



Salaries & Remuneration Commission

Rewarding productivity

PRESS STATEMENT

28th October, 2013

PRESS STATEMENT ON MCAs GO SLOW AND THE WAGE BILL SUSTAINABILITY

Background

Salaries and Remuneration Commission, in March 2013 set the salaries for State Officers. This was against a background of a public sector wage bill that was growing to an unmanageable level. The total public sector wage bill as a proportion of the GDP for the financial year 2012-2013 stood at 12 per cent, while for 2013-2014 stands at 13%. This is way above medium to long term target of 8%. As a nation we are all duty bound to work out what is affordable

Facilitating MCAs to Effectively Discharge their Duties

That notwithstanding Salaries and Remuneration Commission has engaged with Speakers' Forum and held meetings to seek tangible solutions to some of the issues the Forum has raised. The latest of such meetings the Commission has held with the Speakers Forum was on October 23rd, 2013.

Following discussions with MCAs, the Commission approved facilitation perks taking into consideration the constraints the Members of County Assembly faced in the discharge of their duties as representative of their constituents. The facilitation perks include sitting allowances, transport, responsibility allowances and airtime. To-date the Commission has provided the following allowances:

1. Salary Kshs.79,200/-
2. Sitting allowances at Ksh. 3000/- with a maximum 8 sittings per week
3. Transport allowance 20,000/-
4. Airtime 5000/-
5. Responsibility allowance upto a maximum of Kshs. 32,000/-

The minimum total remunerative package is for an MCA is Kshs. 185,200/- while highest earning MCA draws a monthly pay package of more than Kshs. 217,000/-

The MCA's also raised the issues of their grading relation to the county legislative and executive administration. The Commission in appreciation of the critical issues and concerns raised and the fact that the job evaluation was conducted before the MCAs were in office agreed to the MCA's request for job re-evaluation. The Commission is committed to undertake a job revaluation and a further analysis of factors that the commission may have not considered in the job evaluation considering the absence of the incumbents when the job evaluation for state officers was undertaken. Consequently, the Commission has hired a consultant, necessary ground work has been done and what is left is for the MCAs and other members of the County government to avail themselves for the job re-evaluation exercise.

In addition, the Commission has observed that since March, 2013 when the county government came into existence, new public offices have been created to enable the county governments to effectively deliver services to the people. This development was not taken into account when the Commission carried out the job evaluation for state offices for the national and county governments.

This further justified the agreement with the County government, MCAs included that the Commission undertake a job revaluation to determine the true worth of all these positions at the county government levels. Suffice it to say the remuneration structure that will be developed should be objective, defensible and fair.

The Commission recognizes that the Members of the County Assembly are properly remunerated to enable them to effectively undertake the duties of representation and oversight. But this should be within the parameters of the Constitutional principles of sustainability, transparency and fairness and the Public Finance Act.

Need for Dialogue

The Commission has had several consultative meetings including visits to all the 47 counties. It was jointly agreed by both the Commission and the Speakers' Forum that any review of salary for county state officers will be pegged on a job revaluation.

We are appealing to the MCAs not to waver but to join hands with SRC so that we can successfully carry out the job revaluation and move forward. In our opinion as SRC this is not the time to down tools. We appreciate and urge for the spirit of dialogue to be embraced.

Building capacity to deliver services

It is the Commission's view that a lot still needs to be well thought through in order for the gains in the constitution and more-so the devolution process to be appreciated by all and sundry. The letter and spirit of the constitution should be adhered to during the implementation of the devolution process to ensure that resources and public facilities are moved closer to the people at the grassroots and ensure equity in development opportunities and fair distribution of resources.

We need to support devolution through capacity building to effectively deliver public services and ensuring county governments receive adequate resources to fund their functions. It is SRC's stand that success to devolution cannot be measured by how much money is in the pocket/ wallets of the leaders but by how much Wanjiku has in her hand and is able to spend and invest.

High wage bill vs service delivery

Shouldn't we be working in hand in hand to seal leakages in our revenue collection system while ensuring efficiency in public expenditure? Is the spiralling wage bill a concern for SRC only, or a national concern? Can we afford huge salaries and Who will pay for the big salaries? Is this the right time to demand for higher wages? Are Kenyans ready or are they in a position to pay more taxes to meet the salaries of the leaders? For whose benefit is the devolution for is it for Wanjiku or for leaders? Who is for devolution- is it the institutions that are making efforts to manage the recurrent expenditure to a manageable level or institutions that consumes? Who is killing devolution?

We all want devolution to work. Many Kenyans are hopeful and have faith in the new political dispensation. They have faith that the devolved governments as established are a corridor to equal development across the Country. Let us not kill this hope by placing increased burden in taxation on a people who are already overtaxed and underpaid. We owe it to Kenyans also to at least adhere to the constitutional provisions and ensure that we have built a social and economic system whose guiding principles are fair distribution of resources and the collective welfare of society as a whole.

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