



## Statement from the President of the Jamaica Civil Service Association

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Kingston, Jamaica

Wednesday, December 14, 2022

### To the Members and Potential Members of the JCSA within TAJ

Dear Team,

As the Jamaica Civil Service Association (JCSA) pursues the implementation of the Compensation Review we wish to use this medium to explain to you the methodology that is being utilized to transition the staff of Tax Administration Jamaica (TAJ) to the new compensation structure.

By way of background, when we received the initial public sector/civil service alignment, we examined it against the current classification within TAJ and how this compared with the Central Civil Service alignment. This was done when we examined the Consultant's Report in March 2022. Arising from this analysis, the JCSA determined that the alignment of TAJ starting at the top be aligned at Level 14, did not serve for a proper alignment of the entire structure of TAJ. We recommended that for a seamless transition TAJ needed to be aligned higher, starting with the Commissioner General at Level 15, aligning with Permanent Secretaries which would allow for a cascading effect down the ranks of TAJ. This was predicated on the fact that the establishment of TAJ embodied a spirit that spoke to the TAJ being higher compensated relative to the public sector. This would mean that similar job functions in TAJ would always attract a premium, in terms of salary. Having come to this position, the JCSA would have put this to TAJ, its management, Ministry of Finance and the TIU.

There was general acceptance that the JCSA's position held merit. We have consistently and repeatedly advised the TAJ staff that this is the JCSA's position as it relates to the alignment of TAJ. It is the JCSA's understanding that there has been discussion with the Ministry of Finance, TIU and the management of TAJ where they are seeking to put into effect what the JCSA would deem to be the principled approach regarding the alignment of TAJ. It is natural and in the ordinary course of business for the employer to consult within its rank on staff-related matters before it comes to the Union. To that end, the management of TAJ and the Ministry of Finance, which is its parent-ministry have been in dialogue on the proposed alignment for the staff within TAJ. Please note that the government cannot negotiate with itself. The management of TAJ cannot negotiate for the staff in TAJ. The compensation review is a change in government policy that is necessitating consultations and what we are seeing is the government consulting with its agency.

We are aware that it has been said that the JCSA is not serving the interest of the staff within TAJ. We categorically deny this as we have historically defended the rights of the staff of TAJ from when it was four (4) entities, to now that it has become the new TAJ and we have never resiled from representing our members within TAJ.

We are at a point now where the change in the government policy on compensation will also be applied to the already improved salary in TAJ to include an adjustment for those persons who are travelling officers, recognizing that this change in government policy could adversely affect a group of workers who are in receipt of a significant non-taxable allowance. The JCSA would have had dialogue with the TIU/Ministry of Finance from as far back as March 2022 to find a solution to what we saw was an impending problem. What we were able to achieve is the minimum guarantee that no worker will be worse off. This was embodied with a minimum guarantee of 20% on net pay calculated on year 3 salaries, applied over 3 years. We have also secured a buyout of the one year for which there was no increase in upkeep and mileage rates. Additionally, we have secured an increase of \$100 per km to take cognizant of the fact that elements of the upkeep are still going to be absorbed by travelling officers.

We have recognized that the process of establishing the alignment for TAJ has been slow, however this is no fault of the JCSA. We must emphasize that we do not produce scales; we did not propose the alignment and we are not the employer. We are the worker representative and we have made the appropriate and required advocacy on behalf of our members.

It is now the duty of the employer to implement what has been agreed on with the Union. We have shared the draft MOU with you, and we have consistently shared the various releases and analyses surrounding the Compensation Review. We are now monitoring and evaluating those components of the Review that are now being implemented.

We await the end of consultations between the Ministry of Finance and the TAJ and as soon as that is completed, the Union will have its say in relation to the alignment of the staff in TAJ.

We ask for your continued understanding and support as we, your union continue to play our role as your advocates and protectors.

- END -

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