



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

MINISTRY OF FINANCE
Communications Unit

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Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Minister Dookeran refers dispute with the PSA to the Special Tribunal

Port of Spain: Today, Friday March 18, 2011, the Honourable Minister of Finance, Winston Dookeran, referred the dispute with respect to revised salaries and Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) for the period January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2010 for officers of the Civil Service and Statutory Authorities subject to the Statutory Authorities Act, Chap. 24:01 to the Special Tribunal established under section 21 of the Civil Service Act, Chap. 23:01.

The Special Tribunal was established to hear and determine disputes arising in the Civil Service, the Police Service, the Fire Service, the Prison Service and the Teaching Service, among others, which are referred to it and to make appropriate awards thereon.

Since October 2010, the Chief Personnel Officer (CPO) and the Public Services Association (PSA) had been holding discussions on revised salaries and COLA for officers of the Civil Service and Statutory Authorities. At March 1, 2011, fourteen (14) meetings had been held between the parties.

On that date, the CPO made her final offer on revised salaries and COLA to the PSA. That offer entailed a 5% increase in salaries after the consolidation of the COLA existing at December 31, 2007, new rates of COLA and the provision of a lump sum of \$2000 in respect of the period January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2010.

On March 11, 2011, in accordance with the provisions of section 17 of the Civil Service Act, Chap. 23:01, the CPO reported to the Honourable Minister of Finance that no agreement had been reached between the parties on the matter of revised salaries and COLA.

Once such a report is made to the Honourable Minister, a dispute is deemed to exist in respect of the matter and section 20(1) of the Act makes it mandatory for the Minister of Finance to refer any such dispute for settlement to the Special Tribunal within twenty-one (21) days from the date on which the dispute is reported to him.

In referring the dispute at this time, the Honourable Minister has taken into consideration the fact that despite all efforts of the Chief Personnel Officer, significant differences continue to exist between the positions of the parties and that it does not appear that agreement would be achieved bilaterally by the deadline specified in the Civil Service Act.

While the period in respect of which the CPO and the PSA were negotiating is January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2010, any award given by the Special Tribunal must be for a period of not less than five (5) years from the date on which the award takes effect.

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