

Varsity staff give government up to June to clear salary arrears

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The chairperson of the Public Universities Non-Teaching Staff executive forum, Mr Jackson Betihama, consults fellow staff during a meeting with the Ministry of Education officials in 2017. PHOTO BY ALEX ESAGALA

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By Damali Mukhaye

Kampala- Teaching and non-teaching staff in all public universities have given government and ministry of Finance up to June to implement President Museveni's pledge of enhancing their

Addressing a joint press conference at Makerere University yesterday, the chairperson of the Forum for Academic Staff of Public Universities in Uganda, Dr Grace Lubaale, said President Museveni in 2015 directed government to increase salaries of teaching staff in the public universities, which would make a professor earn up to Shs15m a month.

Dr Lubaale said the Ministry of Finance could not pay the money at once, but instead promised to raise their salaries in phases which would take five years to fulfil the President's

He said the five years expire in 2020 and currently a professor is earning Shs10m.

“Reference is made to the letter dated January 12, 2015 in which President Museveni directed government to enhance the salary of a professor pro rata to earn Shs15 million which was phased

into a period of five years by the Finance ministry as of FY 2015, 2016,2016/2017,2017/2018,2018/2019 and 2019/2020,” Dr Lubaale stated.

“We thus ask your office to include the remaining money into the budget of 2019/2020 which is the last year of implementation to hit the target of 15 million for a professor pro rata,” he added.

He said the payslip of a professor should reflect Shs15m in the June salary.

He said they are demanding about Shs200 billion in arrears for both teaching and non-teaching staff including the money for new universities that have been added on the list.

The chairperson of the Public Universities Non-Teaching Staff executive forum, Mr Jackson Betihama, said the government should respond to their demand to avoid negative consequences.

He said they will call for general assemblies after June to decide a way forward if their call is not heeded.

The spokesperson of the Ministry of Finance, Mr Jim Mugunga, told Daily Monitor that the ministry continues to fulfil its commitment and the staff should be patient.

“To realistically implement the executive commitment to teachers, we mutually reached an arrangement with them. This we have progressively undertaken religiously. We remain committed to our part of the bargain and trust the teachers, who are our partners in this, will likewise keep theirs,” Mr Mugunga said.

During the 69th graduation at Makerere University in January, President Museveni asked the staff to be patient, saying government was working on the pledge gradually.

Background

Order. In 2015 President Museveni ordered for an enhancement of salaries of academic staff in public universities with the highest-ranked professor earning Shs15m per month, from Shs2m. The directive followed a strike by staff at Makerere University over poor pay.

The non-teaching staff accused President Museveni of ignoring their call for salary enhancement and only considered the academic staff salaries. They also threatened to strike.

The government bowed to pressure and allocated Shs76b to non-teaching staff in all public universities in 2016.

To-date, government and the staff have been haggling over the salary enhancement.

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