

May 20, 2003

PRESS RELEASE

Dear News Editor

Botswana Teachers Organisations (ABOTEL, BOFESETE, BOPRITA and BTU) are extremely concerned by the slow pace that Government has taken in handling the teachers' allowance issue. In a recent Teaching Service Management Consultative Committee meeting with the Ministry of Education officials [16 Friday, May 2003], the organizations were shocked to learn that the matter has not reached Cabinet yet. The Cabinet is reported to have been attending to other pressing issues and that teachers' issue of overtime allowance will only be tabled this Wednesday [21 May 2003] for consideration.

The teachers' organizations expect the Cabinet to expedite the teachers' overtime allowance so that they quell teachers' impatience. The teachers' withdrawal from the boycott of extra-curricular activities was based on the seemingly promising moves of the Ministry of Education [MOE]. The MOE had further promised the teachers that their allowance issue would be expeditiously handled. It was also clarified that the De villiers commission and the allowance issue were unrelated and would be treated as such. The De villiers commission is expected to be out before the end of this month [May] and has almost overtaken the allowance issue.

The organizations' worst fears are that the on going foot-dragging is likely to precipitate into another teacher-Ministry of Education wrangle. The teacher organizations are currently under fire from impatient teachers who have been told by government that the nature of their work legitimately attracts an allowance and that this should be put in place as soon as possible. The teacher organisations' last hope of arresting the situation is the government's Executive organ. The organizations do not only expect the Cabinet to expedite the teachers' allowance issue, but also expect a positive consideration that is commensurate with their working conditions.

In the same TSM consultative meeting, teacher organizations expressed concern about the snail pace work that the MOE was doing on parallel progression. It was observed that the MOE was failing to deliver on time and that this was a serious concern as teachers' impatience was getting out of control.

Thank you.

BOFESETE National Executive Committee