

Govt yet to increase lecturers pay

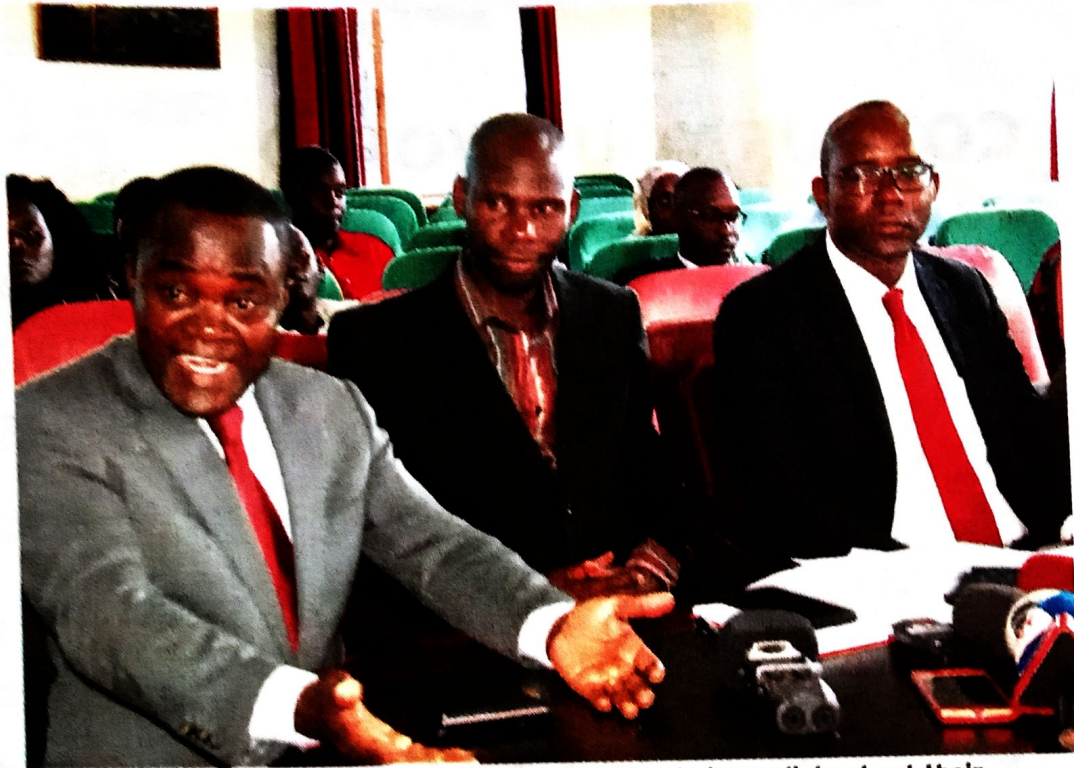
By Pascal Kwesiga

Public university lecturers are up in arms over the delay by the public service ministry to enhance their pay despite a directive by President Yoweri Museveni two months ago.

The President directed the ministry to deliver on his commitment to increase salaries of academic staff in universities. According to the directive, a university professor should be paid sh15m and a lecturer sh12.2m. The directive was prompted by the August 13 State House Entebbe meeting, during which the university teaching staff reminded Museveni that his earlier instruction to increase their salaries had not been fully implemented.

The President allowed the demands by university lecturers for salary increment in 2015, when he accepted to have their monthly earnings raised by between 200% and 300%. This implied that a university professor, who was taking home sh3.5m, would get sh15m.

The Forum for University Teaching Staff leader, Dr Grace Lubaale, said the 2015 presidential directive also implied that an associate professor would earn sh14m,



Lecturers from various public universities speaking to journalists about their demand for better pay last year. They want the Government to honour its promise

a senior lecturer sh13m, lecturer sh12m, assistant lecturer sh10m, and a teaching assistant sh8.5m.

However, the finance ministry said it would only implement the directive in five financial years, providing sh50b per financial year,

starting with 2015/16. The five financial years were supposed to elapse in 2019/2020, but the directive has not been fully implemented.

"They could not implement the directive fully because the non-teaching staff also asked for an increment. But

the professor is now getting sh9.6m, associate professor sh8.5m, senior lecturer sh7.4m, lecturer sh6.8m, assistant lecturer sh5.3m and teaching assistant sh4.3m," Lubaale said.

There are about 3,500 lecturers in public universities.

In 2017, Cabinet approved the public service pay policy principles and a five-year payment target of all salary arrears, increments and harmonisation of the salary disparities by 2023.

2017 POLICY

"The President was shocked that his directive had not been implemented. He said his directive should be implemented immediately but our salaries were not increased in September and October," Lubaale said.

In the September 30 directive, Museveni also instructed that salaries of various categories of medical staff be enhanced. He said the salary of a senior medical consultant be revised to sh17m, and those working as directors of science agencies be paid sh16m, scientists sh5.5m and doctors sh5m. Lubaale said the lecturers have engaged the public service

ministry since September, but have not had their salaries enhanced.

"We, therefore, request you and your technocrats in your Ministry of Public Service to implement the presidential directive," the lectures said in their November 20 letter to the public service minister, Muruli Mukasa.

The permanent secretary at the public service ministry, Catherine Bitarakwate Musingwire, declined to discuss steps being taken to enforce the directive.

"We are working on it. That is what I can tell you. You will be updated if there is anything new," she added. Lubaale stated that their agitation for salary enhancement started in 2003.

In 2017, Cabinet approved the public service pay policy principles and a five-year payment target of all salary arrears, increments and harmonisation of the salary disparities by 2023.

The plan covers all public servants whose salaries are derived from the consolidated fund. However, these long-term pay targets were to be rolled out in a phased manner depending on the availability of funds and set priorities.