

BOFESETE

BOTSWANA FEDERATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS



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October 3, 2002

PRESS RELEASE

The teacher organisations (BOFESETE, BTU, BOPRITA & ABOTEL) have resolved to embark on a **peaceful public demonstration on Friday 4th October 2002.**

The demonstration is meant to show displeasure at the authorities especially the Ministry of Education for their handling of the teaching profession, particularly issues regarding separate pay structure, parallel progression, leave encashment, allowances and benefits. The demonstration will be in the afternoon and will not disturb the education of the students as teachers have agreed to put contingencies in place.

Government accepted the Tsa Badiri Consultancy recommendation and this was further endorsed by the subsequent Government white paper. Both the Tsa Badiri consultancy and Government white paper recommended that a separate pay structure for teachers, police, prisons and nurses should be in place by 1st April 2002. More than a year later nothing is forthcoming.

Teacher organisations have pleaded with the responsible authorities to release the said structure, at the latest, by the 4th October 2002, and paid retrospectively to April 2002 as was originally recommended by the Government. Two government reports, Report of the National Commission on Education (April 1977) and the Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE April 1994) both decry the conditions under which teachers operate.

The 1977 reports (Education for Kagisano) chaired by Torsen Husen, appointed by Sir Seretse Khama explains that "those submitting evidence to the commission, including both teachers themselves and

members of the general public were virtually unanimous in their view that teaching as a profession does not at present command sufficient respect". Husen's report further warns: "But we believe that the deterioration of the position of the teacher in Botswana has gone beyond acceptable limits, and needs to be arrested and reversed... Through the many' submissions, we have received discussions held on the subject of teacher's conditions of service, we have learnt that the problem is only particularly one of the absolute level of benefits. What is more at issue is the feeling on the part of teachers that they are badly treated by comparison with other groups of Public Servants" (chapter 6). Almost three decades later, Kedikilwe's report (RNPE April 1994) observed the same anomalies. It reads: "Commission has cited evidence received from both the Teachers and the general public confirming that the teaching profession is characterized by low morale and declining professional status. Even though teachers' salaries compare favourably with other public officers of comparable qualifications, teachers have not received many of the benefits available to public servants due either to administrative problems or communication lapses", Allowances, benefits and other attractions are hard to find within the teaching fraternity. Government White papers on review of salaries and working conditions of public servants is a good reference for everyone to see. There is no allowance specifically *for* teachers as compared to others!

It is on this sad background that teachers now feel that they have to express their dissatisfaction in a peaceful demonstration that will be held throughout the country, same day and afternoon.

Thank you.

BOFESETE National Executive Committee