



DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Office of the Secretary

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PRESS RELEASE

The Minister for Public Service Soroï Eoe has refuted claims by former Prime Minister Peter O'Neill regarding the Public Service machinery and described it as mere political rhetoric.

Mr Eoe said, the timing of the former Prime Ministers statement is wrong and said such a statement would have been more meaningful if it was done during debate over this issue in parliament rather than after the lifting of the SOE.

Minister Eoe said, the concerns raised by Mr O'Neill are untrue and are a misrepresentation of the facts which are unsupported allegations made against the Marape Steven Government and the Public Service which is not in the public interest at this time.

The Public Service Minister further outlined that the State of Emergency has had a serious impact on the delivery of services throughout the country and that is expected given the pandemic has had an impact on countries throughout the world.

The Minister said, the State of Emergency Controller has issued detailed statements about the impact on essential and non-essential workers in the Public Service which has been supported by Circular Instructions from the Secretary Department of Personnel Management. There is no substance in these allegations.

Minister Eoe says, despite the declaration of the State of Emergency and its restrictions which affected the entire service delivery throughout the country - essential services including Health, Disciplined Forces, Emergency Services with Utilities and core Central Agency support was delivered beyond expectations throughout that period.

In direct response to Mr O'Neill's assertion that there is an increase in public service numbers and ghost names Mr Eoe said, increases in the Teaching Service, the Disciplined Services and the Health Services are policy driven by successive governments and account for a 3% increase in total payroll cost each year. Reference

to payroll ghosts is an issue that is continuously being tackled by the Departments of Personnel Management and Finance through ongoing payroll audit. As a result, powers over the payroll devolved to agency heads during the past ten years have been revoked in 2019 in order to restore “One Position, One Person, One Pay”. This matter is being taken seriously by the Government in comprehensive cost saving measures.

“A serious decline in government revenue was the result of the closure of our borders and the closure of businesses to successfully protect our people. Our finance and accounting officers have worked diligently to ensure that whatever funds we had were allocated to ensure the delivery of essential services. Our economy and government cash flow is dependent upon world commodity prices. During the past six months, there has been a serious decline in petroleum prices due to a downward trend in the world economy which has adversely impacted government budgetary projections”.

Minister Eoe stated that the Marape Steven Government has focused on Performance Management in order to hold both Ministers and their Agency Heads accountable for the delivery of Government services and development priorities. This major Public Service initiative is also designed to forge a harmonious working relationship between Ministers and their Agency Heads.

“Despite the tough economic times – the Marape Steven government didn’t neglect public servants and continued to pay them in full. All efforts have been made to keep the Public Service salary within budgetary confines and as part of that the Department of Personnel Management through a special General Order in October 2019 was made to curtail unnecessary personnel emolument costs in order to reduce the pay bill.

This is a critical time when there is a need for both the government and the Opposition to work together for the public good and for national interest to restore normalcy following the devastating impact of the covid-19 pandemic on the economy”.

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