



NATIONAL HEALTH LABORATORY SERVICE (NHLS)

REPORT 4 OF 2017

25 MAY 2017

AS it was previously reported labour has served NHLS with a letter of intent to declare a dispute after wage negotiations deadlocked. In terms of the Constitution of the Bargaining and Labour Relations Forum (BLRF) a dispute meeting has to be convened within ten (10) working days after the employer is furnished with a letter of dispute.

The dispute meeting was convened on 19 May 2017. In this meeting, the employer reported that a meeting was convened with the Finance Committee and Remuneration Human Resource Committee to cost the wage demand. The employer further reported that these sub-committees were not in a position to give a mandate. The reason forwarded was that our wage demand was too high as the organisation is experiencing financial constraints. The employer informed us that it will seek a mandate from the Board in a meeting scheduled for 24 May 2017.

We expressed discontent with the employer's response and pointed out that the employer is not prepared to resolve the impasse.

After serving the dispute letter to the Employer, labour then filed a formal dispute of mutual interest to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) and the conciliation is set down for the 13 June 2017.

At the commencement of the dispute meeting the employer made a presentation regarding the **Remuneration and Reward Project**.

In the presentation, the employer pointed out that this project was implemented recently and that its aim was to ensure that NHLS employees

are remunerated competitive market-related salaries. The employer claimed that as a result the salaries of NHLS employees were raised on average by over 30% last year. The employer further stated that NHLS has paid a 13th cheque to employees on salary bands A to C last December and will honour this going forward.

Deliberations commenced and the following was discussed:

Annual Wage Negotiations

2017/2018: The employer made it clear that it does not have a mandate and can only make proposals on the wage negotiations and other conditions of service. The employer stated that all proposals are subject to costing by the Finance Committee which will make recommendations to the Board for approval.

Terms of salary adjustment: Parties agreed on a single term salary adjustment for this financial year.

Salary adjustment: Parties proposed to settle salary adjustment on 7.3% annual increase.

Medical Aid: Parties proposed a medical subsidy increase 7.3%.

The employer indicated that it is not able to engage us on the following demands until the Finance Committee has concluded the costing:

1. **Housing allowance**
2. **Shift allowance**
3. **Danger allowance**

Leave: Parties agreed on the Paternity Leave of 3 working days per calendar year which is not part of the family responsibility leave.

Parties also agreed on ten (10) working days pooled leave for Shop Stewards per annum.

Rural Allowance: Parties could not reach an agreement on this matter as the employer believes that this demand does not apply to NHLS as is the case in the Public Service. The employer tried convince us to consider removing this matter on the list of our demands until a proper investigation has been conducted.

We were however of the view that it should remain as the demand is relevant to NHLS which operates some of its laboratories in the rural areas where public servants receive this allowance.

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