



## FIJI TRADES UNION CONGRESS

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### **PRESS RELEASE No. 55-14-13**

#### **Salary Hike of 192% for Permanent Secretaries**

A Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) Salary Assessment Report for 24 Permanent Secretaries and 3 Disciplined Service Heads viz Commander RFMF, Commissioner of Police and Commissioner of Prisons will now receive salary increases ranging from \$160,000 to \$221,894 with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2013. Increase in percentage for the disciplined services and five (5) Permanent Secretaries are a whopping 192.5%.

The highest paid disciplined service Heads and five (5) Permanent Secretaries are as follows:

(1)	<i>Commander RFMF</i>	-	<i>\$221,894</i>
(2)	<i>Commissioner of Police</i>	-	<i>\$221,894</i>
(3)	<i>Commissioner of Prisons</i>	-	<i>\$221,894</i>
(4)	<i>Permanent Secretary, PM's Office</i>	-	<i>\$221,894</i>
(5)	<i>Permanent Secretary, Finance</i>	-	<i>\$221,894</i>
(6)	<i>Permanent Secretary, Works</i>	-	<i>\$221,894</i>
(7)	<i>Permanent Secretary, Health</i>	-	<i>\$221,894</i>
(8)	<i>Permanent Secretary, Education</i>	-	<i>\$221,894</i>

The above eight (8) office holders are the highest paid civil servants with a highest percentage increase in their salaries reaching more than 192% percent. The remaining nineteen (19) Permanent Secretaries have been granted a salary

of \$160,000 per annum with individual increases of 110.94% and in some cases reaching a high of 164.21%.

It would be interesting to find out as to what yardstick the PWC has used to grant such a huge pay hike when the only changes in the Permanent Secretaries duties are to appoint and terminate their staff in consultation with their Ministers as per the new Constitution. By any stretch of imagination this monumental pay rise could never be justified. No criteria or Job Evaluation formula can justify that it is not an abhorrent increase in salaries for a category of officials who are already classed as fat cats. Civil servants who are Deputy Permanent Secretaries (DPSs) and below are left high and dry after a pittance of 3% was paid to them in 2012 together with other civil servants (restoration of pay cut in 2007). The salary of DPSs now are \$61,000 and the lowest paid civil servants gets \$10,000 per annum compared to the highest paid getting \$221,894. The disparity and anomaly with this scale of pay hike has stretched so wide that it would be impossible to correct the relativity criteria of salaries in the public service ever. The anomaly and relativity issues which have been achieved over the years with several Job Evaluation and Restructuring Exercises are now rendered useless.

This pay hike as per PWC Assessment Report appears to have been plucked from the air or put simply the assessment was meant to some elite group in another planet. At the face of this drama it appears that all attempts have been made to buy the loyalty of the three (3) disciplined heads and twenty four permanent secretaries. It is well understood that the government of the day has the final say in any pay rise whatever the recommendation of the Consulting firm like PWC. The current economic state of the nation is well known and it is estimated that debt is around \$4billion with a contingent liability of \$2billion bringing the total to \$6billion puts the economic picture at a disastrous level. The chronic problem of low growth, low employment, low confidence levels and low investment is continuing unabated. The incidence of national poverty has increased and some estimates now put that to 60% (31% 2008-2009). The lowest paid civil servants are earning below poverty line. Unfortunately, civil servants (including workers in all other sectors in Fiji) cannot protest like those in other countries and the irony is that the regime is bent on pay discrimination amongst its own employees. It appears that it is the regime who has given a quiet nod to the enormous pay increases as they themselves are guilty of enjoying unimaginable salaries and perks.

The morale in the public service has been at its lowest ebb for the past seven years and selective pay rise of this elite group will bring down the morale to an extreme abyss ever witnessed in the public service. The Deputy Permanent Secretaries are already gung ho about being left out of any consideration for relative pay rise as they claim that they are the ones writing papers and handling all correspondence etc; while the Permanent Secretaries are taking jaunts overseas with one excuse or another. The pay gap between the Permanent Secretaries and their deputies are whopping 263.76%.

The international community should be able to analyse this act of discrimination by the regime when more than 99.9% percent of its own employees have been subjected to discrimination that is shameful and unbecoming of a regime that never misses a day praising itself from rooftops for giving equal rights to everybody and preaching, just and fair play in all its spheres of governance.

Other government owned entities have denied workers any pay adjustments for the last seven years or have made superficial adjustments like FSC where workers were given a meager \$1.30 a day or \$8.00 a week. FSC continues to refuse to negotiate with the workers union. The Regime's conduct in awarding its top people massive pay rises while denying workers at the very bottom a fair increase is simply shameful.

A significant dent has already been made in government finances particularly on Personal Emolument from \$2.1 to \$4.8 million. A sum of \$2.7 million has been fritted away by the regime to accommodate the greed of those at the top and in order to win their loyalty for the regimes unaccounted spending.



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