



# Jamaica Civil Service Association

## Statement on the current status of the discussion with the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kingston, Jamaica Monday, October 2, 2023

Dear Valued JCSA Members,

This serves to provide some context to what was previously circulated to the general membership regarding outstanding areas of concern arising from the implementation of the compensation review for the public sector and following discussion between the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service (MoF&PS) and the Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions (JCTU):

- 1) **Reinstatement and increase of passenger mileage:** As was previously indicated, the MoF&PS had agreed with the JCTU to reinstate passenger mileage at a rate of \$35.00 per km with effect from July 1, 2023.
- 2) **Retroactive mileage:** The MoF&PS had agreed with the JCTU to make the increase in the mileage amount of \$100 per km retroactive to April 1, 2022, for an eight (8) months retroactive period. Payment to be made in two (2) parts, one on or before December 2023 payday and the other on April 2024 payday.
- 3) **Payment of Increment:** The MoF&PS had offered to pay two (2) increments for the period 2022 to 2025 as outlined below:
  - In April 2025, an increment to be paid to all workers (regardless of performance)
  - Normal performance increment for 2024/2025 (using the old/current) system) to be paid in 2025.

The JCTU had advised the MoF&PS that member unions will consult with their members and revert to the MoF&PS.

- 4) **Clarification of Subsistence Allowance:** The MoF&PS had agreed to issue clarification to MDA's that Subsistence Allowance is payable within a worker's designated zone of work as long as the new distance and time criteria are met.
- 5) **Overtime Policy:** The MoF&PS had agreed to issue a draft Overtime Policy for the JCTU to peruse and provide feedback. The JCSA provided feedback and a submission made to the JCTU which was subsequently sent to the MoF&PS.

- 6) **Uniform Policy:** The MoF&PS had agreed to issue a draft Uniform Policy for the JCTU to peruse and provide feedback. Feedback was also provided to the JCTU by the JCSA which was also forwarded to the MoF&PS.
- 7) **Transitioning of Contract workers:** The MoF&PS had agreed to commence the process of transitioning contract workers to permanent employment with those in the Ministry of Education and Youth, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the National Solid Waste Management Authority in the 2023 financial year.
- 8) **Duty Allowance:** The matter of duty allowance is still a contentious issue.

The JCTU, having already agreed with the MoF&PS on the reinstatement of passenger mileage at the new rate and the payment of retroactive mileage, the member unions consulted with their members and reported to the MoF&PS that the members were not willing to give up any of their increment. The JCTU recommended to the MoF&PS to send out the requisite circulars to the MDs to effect the agreement with respect to the passenger mileage and the retroactive mileage, while we continue to negotiate the matter of increment.

The MoF&PS have advised that it is a **packaged approach** and with the JCTU not agreeing to the matter of increment, no action can be taken until there is an agreement on the three subject areas (reinstatement of passenger mileage, payment of retroactive mileage and increment payment).

The JCSA notes that to date the final Overtime and the Uniform Policies have not been presented to the JCTU to facilitate their implementation. This delayed action continues to have devastating effect on many public sector workers. The JCSA is very dissatisfied with the approach taken by the MoF&PS to treat the issues as a package and has made contact with the MoF&P seeking an urgent meeting to address the issues. **If there is no resolution the matter could be sent to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security as a dispute.**

The JCSA finds this **“take-it or leave-it”** approach by the MoF&PS to be quite unfortunate as it appears that workers are being held at ransom for demanding their increments to which they are rightfully entitled. The MoF&PS refusal to pay public sector workers all their increments is a clear breach of **Sections 37 and 38** of the Public Service Regulations, 1961 which specifies the circumstances under which an increment can be withheld.

With respect to the many anomalies arising from the implementation of the compensation restructuring, The JCSA was informed by the MoF&PS that where specific anomalies have been identified that the JCSA should present them in a detailed manner to the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service in pursuit of a resolution. This was communicated to all MDAs and subsequently, the JCSA referred several anomalies to the MoF&PS and to date the JCSA has received only one response. The MoF&PS continues to be very unresponsive to the challenges that several public sector workers are enduring, arising from the implementation of the compensation restructuring. The leadership of the JCSA have agreed that the MoF&PS has been given more than enough time to make a serious attempt to resolve the anomalies and is advising that normalcy cannot be guaranteed if the MoF&PS continues to demonstrate a lack of will to address the anomalies.

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Techa Clarke-Griffiths, MBA  
President  
Office of the President  
Jamaica Civil Service Association