 46100 x 1575 - 49250 x 1650 - 54200 x 1700 -64400 x 1800 -69800 x 2000 -75800 x 2150 -82250 x 3000 - 88250 x 3125 -107000

2.32 All recommended salary scales of the different grades are segments of the above Master Salary Scale.

Salary Coding and Scaling

2.33 A six-digit salary coding has been used. The first set of two digits indicates the occupational grouping, that is, job classification based on the nature of work. The middle and last sets of three digits denote the initial and top salaries of the grade respectively and these codes correspond to the relevant salary points in the Master Salary Scale.

2.34 The code for the initial salary is "000" for flat salaries. With regard to Parastatal Bodies and Local Authorities, the acronyms with numerical annotations have been used as salary codes for the respective grades. All salary schedules have been presented in descending order except for Parastatal Bodies which is in ascending order.

Layout of the Report

2.35 The Report consists of two volumes as follows:

Volume 1

General Background and Related Issues and Conditions of Service

Volume 2

Part I : Civil Service

Part II : Parastatal and Other Statutory Bodies and the Private Secondary Schools

Part III: Local Authorities

Part IV: Rodrigues Regional Assembly

Volume 1 outlines the background, context and orientation of the Report. Strategies adopted and major consideration of service applicable to Public Sector Employees are portrayed therein. It deals with General Conditions of Service and Related Issues.

Volume 2 Part I of the Report deals with the pay and grading structures, specific conditions of service and organisational design of Ministries, Departments and other service entities in the Civil Service. Within each Ministry/Department, grades have been ordered hierarchywise in descending order of salary.

Volume 2 Part II deals with the Parastatal Organisations reported upon by the Bureau and also covers Private Secondary Schools.

Recommendations for grades in the Municipal and District Councils as well as Village Councils are laid down in **Volume 2 Part III**.

Volume 2 Part IV deals with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) and sets down recommendations pertaining to salaries, organisation structures and specific conditions of service that would apply for employees serving in the different commissions of the RRA.

