



GHANA REGISTERED NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

(Member of the International Council of Nurses)

BANKERS:
Ghana Commercial Bank
Gulf House Branch, Accra
Ecobank, Ridge West Branch, Accra

Our Ref: GRNMA/S/09/2020

Your Ref:

Date: 21st September, 2020

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

P. O. Box GP 2994, Accra - Ghana, West Africa

Tel: +233 (0) 302 500068

Fax: +233 (0) 302 503563

Email: info@ghananurses.org

Web: www.ghananurses.org

Digital Address: GA - 059 - 3733

PRESS RELEASE

It has come to the attention of the leadership of the Ghana Registered Nurses and Midwives Association (GRNMA), Ghana Physician Assistants Association and the Ghana Certified Registered Anaesthetists Association that, the Public Relations Unit of the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission has issued a chronological order of event which seeks to portray the GRNMA and its Allies as being inconsiderate and also did not clearly capture the true picture of events.

It is against this background that we seek to share the following sequence of events.

1. In July 2019, the Ghana Registered Nurses and Midwives Association was invited to a meeting at the Ministry of Health to discuss the renegotiation of its Conditions of Service. It was made clear to the Employer in the said meeting that, considering the immense challenges the Union had faced with the implementation of its April 2016 Collective Agreement, the Employer must understand that the specific allowances unique and to Nurses and Midwives, CRA's and Pa's must be paid as part of the salary and that the Ministry of Finance must be well represented in the negotiations.
2. The Rules of Engagement was subsequently signed on 29th July, 2019.
3. On the 17th of September 2019, by a letter number FWSC/D/SCR/90/Vol.2/42 the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission (FWSC) wrote to the Ghana Registered Nurses and Midwives Association (GRNMA) to formally request for proposals for the re-negotiation of their Conditions of Service.
4. GRNMA did not submit the proposal immediately because the Collective Agreement signed as far back as April 2016 had not been implemented and therefore the question was, is there a need for a re-negotiation.
5. The GRNMA took a decision to go into re-negotiation but this time have regional durbars to solicit the views of its members on the implementation challenges of the April 2016 Collective Agreement and how the Union could approach things differently this time around.



6. The general feedback from members in the durbars organized in October 2019 revealed that because the Collective Agreement placed the responsibility on health facilities to pay entitlements from their Internally Generated Fund (IGF), the Collective Agreement was never implemented since according to the heads of those health facilities, the reimbursement from the National Health Insurance Scheme was not effective and therefore their limited funds could not be used in paying staff allowances.
7. The other major feedback from the members was that, going into the next negotiation, the leadership must agree with the Employer to pay some allowances unique to nurses and midwives as part of the basic salary.
8. Following the regional durbars, GRNMA engaged its Allied Associations (Ghana Physician Assistants Association and Certified Registered Anesthetists) as well as its sister Nursing and Midwifery Associations specifically Ghana Registered Midwives Association and leaders of its Specialized Groups to further discuss the proposal to be tabled to the Employer.
9. At the three-day consultative meetings were held on 17th, 18th and 21st October, 2019 under the guidance of the GRNMA Labour consultant, the proposal was developed and the consultant was tasked to finalize it for submission.
10. The Ghana Registered Nurses and Midwives Association officially submitted the proposal to Fair Wages and Salaries Commission (FWSC) on 20th January 2020.
11. The FWSC after receiving and considering the said proposals set 18th February 2020 for commencement of negotiations to begin and invited the GRNMA by a formal letter.
12. On 17th February, 2020, GRNMA sent an addendum or additional information as part of the proposal because the GRNMA identified that the non-core category 2 and 3 allowances which had been developed as a separate document per the input of members and our Allies in the durbars and consultative meetings had not been added to the proposal already sent to the FWSC.
13. Per our letter number GRNMA/S/20- 02/17/01, GRNMA re-submitted the Conditions of Service proposals to the FWSC and this is acceptable in practice. The re-submission was discussed as the first item in the negotiation meeting held on 18th February, 2020 and both parties agreed to the addendum submitted to be dealt with as part of the proposal.
14. On 4th and 5th June, 2020, the Government Team led by FWSC engaged the GRNMA in negotiation meetings which involved the acceptance of proposals and the submission of counter proposals.
15. By the end of the negotiation meeting held in 5th June, 2020, all the proposals had been discussed except for one or two issues which had been flagged. Before the adjournment of the meeting, the Government team indicated that the meeting could not schedule the next meeting because they had to get mandate from the Ministry of Finance to negotiate the monetary aspects of the proposal which was the non-basic allowance in lieu of the Market Premium and the non-core category 2 and 3 allowances.

16. It took the Employer (government team) three months before agreeing for the parties to meet on 3rd September, 2020. Within the three month period, GRNMA did a number of follow ups to the FWSC and presented data on members (grades and total numbers) with the assistance of the Ghana Health Service (GHS) as well as the justification for the proposed non-core category 2 and 3 allowances and the grades of staff to enjoy same.
17. At the meeting held on 3rd September, 2020, the Employer tabled its counter proposals which virtually did not support even one of the proposals the GRNMA team had proposed. The GRNMA team communicated its displeasure to the Employer for not showing good faith in the negotiations and gave the Employer two weeks to reconsider its counter proposals. They were also informed that if by the expiration of the two weeks which was 17th September, 2020, they had not engaged us to continue the negotiation with a better proposal, the GRNMA team would advise itself on actions that will safeguard the economic interest of its members.
18. The GRNMA issued a communique dated 4th September 2020 to its members informing them about the bad faith depicted by the Employer and that the Employer had been given two weeks to re-engage with a better counter proposals.
19. The GRNMA also wrote a letter dated 9th September 2020 to all the stakeholders, Ministry of Health and its Agencies as well as the heads of regional health directorates and regional hospitals, FWSC and the Ministry of Finance about the posture of the Employer in the negotiations and the fact that the GRNMA will take actions to safeguard the economic interest of its members and Allies if the Employer does not table some considerable counter proposals. The letter to the National Labour Commission (NLC) on the same matter was delivered to the NLC secretariat later.
20. On Tuesday 15th September, 2020, both parties reconvened at the Ministry of Health conference room to continue with the negotiation as contained in the invitation letter GRNMA received.
21. At that meeting, both parties were able to reach agreement on the Non-Basic Salary Allowance, which was part of the nine (9) new proposals. However, the Employer insisted that all the other allowances should be considered for payment through the IGF of health facilities after the parties are able to reach some consensus.
22. Another meeting was held on Wednesday, 16th September, 2020 to continue the negotiations. However, the Employer's posture was to push our team to accept the non-basic allowance already agreed upon in an MOU which will also contain the intention to negotiate the remaining allowances in the next four weeks for payment through the IGF of health facilities.
23. The GRNMA consistently tried to let the Employer understand that indeed the category 2 and 3 allowances agreed upon at the level of the Public Sector Joint Standing Negotiating Committee (PSJSNC) will have to be paid at the facility level from the IGF but the GRNMA team needed the employer to consider some if not all the non-core category 2 and 3 allowances proposed by our team to be paid as part of the salary. In the heat of the negotiations, the Employer agreed on the Fuel Allowance proposed for

senior members but refused to consider the other allowances. Please note that Fuel Allowance was agreed upon in the 2016 negotiations for DDNSs and above although it was not being paid at the health facilities. The difference in the 2020 negotiation was that the Employer now agreed to pay the said allowance from the Principal grade upwards and on the payroll.

24. The GRNMA informed the meeting that the report of the negotiation will be communicated to our various councils of the GRNMA negotiation team and that the Employer will hear of the decisions taken.
25. The various councils having received the report on the negotiation, gave directives to the leadership to embark on a strike action from Monday, 21st September, 2020 at 8:00am.
26. A press conference was held on 17th September, 2020 to declare an intention to strike slated Monday, 21st September, 2020. The Press Release was widely circulated to members, stakeholders and the general public.
27. The Employer invited us to a meeting on Friday, 18th September, 2020 per an invitation letter dated the same day to continue with the negotiation of the conditions of service.
28. In the said meeting, the Employer only sought to understand why the GRNMA team had declared a strike action from 21st September, 2020 and therefore it was not a meeting to continue the negotiation contrary to the agenda. The said meeting turned into an informal discussion as the GRNMA Labour consultant sought to mediate for the parties to find a common ground. However, the Employer was not willing to make any compromise.
29. The outcome of the meeting was again reported to our councils and the decision was taken to continue with our action.
30. The Employer has subsequently reported the matter to the National Labour Commission the Commission gone in for an Interlocutory Injunction which the GRNMA has not been served.
31. In this regard, we urge all Nurses, Midwives, Physician Assistants and Certified Registered Anaesthetists to join in the struggle for better conditions of service.

ISSUED THIS

21st Day of September, 2020

FROM: The Public Relations Unit of the GRNMA and its Allied Associations