

Feedback: DIRCO Departmental Bargaining Council (DBC) meeting – 13 August 2024

International medical claims

The previous *Informus* edition refers (copy can be obtained at the PSA website (www.psa.co.za) or from PSA Provincial Offices).

Members were previously informed that the PSA raised concerns regarding the way the employer has been implementing the Foreign Service Code on international medical claims, which led to claims being processed late and being rejected by GEMS. The employer previously reported that it had a meeting with GEMS to discuss ways and means to streamline the processing of claims with the necessary speed. The employer indicated that GEMS committed to process claims within seven days. GEMS officials were requested to visit the offices of the Department regularly so that they could process claims quickly. The employer will further request a list of ICD (International Classification of Diseases) from countries where ICD codes do not correspond with those of GEMS to put them in the system. The PSA noted the report and requested that the matter be referred to a task team so that regular feedback could be provided.

Organisational structure: Repositioning of South Africa's global presence/DIRCO rationalisation of foreign missions/transformation

The employer reported that it is reviewing the organisational structure. The PSA had consistently demanded that the employer must consult labour on the review of the organisational structure. The employer agreed to consult labour going forward. Members will be invited to provide input on the draft organisational structure once it is shared with labour.

Mobile Communications Policy

The draft Mobile Communications Policy was tabled at the DBC prematurely without prior consultation with labour. The employer has committed to consulting labour through the policy task team and the DBC. Members will be able to provide input on the draft policy once it is tabled at the DBC.

Budget cuts

The employer reported that the Department is unable to function optimally owing to a lack of funds. It indicated that it has made a business case to National Treasury for additional funding and is awaiting

feedback. The PSA noted the report and requested that senior managers stop travelling business class and utilise economy class going forward to save costs.

Regulations of Foreign Services Act 26 of 2019

The employer reported that the responsible manager was not available to discuss the item. The PSA expressed dissatisfaction and urged the employer to treat DBC processes with seriousness. The matter was deferred to the next DBC meeting.

Internal Conditions of Services (ICOS) Circular 1/2024: Procedures and Guidelines

The PSA raised a concern that DIRCO issued *ICOS Circular 1/2024* on Remunerative Overtime and Standby allowance for the 2024/25-financial year, which excluded transferred officials from performing remunerative overtime. The PSA further indicated that the *Circular* issued was in contrast with the *Foreign Service Code part 3b, Chapter 26*, which outlined overtime provisions. The *Foreign Service Code* provides for the payment of overtime to transferred officials. The employer indicated that the policy has been amended and that the current policy is in line with *ICOS Circular 1/2004*. It indicated that it is an oversight that the *Foreign Service Code* has not yet been amended and that it will amend this *Code* to be in line with and reflect both the Policy and *ICOS Circular 1/2024*. The employer committed to providing a progress report on the matter at the next DBC meeting.

Departmental Revenue Policy

The employer tabled the Departmental Revenue Policy for discussion at the policy task team and the DBC. This policy provides guidelines for the identification, collection, reconciliation, and monitoring of revenue collected by DIRCO, including monies earned from parking fees, selling scrap paper, publications, *etc.* The policy aims to ensure sound practices for managing departmental revenue and applies to all officials in the Department. The draft policy is *attached* for members to make inputs. Members are requested to submit inputs to Velucia.maluleke@psa.co.za or bradleyg@dirco.co.za **by 23 August 2024.**

Posting of employees abroad

The PSA raised concerns that the employer was failing to implement the approved Placement Policy for posting staff abroad, warning that continued delays would further negatively impact DIRCO's core business. The employer informed the DBC that the process would finally proceed following an engagement with the Director-General. The PSA acknowledged this response and urged the employer to ensure proper communication with labour moving forward.

Members will be informed of developments.

Employees who want to join the PSA can visit the PSA's website (www.psa.co.za), send an email to ask@psa.co.za, or contact PSA Provincial Offices.

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GENERAL MANAGER