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## Classified Pemandu report exposes Botswana Public Service

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**A confidential report by a Malaysian private consultancy firm, Performance Management and Delivery Unit (PEMANDU) Associates, that was engaged by Botswana government through the Directorate of Public Service Management (DPSM) has revealed a damning state of affairs in the country's Civil Service.**

Curiously, the report has been ready for long but kept in the shelves by the Botswana government, making it out of reach and touch for the critical stakeholders including the trade unions and the public. The report essentially provides the progress and status update on Pemandu Associate's activity in Botswana from December 2017 up to September 2018 in which their main aim, which they executed, was to conduct preliminary assessments on the areas of remuneration management system.

In the classified report they unearthed that generally the Botswana Public service performance management is not functioning efficiently as it was supposed to be. According to the report, titled, "remuneration system project report for grades A to D," there are issues on the complexity of performance appraisal form and biased session between employee and employer. It further reveals that "the Botswana Public Service today does not have a comprehensive remuneration structure and does not follow best practices."

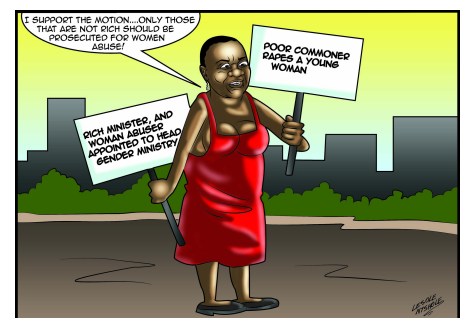
Some of the flaws in the system, it posits, is that the current Botswana public service remuneration follows a traditional model made up of grades and notches or steps within grades; and a new employee will start at the bottom notch of the grade as there is no flexibility to take into account special skills and experience. It states that the employee will move up from one notch to another based on promotion and that the notches remain steep, meaning an employee will reach the ceiling of the particular grade quickly.

"The salary for one grade does not overlap with another. This means that on reaching the ceiling (the top most notch of the salary grade), the employee must be promoted to another grade in order to advance in salary. In addition the current design does not have a fixed salary range – it is merely a series of notches within a particular grade and no fixed ceiling and floor levels. This has serious implications in terms of the salary structure in equilibrium."

To illustrate this, the report gives an example of an employee (A) who may start at the lowest notch of a

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grade at P20 000 and another employee (B) at the highest notch earns P100 000 adding that the range between the lowest and the highest salary point is then therefore P80000. "Assuming there is a salary increment of 5 percent. Employee at the bottom will now earn P21000 whilst employee B will earn P105000. The gap between the two salary points increases from P80000 to P84000. With another 5 percent adjustment, the gap widens to P88200," it highlights.

According to the top secret report, this means the structure will slide with each salary adjustment and the gap will grow exponentially as well. It points out that this design is not sustainable in terms of managing the salary bill, keeping equity and maintaining employee morale as the salary pyramid grows steeper with each salary adjustment. It further revealed that the existing salary structure does not follow the norm in terms of range and notches; it's complex and difficult to manage.

"The salary rates are below market rates and is thus not competitive in terms of attracting and retaining talent and the required professional skills for the country to become a high performing public service sector," the report compiled by the engaged Malaysians highlights. The Pemandu Associates report also discloses that the structure contains many legacy issues which arose as a means of circumventing the current shortfalls in the system and that there is no review process to sustain a motivated workforce and productivity.

The current salary is a sliding structure, reports states adding that the minimum and maximum salaries (ranges) are not locked and will change according to any inflationary adjustments declared by the leadership. The range (maximum and minimum) within each grade from grade C to grade E is narrow. Hence over time, this would create a bulge of employees who are stagnated at the top of the scale. This was observed particularly for grade E1 where 63 percent of the employees are stagnated at ceiling.

Many of those who have reached the salary ceiling would remain there for a long time as the number of positions at the next level is usually less and consequently, the number of vacancies is much lesser. In the case of grade E1, report states that 36 percent of the employees at the ceiling have remained status quo for more than 5 years – in fact, all 63 percent of them at the ceiling of grade E1 will not be promoted to grade F1 as there are no vacancies in grade F1. "This is demotivating for current employees and a deterrent for the recruitment of much needed talent for the public service."

In some Ministries, it states the percentage of employees who are stagnated at the top of their scale has reached a dire situation and that the ministry of Basic Education has 82.7 percent of their employees stuck at the ceiling in grade C1 and 42.8percent at grade D1 while stressing "this has an adverse on productivity." Considering cadres such as doctors and teachers, the government report posits that the remuneration system is not flexible enough to recognise skills.

As an illustration, it explains that a doctor who joins the public service has a starting basic salary of P187 716 and a scarcity allowance of 40percent of the basic salary to supplement the shortfall in attracting the profession to the public service. It recommends that if the remuneration system is sufficiently robust and flexible, the doctor should be offered a starting salary of P262802 without the need to act as a 'bandage.'

The same is true for teachers, the shelved report asserts adding that Science and Mathematics teachers join the public service at grade C4 with a starting salary of P73416, supplemented by a 40percent scarcity allowance that makes the total remuneration P102782. "The scarcity allowance albeit a necessity distorts the remuneration structure and makes it difficult to manage the total remuneration." This comes in light of remuneration system issues which were raised including concern of among others, scarce allowances issues being distributed "unequally" in Botswana.

The current salary plus allowance lags behind the private sector and that it is not competitive and is a concern especially at the leadership level, it stresses. Moreover, the report acknowledges that the government of Botswana has laid out a bold and compelling vision of what the future of the country would look like in Vision 2036, which is, transforming from an upper middle-income nation to a high-income nation.

It adds that "the critical successes factor in arriving at a high-income nation status will be a high performing public service sector that will move the many levers for socio and economic development." Creating and sustaining a high performing public service sector, it emphasises that will depend to a larger part on having a remuneration framework that will enable the government to attract, retain, and motivate public service employees.

The report further cites a study by the University of **Warwick**, United Kingdom which showed that productivity increased between 12percent and 20percent if an employee was happy and that in another article, it was noted while money is not the only motivator and it is not the primary motivator for everyone, it is an important motivator for most people in the workplace including the public servants in Botswana.

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