

## RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

- 1.1 Set up as a body corporate under the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) Act 39 of 2001, the RRA exercises its function on behalf of the Republic of Mauritius. It is a Parliamentary institution and is responsible for the formulation and implementation of policy in respect of the areas under its jurisdiction.
- 1.2 The RRA is empowered to make policy decisions, through its Executive Council (equating the role of Government Cabinet) which comprises the Chief Commissioner, the Deputy Chief Commissioner and five other Commissioners who are responsible for exercising general direction and control over the Commissions assigned to them, namely:
  - (i) Commission for Women's Affairs, Family Welfare, Child Development, Industrial Development, Information and Communication Technology, Vocational Training, Cooperatives, Trade, Commerce and Licensing and Prisons and Reforms Institutions;
  - (ii) Commission for Health, Community Development, Fire Services, Meteorological Services, Judicial Services and Civil Status;
  - (iii) Commission for Social Security, Housing, Labour and Industrial Relations, Employment and Consumer Protection;
  - (iv) Commission for Agriculture, Environment, Fisheries, Marine Parks and Forestry; and
  - (v) Commission for Youth and Sports, Arts and Culture, Library Services, Museum, Archives, Historical Sites and Buildings.
- 1.3 Responsibility for the efficient administration of all the functions of the Executive Council rests upon the Island Chief Executive (ICE). He has under his administrative control all the staff of the RRA. The ICE is, in addition, empowered to exercise functions pertaining to law enforcement such as those of the Magistrate (in the latter's absence), the Director of Environment and Director of the Tourism Authority.
- 1.4 Departments of the Executive Council have been grouped and placed under the overall supervision of Departmental Heads who are also the Accounting Officers thereof.

#### Preparatory Work and Official Visit to Rodrigues

- 1.5 The Circular M1 issued by the Bureau in 2018 to all Public Sector Organisations in Mauritius was simultaneously sent to the RRA to request, among others, updated information on the overall vision, mission and objectives; updated Customer Charters;

departmental organisation charts with the different grades in hierarchical order and their respective establishment size; as well as a list of all grades at the RRA.

- 1.6 The Bureau carried out a series of surveys on specific issues to collect factual information and gauge the effectiveness of recommendations contained in the 2016 PRB Report/Addendum Report and bring any corrective measures. The RRA was also invited to participate in our surveys.
- 1.7 In the same line as for the Civil Service, a random stratified sampling method was used to sample some 350 officers for Self-Written Job Description Questionnaires while some 150 employees were sampled for interview to be carried out during the official visit to Rodrigues. The purpose of this exercise was to gather maximum details of jobs with a view to enabling the Bureau to carry out a proper assessment of all grades in the RRA.
- 1.8 Traditionally, the Bureau organises an official visit to Rodrigues in the context of a review exercise. Hence, officers of the Bureau proceeded to Rodrigues from 20 to 26 September 2020 as part of its established plan of work. The delegation comprised the Director, Ag. Deputy Director, an Ag. Principal Job Analyst, a Job Analyst and a team of five Survey Officers.
- 1.9 The team of five Survey Officers was called upon, among others, to write Job Description Questionnaires (JDQs) of sampled job incumbents, who were interviewed. The duly filled in JDQs were thereafter forwarded to respective supervisors for their comments and eventual validation. Overall, some 110 employees of the Workmen's Group at the RRA were interviewed during the visit.

### Site Visits

- 1.10 Additionally, formal site visits were effected, to take cognizance/*constat de visu* of, *inter alia*, working conditions and the environment and work processes of different departments. During our official visit, the Ag. Principal Job Analyst along with Survey Officers, carried out site visits at the Fisheries, Research and Training Unit; Blood Bank Department of Queen Elizabeth Hospital; Desalination Plant Room; Binding Unit; Culture and Leisure Centre; and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

### Consultations with Stakeholders

- 1.11 The top Management team of the Bureau was welcomed by the Island Chief Executive in the morning of 21 September 2020. Thereafter, consultative meetings were held for the whole duration of the official visit with the Staff Unions, namely the Rodrigues Government Employees Association (RGEA); Rodrigues Public Service Workers Union; Rodrigues Nursing Workers Unions; Government Teacher's Union (RRA) and the Government Services Employees Association (GSEA). Moreover, the delegation had meetings with the Management side, the Departmental Heads as well as the staff of the different Commissions of the RRA wherein all oral and written representations/submissions were lengthily discussed. To maintain a transparent and consultative approach, other staff were also given an opportunity to depose upon

request. Representatives of the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms comprising the Secretary for Public Service, Director, HRM and officers of the HRM Cadre were in-attendance during meetings with the different stakeholders.

- 1.12 The delegation also had a courtesy meeting with the Chief Commissioner who gave a broad overview of the policy orientation of the RRA and its main priorities. He made some proposals specific to the RRA and requested the Bureau to make appropriate recommendations thereof.

### **Economic Factors and Constraints**

- 1.13 Several factors of paramount importance have been considered during the preparation of this Report such as: -

- attribution of the Bureau to look at salary/remuneration (Pay and Grading); the organisation structure (appropriate levels for a smooth delivery of services); and the specific conditions in the Public Sector together with specific conditions for the RRA;
- economic and financial factors such as introduction of National Minimum Wage; grant of Additional Remuneration, commonly known as salary compensation, of different quantum and up to certain levels from years 2017 to 2021;
- demand of the Trade Unions for relativity adjustment across the Public Sector;
- payment of interim allowance of Rs 1000 granted by Government as from January 2020; and
- unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on our economy.

- 1.14 Some constraints were encountered which, in one way or another, delayed the work progress, namely:

- information in respect of each Commission was obtained after several requests, thus impacting on our tight time frame. It was received on a piecemeal basis, partially inadequate and incomplete; and
- after consultative meetings, some proposals pertaining to creation of grades, enhancing the existing benefits and new allowances, among others, could not be finalised for want of official information and confirmation.

- 1.15 The delegation informed the stakeholders that in spite of all the above factors and constraints, the Bureau would, to the extent possible, address non-conformities and come up with an acceptable and sustainable salary structure. However, complete alignment with what obtains in the Civil Service would be subject to the complexities and specificities of the cadres/grades and the establishment of the RRA, among others. They were also apprised that the responsibility of the Regional Assembly should be looked into by the appropriate authorities. As regards the non-setting up of the Administrative Reforms Committee, the Bureau considers that the relevant stakeholders should come to a consensus.

## Revision of Allowances

- 1.16 In general, in the context of an overall review, the quantum of all allowances is normally revised. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting unfavourable economic and financial state of the country, we could not adopt the same course of action for this Report. **Instead, we have intelligently focussed more on salary revision, given that benefits are attached thereto and have revised allowances marginally where needed.**
- 1.17 It may happen that following the revision of salaries, the quantum of an allowance which is computed on the initial salary point of a salary scale, turns out to be lesser than what officers were drawing with the previous Report. **In such cases, officers in post as at the eve of the publication of the 2021 Report should continue to draw the higher quantum on a personal basis.**

## General Observations

- 1.18 In view of the fact that the RRA has urged for complete alignment with what obtains in the Civil Service, the following have been observed in regard to the RRA: the establishment size of RRA is smaller as compared to Civil Service in Mauritius; the hierarchical cadre structure is pin-headed in the RRA unlike the pyramidal structure in the Civil Service; the top most positions inclusive of Departmental Head are not comparable with top most administrative positions in the Civil Service in terms of accountability and responsibility, formulation of policies, international obligations, and supervision; and certain requests for creation of grades which have not been acceded to in previous Reports or on *ad hoc* basis as they did not meet the set criteria, have been created through the Budgetary exercise, thus giving rise to lateral/internal distortion.

## Private Consultancy Services

- 1.19 During consultative meetings, members of the Federations and Unions have mentioned that they are not in favour of the practice of enlisting the services of Private Consultants which they view to be at the disadvantage of certain category of officers, giving rise to distortion in salary relativities and promotion of an unhealthy working environment.
- 1.20 The Bureau wishes to highlight that the PRB Report is implemented after obtaining the approval of the Cabinet. The moreso, the Bureau has a well-established and generally acceptable mechanism for salary administration/determination and review of conditions of service. The recommended salaries of grades and conditions of service are based on job evaluation exercises and studies, amongst others. Utmost care is taken to minimise distortion and disturbance in salary relativities and job rankings across the Public Sector.
- 1.21 This observation, however, does not preclude Government from tapping the services of private consultants. But for the sake of fairness and natural justice, the involvement of all stakeholders and professionals in the respective domain may be solicited.

## Restyling of Job Appellations and Creation of Positions

- 1.22 Many representations were made for restyling of job appellations. After examination, we found that in the majority of cases, these requests were premised on the expectation that they would lead to an upgrading in salary. We have to point out that any upgrading in salary emanates from an assessment of the grade based on a job evaluation exercise. We view it imperative to reiterate that job appellations should reflect the nature and level of duties performed by incumbents.
- 1.23 Moreover, the Bureau has equally noted with much concern that a few grades have been created/restyled in the Civil Establishment Order (CEO) or by Management without following the appropriate procedures. Such situations have given rise to internal imbalances in the present structures. In principle, restyling of grade is considered only in the wake of a general review or acceded to with the approval of the High Powered Committee (HPC) whereas creation of positions rests upon Management subject to functional/operational needs. **Hence, the Bureau holds that all requests for restyling and the reasons thereof should be submitted to the Bureau for consideration, through the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms (MPSAIR). The latter, being the sole authority responsible for updating the CEO, should ensure that the appellations are strictly in accordance with our recommendations or as approved by the HPC. As regards creation of grades, the Bureau recommends that all requests thereof should be forwarded to the Standing Committee as set out in the Chapter – Organisation Structures and Related Issues in Volume 1 of this Report.**

## Performance Criteria

- 1.24 As per existing provisions, officers in various grades are allowed to benefit from movement beyond their top salary subject to satisfying the conditions laid down below:
- (i) **they should have drawn the top salary for at least 12 months;**
  - (ii) **they should have been efficient in their performance during the preceding year; and**
  - (iii) **they should not be under report.**
- 1.25 The conditions are directly linked to performance. Hence, wherever these have to be met under specific recommendations, they should be referred to as **“Performance Criteria”**.

## Consequential Structural Changes

- 1.26 In general, structural changes effected in the General Services/Administrative Cadres, Procurement and Supply Cadre, Finance Cadre, Internal Control Cadre and the Workmen’s Group in the Civil Service have, as appropriate, been extended to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. **These changes are dealt with in details in the relevant Chapters of Volume 2 Part I of this Report.**

**Structure of the Report**

- 1.27 For this review, all the Commissions requested for the creation of additional levels, restyling and filling of existing grades. The Bureau carried out an in-depth analysis of the structures in each Commission. All the recommendations pertaining to organisation design and pay structures have been made under the respective Commission/Division and they are self-explanatory.
  
- 1.28 In the introduction of each Commission/Division, we have wherever possible, defined and spelt out the goals, objectives and future orientations for our users. Additionally, with the approval of the Management of the RRA, the salary schedules have been aligned with those of the Civil Establishment Order 2020.
  
- 1.29 The Master Conversion Table is given at Annex, the list of grades eligible for loan to purchase a 70% duty exempted car for official travelling is at Annex II and the list of grades eligible for loan to purchase an autocycle/motorcycle for official travelling is at Annex III.

**Acknowledgement**

- 1.30 The Bureau would like to express its appreciation to all the stakeholders in particular: Management of RRA inclusive of all the Heads of Commissions and their staff; the representatives of the different Unions; the President of the FCSOU and representatives of GSEA and all the staff of RRA for their invaluable contribution in the preparation of this Report. We would also like to thank all those who responded favourably to our survey questionnaires and provided suggestions for consideration. All these inputs have been considered while drafting this Volume.

