

Teachers to get equal salary increment

By Moses Mulondo

Parliament's budget committee has resolved to redistribute the sh98b the Government had earmarked for the enhancement of science teachers' salaries so that both science and arts teachers get an equal increment.

The decision was reached in a Friday meeting, during which the chairperson of the committee of education, Connie Galiwango, was appearing before the budget committee to agree on which of their recommendations should be adopted by the budget committee.

The budget committee has powers to harmonise reports from all sectoral committees and come up with a joint report, which the Parliament plenary bases on to do the final appropriation of money to various sectors.

Both the Budget Act and the Public Finance Management Act give Parliament the ultimate power to determine how much money each sector and entity should get in the national budget.

The Government had proposed that the graduate science teachers receive an enhancement from sh1,089,533 per month to sh1,677,688, while the diploma science teachers get an increment from sh625,067 to sh1,092,885.

The Government had also proposed to have the graduate and diploma arts teachers' salaries increased from sh601,341 and sh447,080 to sh691,542 and sh514,142, respectively.

But after a discussion on the implications of the discriminatory salary enhancement that would create a big disparity in science and arts teachers pay, the budget committee resolved on Friday that both categories would receive an equal increment.

The committee also decided to allocate sh18b, out of the sh98b meant



Lugoloobi (centre) and members of the Parliament's budget committee during the meeting where they discussed the science and technology report on Friday. Photo by Moses Mulondo

for salary enhancement, towards the recruitment of 2,000 science teachers to address the inadequate supply of science teachers in government-aided secondary schools.

In addition, the budget committee approved a proposal from the education committee to reallocate sh10b from the sh98b meant for salary enhancement towards recruitment of 1,200 English language and literature in English teachers.

"The discriminatory enhancement

BETWEEN THE LINES:

After Parliament discussed the implications of discriminatory salary enhancement, members agreed that it was unconstitutional and would be demoralising, given that both the arts and science teachers have attained the same level of education.

of salaries of people who have the same qualifications is against the Constitution and it will greatly demoralise arts teachers if we allow it. That is why we have resolved that they all get equal increment," budget committee chairman Amos Lugoloobi said.

It is the balance of sh70b which the committee has resolved should be distributed equally as salary enhancement for both science and arts teachers.

The education committee also

implored the budget committee to ensure that the sh105b meant for the enhancement of salaries for lecturers in public universities is put in the 2018/2019 budget.

Galiwango said whereas the Government had committed itself and increased salaries for the lecturers in public universities, it had been releasing less than what was required, which had resulted in accumulated arrears.

"If, as Parliament, we do not allocate money to cater for arrears for lecturers, we would be risking a repeat of strikes that will affect students. We need to find the money," Galiwango argued.

Lugoloobi said since the Government had increased the salaries for lecturers, it was necessary to get the money allocated for it.

New Vision learnt that after the plenary had on Wednesday resolved to halt the enhancement of salaries for secondary school teachers until the concern of disparity was addressed, the finance ministry had proposed to the budget committee that the sh98b it had earlier earmarked for this cause be reallocated to clear the arrears of lecturers.

Out of the required total of sh105b, the Government had proposed to allocate only sh19b towards the arrears for the enhancement of salaries for the lecturers in the 2018/2019 budget.

Lugoloobi said the committee would make the decision on the lecturers' arrears after scrutinising the way public universities utilise funds generated from the tuition fees that private students pay.

Parliament is in the final stages of appropriating money in the national budget. The Public Finance Management Act requires the House to have concluded the budget allocation process before the end of May.