

# BOFESETE

## BOTSWANA FEDERATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

P. O. BOX 404341

GABORONE

[Emailbofesete@botsnet.bw](mailto:Emailbofesete@botsnet.bw)

TEL: 3937472/3

TEL / FAX: 3170845



June 27, 2003

### Press Release

BOFESETE would like to express its disappointment with the manner in which the government is handling the concerns of teachers. The general public is no doubt aware of the running battles between the teacher organizations from mid last year to March this year. We wish to announce to the general public that our genuine demand for a Unique Pay Structure and teachers allowance have not been met.

You will recall that at the end of last year his Excellency the President directed that the Ministry of Education should go and sit down with the teacher organizations and discuss the issue of the Teachers' Allowance. In fact the President in principle agreed that the teaching profession deserves an allowance. The Ministry of Education and teacher organizations met and agreed on a "teachers overtime allowance". The two parties only differed on the percentage to be awarded to teachers. We as teacher organizations were assured that by April a cabinet memorandum will have circulated and the issue will be tabled before cabinet. Instead there has been a number of delays which were, as we were told, caused by the fact that the cabinet agenda was full as there were more important issues to be discussed. (so the teacher's allowance is not so important to government after all!!!)

In early June we were told that cabinet has discussed the issue but has not taken a stand on the issue or something to that effect. We were told cabinet still wants to look at the De Villiers Commission first. For goodness sake, were we not constantly reminded that the De Villiers Commission has nothing to do with allowances? **Tichara a bo a re, mo ke tsietsa Motswana!** We would like to ask cabinet to come out clear and announce to the nation whether or not the teachers will get an allowance. The Ministry of Education now (perhaps rightly) washes its hands off issue.

**Ba re** it is beyond them. Then there is the issue of parallel progression. You will recall the President also directed that parallel progression for teachers should be reinstated. In fact to him and to us this is normal progression and should not have been stopped in the first place. The courts also ruled in the Botswana Teachers Union's case that parallel progression be backdated to 1994 and Ministry officials had unlawfully started in 1996. The process of paying

teachers has started albeit at a snails pace. The disturbing factor is that rumours abound that people dealing with the payments have been given a verbal order, to concentrate more on processing deductions of those teachers who are found guilty of having taken part in the strike. Senior Ministry officials deny the rumours but what is clear is that the process of paying is not going on well. There is confusion between Ministry of Education and Teachers Salaries and Ministry of Finance on how to deal with the issue. But **ka go na le "PRO" ko** Ministry of Education why is he not communicating to teachers especially teacher organizations on the hiccups.

Over the years we have told Ministry of Education officials that one of their biggest shortcomings is the inability to communicate with the teachers. They have always promised to improve and have even introduced Mr. Patrick Masimolole as "PRO". Can anybody tell us how many times they have seen a communication from the "PRO" updating teachers on anything? I have not seen a single communiqué. Talk of PMS!! To cabinet we are saying, this is a replay of last year's events. Broken promise after another. I will not be surprised if at the end of the year we see another "uprising". **Batsadi**, you are testing the patience of teachers. **Ba neeleng tse di ba lebanyeng**. What hurts most is that when we negotiate with government as teacher organizations, we do so in good faith but I doubt if they always do. We are saying this because we had agreed with government that the issue of the allowance should be dealt with speedily. We had also agreed that it should be resolved before the De Villiers Commission. The thinking was that the allowance issue should not be clouded by the Commission.

The teacher organizations went to their 'charged' up constituents and asked them to calm down as their grievances were being attended to. The teachers do not trust the Ministry of Education and as leaders we fought hard to have them go back to classes and perform at their best. I must say to government that the moral is still low in the teaching fraternity and anything less than an allowance will not satisfy the teachers. If you indeed want the healing process to be seen, then tsisang allowance.

I wish to say we are patriots and we will not run away from our beautiful Botswana ka gore afterall you have the money and you can bring teachers from all over the world. **Re tlaa nna hela mo gae** and fight to the bitter end. **E a simolola gape ntw**a if we don't get our allowance.

**VIVA MATICHARA VIVA**

From Secretary General  
BOFESETE