

# MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Minister -*Hon. Dr O.N. Muchena*

**CC:** Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet –

*Dr M. J. M. Sibanda*

**Chairperson - Civil Service Commission -** *Dr M.M. Nzuwah*

**Deputy Minister –** *Hon. Dr G. Gandawa*

**Permanent Secretary –** Cde George Charamba

**(Media Information and Publicity)**

**Director Quality Assurance and Standards –** Eng S. Marume

**FROM:** Permanent Secretary -*Washington Mbizvo (Dr)*

**SIGNATURE**.....**DATE:** 09 May 2014

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**RE: "MINISTRY PAYS OUT MEGA ALLOWANCES" HERALD ARTICLE AND COLAZ LETTER TO THE MINISTER ON HEXCO**

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## 1. PREAMBLE

1.1 Upon my return from South Africa this morning, I became aware of the story that was published in the Herald of the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2014 entitled; **"Ministry pays out Mega allowances"**.

1.2 **In the main the substance of the story was that:**

1.2.1. I, Dr Washington Mbizvo the Permanent Secretary, and Chairman of HEXCO and a handful of HEXCO members were paid outrageous and disproportionate allowances;

- 1.2.2. This was done to the overall detriment of the members of College Lectures Association of Zimbabwe (COLAZ).
- 1.2.3. That the conduct under 1 and 2 above is corrupt, unashamed, and unethical, therefore below the conduct expected of a Permanent Secretary. Nothing is further from the truth.
- 1.2.4. The story was intended to create and did create the impression in the minds of right thinking member of the public that I am a corrupt and unethical public official whose conduct has fallen below the level expected of a Permanent Secretary and that therefore, I have become unfit to continue as Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Technology Development.
- 1.2.5. In addition, the extravagancy of the allegations has the effect of bringing the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Technology Development in general and the Higher Examination Council (HEXCO) into disrepute by lowering HEXCO's credibility in the estimation of right thinking members of society as a public institution, whose corporate governance systems are either non-existent or ineffective
- 1.2.6. I therefore, feel duty bound as the Head of Ministry and its Accounting Officer to set the record straight for the benefit of the public in general and the Ministry in particular.

## **2. THE ALLEGATIONS**

### **2.1. Mega allowances paid out to Dr Mbizvo and HEXCO Administrators**

The Chairperson of HEXCO (Dr Mbizvo) was paid USD5 000 as responsibility allowance for the entire examination process, from registration of candidates, marking, external assessment, verification of results, pre-ratification; whose period stretches for one complete year. It must be understood that, the payment was not for a day or two days sitting only. This involves behind the scenes activities, invariably out of the normal duty.

In addition the Chairperson is paid a total of USD400 for a maximum of two sittings. The Chairperson of HEXCO who oversees and supervises the entire process is paid only once after the results have been ratified by the HEXCO Board. This is a normal practice in other countries that include Tanzania, Ghana, South Africa, the United Kingdom, Australia, to name but a few. In fact some SADC countries are learning from our system here in Zimbabwe. Significantly it must be point out that the funds in question were budgeted for and approved by Treasury. In addition, the Ministry books of accounts are regularly audited by the Auditor General.

This system of HEXCO was established over a two year period between 1988 and 1990, when Government gave a mandate to the Ministry to localise City and Guilds Examinations and South African NTC Examinations. The rationale was that the courses were no longer relevant to the socio-economic needs of our industry and commerce whilst at the same time drawing heavy foreign currency from fiscus. This has always been the trend even with what was called Further Education Examinations Board (FEEB) under the Ministry of Labour Manpower Planning and Development that was replaced by the HEXCO. The Policy Document on the Rationalisation of Technical Vocational Education and Training curriculum was adopted by Cabinet in September 1990.

## **2.2. Expenditure for the meeting totalled \$500 000**

HEXCO administers examinations for an average student population of 37 000 across a wide range of course totalling at least 1 260. The examination administration process is, as can be expected, not a three-day event as was suggested by the COLAZ representative. It is a process spanning over a period of seven to fourteen months covering all of Zimbabwe Polytechnics, Technical Colleges, Technical High Schools and Independent Colleges that are registered with the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Technology Development in terms of Manpower Planning Development Act [*Chapter 28:02*].

As I have here-in said before the Ministry administers examinations for an average of 37 000 candidates per year who write an average of 8 - 10 subjects each. The Ministry expended USD700 000 towards the Administration of the examination which the author of the COLAZ letter, Mr Madovi a Marketing lecturer at Mutare Polytechnic who is currently the COLAZ treasurer, was complaining of.

***Had Mr Madovi taken the logical step of testing his facts through simple arithmetic before he lapsed into peddling falsehoods, extravagancy and defamation he would have realised that the cost of administering examinations per student per subject is only USD1. 89. I therefore challenge him to provide empirical evidence from anywhere else in the world where examination at similar levels are being administered at a cost that is lower than USD1. 89.***

### **2.3 The Chairperson of HEXCO and his representative were double paid.**

It is further pointed out that Dr Mbizvo is the Chairperson of HEXCO and NOT the Chairman of Standards Development and Quality Assurance Department (SDEQA) since the latter is only a department in his Ministry. Therefore the suggestion that Dr Mbizvo attended the meeting as Chairperson of SDEQA is not correct and as a consequence, the further suggestion that Dr Mbizvo and the Director of SDEQA both attended the meeting and therefore created a duplicate allowance of expense again is not correct. These two attended the meeting in different capacities in terms of their specific roles within the purview of HEXCO processes and activities.

HEXCO is an Examining Board whose Secretariat is drawn from the Standards Development and Quality Assurance Department. The Chairperson's representative is the Director of the Department of Standards Development and Quality Assurance under which HEXCO falls.

It is therefore mandatory that the Director of the Department has to be present during the three day pre-ratification and ratification period leading all the technical deliberations of SWOT analyses.

### **3. ALLEGATIONS ON PAYMENT OF PRINCIPALS AND SUPERVISORS (COORDINATORS)**

- 3.1** Principals and other supervisors of HEXCO are paid ONLY ONCE per session in the whole twelve months they work for HEXCO in order to produce HEXCO results and Certificates. ***In other countries, the role of Principals and Supervisors in Examinations is performed by Hired Consultants.*** The following are some of the key duties they perform:
- 3.2** Principals and the other Supervisors organise and supervise the registration of all the HEXCO candidates and collect all the HEXCO examination registration fees and dispatch all these to Head Office safely. To date, there is no report of any registration fees failing to reach HEXCO through misappropriation. They then organise the verification of candidate numbers, spellings, names and course codes, so that they appear correctly on the lists.
- 3.3** The same Principals and Supervisors organise and supervise the setting of examination test items by about 1000 examiners in their respective Regions and the dispatch of these papers with the strictest of security to National Examinations Headquarters where they are typed and deposited into National Examinations Management Information System (NEMIS).
- 3.4** They also organise and supervise the collection of these question papers and official HEXCO stationery, e.g. answer booklets from HEXCO at Head Office to their Regions and keep them secure until the time of writing.
- 3.5** They organise and supervise the dispatch of exam question papers and answer booklets to all the HEXCO centres in their respective Regions e.g. Mashonaland West or Matabeleland South in the strictest of security. That HEXCO examinations have not been compromised, to the best of our knowledge, is a clear testimony of the professionalism and trustworthiness of these supervisors. Those who have attempted to do irregular practices have been dealt with by these Principals and Supervisors).
- 3.6** They notify students, full-time and part-time, including re-writes, of their individual time tables and ensure that there is adequate preparation on

writing space for each candidate. They then supervise the writing, (including invigilation) of the exams in all centres in their Regions. They then organise the orderly collection and transportation of all examinations answer scripts from all the centres, to the Regional centre where marking takes place.

**3.7** The Principals and the other HEXCO supervisors vet all markers in their Region, and arrange for accommodation, meals, and refreshments for markers. HEXCO does not prescribe the menus. They then ensure that scripts are thoroughly marked by the markers and moderated by syndicate coordinators, discipline coordinators and course coordinators (supervisors) with adequate checks and balances in place for effective quality assurance. ***They also ensure that each marker records the marks for his or her candidates correctly on a mark sheet.***

**3.8** ***The supervisors collate and collect all the marks for the entire mark sheets and compile composite profiles at course, e.g. Machine Shop, discipline e.g. Mechanical syndicate e.g. engineering levels and submit these to the data capturers for incorporation into NEMIS as internal assessment marks.***

**3.9** The supervisors then hold Academic Board meetings, chaired by the Principal, to verify the internal marks and in preparation for external assessment and compile detailed reports for the external assessors. The Principal also prepares the Chief Internal Assessor's Report for the Chief External Assessor. This Report is later sent to the HEXCO Board at pre-ratification level, together with that from the Chief External Assessor (a member of HEXCO).

#### **4. ALLEGATIONS ON OTHER OFFICERS SHARING \$3 500**

The factual position is that the officers were paid individually, on the basis of their roles and functions, in accordance with the stipulated rates set by the Board in consultation with the department of Quality Assurance and Standards. This is based on a comparative analysis with similar Boards such as ZIMSEC and other Regional Boards.

## **5. ALLEGATIONS ON MINISTRY'S OVERALL EXPENDITURE FOR MEETINGS TOTALLING OVER \$500 000**

Funds totalling \$600 000 were drawn from the Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund (ZIMDEF) for the whole exercise, which included marking, external assessment, verification, pre-ratification and ratification. ***The ZIMDEF was set up primarily for purposes of funding curriculum processes, examination processes, teaching and learning processes, within the areas of Technical Vocational Education and Training.*** It is critical to mention that in August 1982 a group of officials (including Dr Washington Mbizvo - the then Chief Apprenticeship Officer) were sent to the then Lake Mcllwaine for a whole week and mandated by the then Permanent Secretary, Dr Herbert Murerwa and the then Deputy Secretary Dr Ibbo Mandaza and again the then Deputy Secretary Mr Don B. Mothobi to proceed to create and establish what is now called Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund -ZIMDEF. In terms of Section 47 Part (v) of the Manpower Planning and Development Act, Chapter 28:02, this ZIMDEF superseded the MANDATA Training Levy of the Apprenticeship Act Chapter 266.

## **6. WHAT IS COLAZ**

COLAZ was formed in the early 1980's as a breakaway faction from ZIMTA by lecturers from Teachers' Colleges (mainly Belvedere) in the then Ministry of Education and Culture. These disgruntled lecturers felt that their colleagues in ZIMTA were not articulating their grievances on remuneration packages well, because the majority of ZIMTA membership came from Primary schools who were not sufficiently educated and were considered less sophisticated. They struggled with recognition until the creation of the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology when they eventually were registered as a Teachers' organisation.

The Government, in 2004, through the intervention of the then Minister Dr Herbert Murerwa mandated the Permanent Secretary, Dr Mbizvo to recognise the existence of COLAZ and allocate some offices for them in the New Government Complex Building. The Ministry further assisted COLAZ with equipment, telephone system and support staff. In spite of all this, what has emerged in COLAZ is that one or two of its members have decided to abuse the name of a collective institution to convey personal

views intending that the views would be interpreted by the Zimbabwean public, to be the views of COLAZ.

## **7. COLAZ SPOKESMAN – MR MADOVI**

***The author of COLAZ documents has always been Mr Madovi, a lecturer at Mutare Polytechnic for the past 20 years, with a mere HND qualification obtained at the same college and has never improved his qualifications ever since he joined the service. He is a disgruntled individual who feels neglected and is therefore seeking to draw attention to himself. Suffice to mention that the Ministry does not have a policy of paying "appearance fees" of USD800 as Mr Madovi is suggesting. He clearly does not know what he is talking about and should therefore be forgiven.***

Such a person's capacity to analyse issues is limited and tends to see his small world as a universe. During the job action in Teachers' Colleges, Madovi moved from class to class to try to force lecturers to join him in his disruptive action. The lecturers refused and reported his illegal action to the Principal. He was charged for his lawlessness and ever since, it then appears he spends more time crafting distorted documents on anything that is against Government and indeed HEXCO, an organisation whose epistemology he does not quite comprehend. In addition, he considers himself at par with the Principal and all the supervisors (coordinators) above him and has the folly of thinking that the little he does is done by everybody. His kind of agitation is desperation for undeserved recognition above his supervisors because he can never be where they are, due to his own academic shortcomings.

His aim is to reap where he has not sown, that is why he is asking for USD800 as just 'appearance fee', the kind of agitation of a typical of corrupt official who are not professional in terms of their intrinsic values.



## 8. VALIDATION OF HEXCO EXAMINATIONS AND COORDINATION

### 8.1. Reward Benchmarks

It must be noted that in identifying coordinators the Board takes in to consideration the level of expertise, the qualifications on the said expert, the disciplinary record of the coordinator and his seniority in the system.

The Principals and their supervisors (coordinators) ***run the external assessment exercise where experts from Commerce and Industry scrutinise and moderate all the work produced by the candidates and present reports on their findings to the Regional Board chaired by the Principal and attended by all external and internal assessors***, the Heads of HEXCO centres in the Region and the Chief Internal Assessor who constitute the Regional Board. This is where the final marks for the Region are finalised and made ready for the National HEXCO Board.

The marks are again verified to establish congruency between the marks on the original mark sheets and final pass lists. This is again done by the Principal and the coordinators. The Principal then transports everything to National Exams Head Office.

For all this year's work, the coordinators (including the Principal and their Deputy) are paid only once per session. They work for twelve months a year, doing HEXCO business and not 10 days as alleged by Madovi and company. ***Even the fees given by Madovi are distorted. The correct fees are \$2 000 for supervision of marking per session and \$1 900 for external assessment and supervision, depending on whether the Principal himself/herself is a member of HEXCO or not and again depending on his/her technical qualifications.***

However, the markers only come into stage six, i.e marking, which exercise they finish in two to ten days depending on the load. So to confuse matters, ***Madovi gives the time spent by him marking as the time spent by the coordinators in administering exams.***

## 8.2 Reward Matrix

It must also be noted that markers reward system varies depending on the number of hours invested, number of question being set, number of candidates being examined and the number of scripts, depending on specific rates on specific levels.

***As is clear from the foregone analysis, the coordinator is not paid enough as they always say. If a comparison was to be made with what ZIMSEC administrators are paid, it might be shocking to note that HEXCO administrators are paid less than one tenth of what their counterparts in ZIMSEC get, without even thinking of the "perks" the ZIMSEC people get. And yet on contrary HEXCO pays its markers the following rates per script for theory: \$2 for NFC, \$3 for NC, \$4 for ND and \$5 for HND.***

The fees are doubled for projects or practical's, i.e. \$4 for NFC up to \$10 for HND to \$15 for special cases like marking in Braille! These fees were reviewed in 2012 and the pool of markers drastically improved, accordingly. In any case Madovi should be requested to produce a verified register of his membership in the Polytechnics to see whether he represents anybody at all. For Madovi to suggest that each marker should be given what he calls USD800 appearance fee' is beyond comprehension.

***It is a lie to allege that they used to be paid this amount before. Madovi wants the money not for the job done, but for lecturers to take home a reasonable fund'! Reading through his letter, it is clear that he wants the coordinators fees reduced and his, raised sustainability and conjures up emotions, typical of opposition politics thinking and behaviour, by giving the Parastatals, parallel.***  
In other words, if there were no coordinators and Principals or Parastatals, he and his colleagues would be OK.

## 9. CONCLUSIONS

**9.1** *HEXCO according to various observers who have phoned me after reading these articles believe that HEXCO is a special brand whose Examination Certificate is on demand both from within and without and therefore, due diligence should be exercised to ensure that this HEXCO brand is not compromised through ill-advised conceptions in dealing with HEXCO*

*matters. The nation should continue to have full confidence in HEXCO **with or without Dr Mbizvo.***

***9.2** What is curious in all this, is that, such issues always start to appear in newspapers, then create an agenda for investigation without prior internal processes of dialogues, discussions or structured meetings.*

***9.3** While I stand to be corrected and guided as Head of Ministry, I am also mindful of the fact that these HEXCO allowances and other related issues have not been queried at any time in the history of this Ministry, hence, I shall leave this to the people of Zimbabwe to judge for themselves. Accordingly, I here-in request the Permanent Secretary for Media, Information and Publicity to publish this Memorandum as it bears a testimony to those replies whose questions continue to create varied perceptions in the minds of people.*

***9.4** In terms of the said Act, NAMACO and the Ministry should hold joint quarterly meeting aimed at reviewing among other things, the utilisation of ZIMDEF funds. I am aware, as I am sure many Zimbabwean's are, that ZIMDEF is facing a decline in revenue collections owing to widespread company closures and retrenchments hence, the need to table for review, the HEXCO allowances and fees at the next 25 June 2014 meeting.*

***9.5** I must also acknowledge that some COLAZ members are highly professional people of integrity with a high degree of commitment and have continued to exude superb workmanship during the most difficult period of 2006 - 2008 when the majority of technically qualified staff left for the diaspora.*

***9.6** We are indeed grateful for such commitment which is appropriately demanded if the Ministry is to be ZIMASSET compliant, given its gaps in skilled human capital.*

*9.7 On the other hand, they are a few COLAZ members including the likes of Madovi and perhaps one or two senior officials in the system who talk about the modularisation which was never introduced despite having made concerted efforts to explain to our teaching staff in writing and in several workshops on Competence Based Training and Learning systems.*

***9.8 It is indeed my hope, prayer and belief that HEXCO with the financial support of ZIMDEF, as mandated by the Laws of this country should prepare to move to greater heights and embrace technical and vocational subjects within the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and embracing skills development agenda within the Ministry of Youth Employment Creation and Indigenisation. It is imperative that we gear ourselves towards the policy trajectory of ZIMEQA indeed an appropriate Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> century for Zimbabwe which has prided itself for producing high profile skilled human capital for Zimbabwe, Africa and the world over. Again, it becomes important to look at HEXCO within the context of sustainability and credibility.***