

19. RODRIGUES AND THE OUTER ISLANDS

- 19.1 In this Chapter, we outline the specific benefits and Conditions of Service that are applicable to public officers domiciled in Mauritius who are required to serve on a tour of service in Rodrigues and the Outer Islands, namely Agalega and St Brandon. Some of these provisions equally apply to public officers on the establishment of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) when they are posted on a tour of service in Mauritius.
- 19.2 To ensure proper staffing and continuity in service delivery in Rodrigues and the Outer Islands, the current arrangements are being maintained and a new provision is being introduced for the payment of disturbance allowance for tours of shorter duration to Rodrigues.

Recommendation 1

- 19.3 We recommend that public officers domiciled in Mauritius should continue to serve on a tour of service in Rodrigues and the Outer Islands, that is, Agalega and St Brandon, as and when required.**

Tour of Service to Rodrigues

- 19.4 Earlier, many officers domiciled in Mauritius were being sent on a tour of service to Rodrigues to ensure the proper manning and running of the various Commissions/Departments due to a lack of qualified Rodriguan officers. Gradually, the RRA started recruiting its own qualified officers and today many of the Commissions/Departments are solely manned by Rodriguan officers. Nonetheless, there still exist certain fields requiring professional/technical skills such as health, meteorology, civil aviation and human resource, where the services of Mauritian officers are solicited. On an annual basis, some 20 to 30 officers proceed on a tour of service to Rodrigues.
- 19.5 A tour of service in Rodrigues is generally of 12 months' duration, though in exceptional cases, the length can be less than six months. The benefits accruing to an officer on a tour of service in Rodrigues include, among others, payment of Disturbance Allowance, rent free-accommodation or quarters; free passages; and enhanced Vacation Leave. As regards professionals in scarce supply, they are paid an Inducement Allowance in lieu of the Disturbance Allowance.
- 19.6 After examining the existing provisions, we consider that they are adequate in meeting the set objectives. Besides, no submission related thereto have been received from the Federations and the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms (MPSAR). In the circumstance, the undermentioned provisions should continue to remain effective.

Recommendation 2**19.7 We recommend that:**

- (i) the duration of a tour of service in Rodrigues should generally be of 12 months' duration. However, it can be of shorter period, but not less than six months, for exceptional cases such as the non-availability of qualified staff in certain scarcity areas, subject to the approval of the MPSAR;
- (ii) payment of the monthly Disturbance Allowance should be 25% of gross salary for the duration of a tour and, except in exceptional circumstances and subject to the approval of the MPSAR, should be limited to three tours of service only;
- (iii) notwithstanding the provision at paragraph 19.7(i), where a Ministry/Department is unable to release an officer for a tour of service of six months' duration, the officer should be paid the monthly Disturbance Allowance for the actual duration of the tour, subject to the approval of the MPSAR; and
- (iv) Mauritian officers posted in Rodrigues on a tour of service should continue to benefit from rent-free accommodation or quarters.

Inducement Allowance

- 19.8 In lieu of the Disturbance Allowance, certain categories of professionals in scarce supply are paid an Inducement Allowance equivalent to 50% of their monthly salary as an incentive to serve on a tour of service in Rodrigues.
- 19.9 The Inducement Allowance, which is determined and approved by the MPSAR, has so far been paid to professionals/experts in the IT, health and legal fields. The payment of the allowance is on a *pro-rata* basis to Specialist/Senior Specialists who are posted for short duration in Rodrigues and are accommodated in fully furnished rent-free quarters/houses. As regards officers who are provided with board and lodging in hotels for the duration of their tour, they are not entitled to this allowance.
- 19.10 As the need to provide an encouragement to our professionals in scarce fields who are posted to Rodrigues is still felt, the present provisions are being sustained.

Recommendation 3

- 19.11 We recommend the payment of an Inducement Allowance of 50% of the monthly salary to certain categories of professionals in scarce supply and posted on a tour of service in Rodrigues, subject to the approval of the MPSAR.**

19.12 We further recommend that the Inducement Allowance:

- (i) should be paid on a *pro-rata* basis to Specialist/Senior Specialists posted for short duration in Rodrigues and who are accommodated in fully furnished rent-free quarters; and
- (ii) should not be paid to officers who, for one reason or another, are provided with board and lodging in hotels.

Officers Performing Duties in a Higher Capacity

19.13 As per existing provisions, the Disturbance or Inducement Allowance paid to officers who are called upon to act in a higher capacity or are assigned duties of the higher post in the hierarchy, is calculated on the basis of aggregate earnings, that is, basic salary plus salary compensation at approved rates plus Acting/Responsibility Allowance. Since this practice is considered fair and equitable, it should continue to prevail.

Recommendation 4

19.14 We recommend that the Disturbance Allowance or Inducement Allowance paid to officers who are called upon to act in a higher capacity or assigned duties of the higher level should be computed on the basis of aggregate earnings comprising basic salary, salary compensation at approved rates and any Acting/Responsibility Allowance.

Other Conditions

19.15 Besides the payment of Disturbance or Inducement Allowance, the following benefits are granted to officers who are posted to Rodrigues for a tour of service of a minimum period of 12 months:

(a) Passages:

- (i) one free passage, to and from Rodrigues, for himself, his spouse and up to three dependent children below the age of 21; and two additional free tickets to Mauritius to married officers in case the tour of service is extended for another 12 months;
- (ii) one free return ticket from Rodrigues for medical treatment in Mauritius in respect of himself or any immediate member of his family, as at sub-paragraph (i) above, provided a Government Medical Officer certifies that such medical treatment is not available in Rodrigues and cannot safely be postponed until the end of his tour of service;
- (iii) two free return tickets from Rodrigues for medical treatment in Mauritius in respect of himself or any immediate member of his family, as at sub-paragraph (i) above, provided a Government Medical Officer certifies that such medical treatment is not available

in Rodrigues and cannot safely be postponed until the end of his tour of service, and that the patient needs to be accompanied;

- (iv) one additional free return ticket to Mauritius to single officers in case the tour of service is extended for another 12 months; and
- (v) the entitlement of free return tickets, under sub-paragraphs (i) and (iv) above, is limited to three tours of service only.

(b) Transport:

- (i) free transport by sea of his personal effects to the extent of six cubic metres; and
- (ii) free transport by sea of his car/jeep/motorcycle/bicycle subject to the approval of the Prime Minister's Office;

provided that the total volume of (i) and (ii) does not exceed 12 cubic metres.

(c) Enhanced Vacation Leave:

- (i) an officer domiciled in Mauritius, when posted to Rodrigues for a tour of service, earns during the period of his service there, vacation leave at the rate of 50% more than what he is eligible for in respect of that period;
- (ii) the additional leave granted under sub-paragraph (i) may be accumulated over and above his normal entitlement; and
- (iii) an officer on a tour of service in Rodrigues is not allowed to enjoy vacation leave, save in exceptional cases, subject to the approval of the Island Chief Executive.

Recommendation 5

19.16 We recommend that:

- (i) the conditions laid down at paragraph 19.15 regarding passages, transport and vacation leave to which an officer domiciled in Mauritius and posted to Rodrigues is entitled to, should be maintained; and
- (ii) an officer, on his return to Mauritius at the end of his tour of service, should be given priority of consideration to take his earned vacation leave.

Tour of Service to the Outer Islands – Agalega and St Brandon

- 19.17 Besides Rodrigues, Mauritian officers are, as and when required, also called upon to serve on a tour of service in the outer islands of Agalega and St. Brandon. The duration of the tour of service to these islands normally varies from four to six months and is most of the time dependent on the movement of vessels thereto. The officers posted to these islands benefit from a higher quantum of Disturbance Allowance in addition to enhanced pension benefits, as the travelling and living conditions thereat are more difficult.
- 19.18 We consider that the benefits accruing to Mauritian officers serving the outer islands are adequate and should continue to prevail.

Recommendation 6

- 19.19 **We recommend that officers posted on a tour of service in Agalega and St Brandon should:**
- (i) **be eligible for a monthly Disturbance Allowance of 60% of gross salary (basic salary plus salary compensation at approved rates). The allowance should be *pro-rated* with respect to the duration of the stay in these islands;**
 - (ii) **earn Vacation Leave at the rate of 50% in addition to what they are eligible for in respect of that period;**
 - (iii) **be given priority to take their earned Vacation Leave on their return to Mauritius at the end of their tour of service in these islands; and**
 - (iv) **be eligible for one free passage for himself, his spouse and up to three dependent children below the age of 21 and rent-free Government quarters.**
- 19.20 **We further recommend that any period that a Mauritian public officer serves in Agalega or St. Brandon should be reckoned as pensionable service at the rate of two times.**

Rodriguan Police Officers posted to Mauritius

- 19.21 A Disturbance Allowance equivalent to 25% of monthly salary is presently payable to Rodriguan Police Officers who are posted on a tour of service to Mauritius for operational requirements. They are also entitled to free passages for themselves, their spouse and up to three dependent children below the age of 21, subject to certain conditions. As the posting of these officers to Mauritius is an ongoing feature, the specific provisions related thereto are being maintained.

Recommendation 7

19.22 We recommend that a Rodriguan Police Officer posted on a tour of service in Mauritius should:

- (a) be paid a Disturbance Allowance equivalent to 25% of his monthly salary; and**
- (b) be eligible for:**
 - (i) one free passage, to and from Mauritius, for himself, his spouse and up to three dependent children below the age of 21;**
 - (ii) two additional free tickets to Rodrigues if he is married, in case the tour of service is extended for another 12 months; and**
 - (iii) one additional free return ticket to Rodrigues if he is single, in case the tour of service is extended for another 12 months.**

Allowance to Rodriguan Officers coming to Mauritius on Training

19.23 Rodriguan officers who come to Mauritius for training, are entitled to a monthly allowance equivalent to 50% of their salary for the duration of the course. This allowance is intended to help them meet additional expenses and maintain a reasonable standard of living. They are also provided with rent-free quarters. Where these are not available, a monthly allowance is paid to assist them in meeting rental costs. We are reiterating the present arrangements, while revising the quantum of the allowance.

Recommendation 8

19.24 We recommend that officers domiciled in Rodrigues and coming to Mauritius for training should be paid:

- (i) an allowance equivalent to 50% of the monthly salary for the duration of the course and provided with rent-free quarters; and**
- (ii) a monthly allowance of Rs 3185 as an assistance towards payment of rent in the event they cannot be provided with quarters.**

