

18.18 FOREIGN SERVICE ALLOWANCE AND OTHER RELATED ALLOWANCES

- 18.18.1 The Foreign Service Allowance and Other Related Allowances are paid to home-based staff serving in our diplomatic missions. Same are payable at the prevailing rate of exchange in the country of posting, in addition to their monthly salary, to meet the cost of living and to allow them to enjoy a standard of living compatible with their rank. These allowances vary according to the grade of the officer and the country of posting and are normally paid in the currency of the country of posting.
- 18.18.2 In certain countries, on account of recurrent fluctuations in the exchange rates against Hard Currencies and Mauritian Rupees, home-based staff are allowed to earn their Foreign Service Allowance and Other Related Allowances in Euro or Pound Sterling or US Dollars at the prevailing rate of exchange, on a month-to-month basis.
- 18.18.3 In the context of this Report, we are reviewing the various allowances for each category of the home-based staff posted in overseas missions, based on the submissions made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade and Diplomatic staff and taking into consideration, *inter alia*:
- (a) the relative costliness of a basket of goods and services compared to a similar basket in the foreign city, as determined following a joint survey carried out by Statistics Mauritius and this Bureau in August 2012;
 - (b) the Mercer's cost of living survey report in relation to the comparative costliness and the cumulative rate of inflation of the country of posting;
 - (c) the relative inconveniences and hardship encountered in some countries of posting;
 - (d) the Foreign Service Allowance drawn by the various officers prior to this review;
 - (e) the exchange rate obtaining at August 2012; and
 - (f) any fluctuation in the exchange rate in the respective countries where our missions are located.
- 18.18.4 On the basis of the above, we are making appropriate recommendations.

Recommendation 1

18.18.5 We recommend that:

- (i) **the quantum of Foreign Service Allowance should be paid to home-based staff at the prevailing rate of exchange of the currency of the respective country of posting as per data at Annex I to this Chapter;**

- (ii) all other payments, including the monthly salary and Other Related Allowances, should be made to home-based staff at the prevailing rate of exchange of the currency of the respective country of posting;
- (iii) notwithstanding the provisions at (i) and (ii) above, in a few countries/cities where there are recurrent fluctuations in the exchange rates, home-based staff should be allowed to earn their Foreign Service Allowance and Other Related Allowances in Euro or Pound Sterling or US Dollars at the prevailing rate of exchange; and
- (iv) where an officer is presently drawing salary, Foreign Service Allowance, Rent and Utilities and Entertainment Allowance, wherever applicable, more than what he would draw in the aggregate with this Report, he should be allowed to retain same, on a personal basis, up to the time of a new posting. On a new posting, our new recommendations should apply *in toto*.

Review of the Foreign Service Allowance (FSA)

- 18.18.6 In general, the Foreign Service Allowance and Other Related Allowances are reviewed once in five years in the wake of the PRB Report. However, frequent fluctuations in the foreign currencies coupled with the rise in the cost of living in the countries of posting lower the purchasing power of home-based staff and, therefore, provision was made in the last Report for an adjustment mechanism and the possibility for a mid-term review of the FSA.
- 18.18.7 At present, the Foreign Service Committee (FSC) may consider to review the quantum of FSA wherever there is a rise in the cost of living exceeding 20% in the country of posting.
- 18.18.8 In April 2012, data on the cumulative rate of inflation was compiled by Statistics Mauritius in the countries where our missions are located and submitted to the Foreign Service Committee. Only in a few countries, the cumulative rate of inflation exceeded around 20% for this period. The matter was referred to the High Powered Committee and the latter decided that the review of FSA should be considered in the context of this Report.
- 18.18.9 In the context of this review exercise, the home-based staff posted in overseas mission have reiterated their request for a periodic review of the FSA every two years, in light of substantial increase in the cost of living resulting from inflationary pressures in the country of posting.
- 18.18.10 We have examined the request and are making appropriate provision to this effect.

Recommendation 2

18.18.11 We recommend that the Foreign Service Committee should consider reviewing the Foreign Service Allowance of home-based staff posted in overseas missions in cases where the rate of inflation in the country of posting, at a given period of time, exceeds by 100% the rate of inflation in Mauritius.

Rent and Utilities

18.18.12 Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Permanent Representatives are refunded full charges of rent and utilities. Home-based staff serving in our overseas embassies are eligible for rent and utilities up to a ceiling set according to broad salary levels in the currency of the country of posting at the prevailing rate of exchange. However, any expenditure incurred above the prescribed ceiling of rent and utilities are borne *in toto* by the officer concerned. The acquisition of quarters by Government, wherever feasible for the benefit of home-based staff, remains an open option. The current arrangements are considered appropriate and are being maintained.

Recommendation 3

18.18.13 We recommend that, pending the acquisition of quarters by Government, wherever feasible:

- (i) full charges of rent and utilities should continue to be paid to Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Permanent Representatives; and**
- (ii) home-based staff in other grades, rent and utilities should be refunded up to a monthly ceiling according to broad salary levels and the currency of the country of posting at the prevailing rate of exchange as set out at Annex II to this Chapter.**

18.18.14 We also recommend that:

- (i) any expenditure incurred above the prescribed ceiling of rent and utilities as at Annex II to this Chapter should be borne *in toto* by the officer concerned; and**
- (ii) officers reported upon in this review, other than local recruits, occupying their own house, should be paid 80% of the prescribed ceiling as at Annex II to this Chapter .**

18.18.15 The payment of rent and utilities is meant to allow home-based staff to rent a convenient accommodation in the respective country of posting. However, very often, following a new posting or renewal of the lease agreement, there is an increase in the rental charges. In such cases, provision exists for the Supervising Officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to consider reviewing the ceiling of rent and utilities. This

arrangement is being maintained and we are reviewing the rate of ceiling of rent and utilities.

Recommendation 4

18.18.16 We recommend that the Supervising Officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade may, on strong reasonable grounds, revise the ceiling of rent and utilities, subject to a maximum of 30% in urgent cases relating to new posting/renewal of lease agreement of home-based staff.

18.18.17 We also recommend that any decision taken under the above provision should be ratified at the subsequent meeting of the FSC.

18.18.18 We further recommend that notwithstanding the provision at paragraph 18.18.14 (i), the home-based staff should continue to be refunded the rent and utilities up to the monthly ceiling as determined, on an *ad hoc* basis, by the Foreign Service Committee up till the expiry of the lease agreement. However, for subsequent renewal of lease or for new lease, rent and utilities ceiling above the prescribed rates should be sanctioned by the Foreign Service Committee.

Utilities for Staff occupying accommodation provided by the Mission

18.18.19 Home-based staff who are provided with rent free accommodation have only to meet the cost of utilities. We are maintaining the current arrangement.

Recommendation 5

18.18.20 We recommend that home-based staff provided with rent free accommodation be entitled to 20% of the quantum of rent and utilities as specified for their grade as per Annex II to this Chapter, if they have to meet the cost for utilities comprising electricity, gas, water and telephone facilities. In the event any of the utilities mentioned above is provided free of charge along with the accommodation facilities, appropriate deduction should be made to the quantum of 20% for rent and utilities.

Entertainment Allowance

18.18.21 Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Permanent Representatives, Minister Counsellors/Deputy High Commissioners, First Secretaries and Second Secretaries posted in our diplomatic missions are entitled to an entertainment allowance with a view to fostering healthy diplomatic relations and/or reciprocating invitations with foreign diplomats. The present provision is maintained and the quantum of the allowance is being revised.

Recommendation 6

18.18.22 We recommend that the quantum of Entertainment Allowance payable to home-based staff should be revised as per Annex III to this Chapter.

Children's Education

18.18.23 School fees inclusive of admission fees, contribution to land/building fund, society fees, registration fees and school endowment fund in respect of dependent children of home-based staff posted in our missions, aged between three and 20 years old, who attend school up to secondary education, are refunded at the rate of 60%. The existing provisions are being maintained.

Recommendation 7

18.18.24 We recommend that for home-based staff posted abroad, school fees should be refunded:

- (i) at the rate of 60% in respect of their dependent children, aged between three and 20 years old, attending pre-primary, primary and secondary schools as well as for children up to three years attending nurseries and day care centres; and**
- (ii) at the rate of 80% for dependent children aged between three to 20 years old attending pre-primary, primary and secondary schools as well as for children up to three years attending nurseries and day care centres in countries where the medium of teaching is neither English nor French and where the children have no alternative than to seek admission in international schools.**

Service Allowance

18.18.25 Ambassadors and/or High Commissioners employed on contractual basis to serve in our missions are paid service allowance equivalent to two months' salary in lieu of gratuity on completion of 12 months' satisfactory service. We are maintaining the present arrangement.

Recommendation 8

18.18.26 We recommend the payment of a service allowance equivalent to two months' salary in lieu of gratuity to Ambassadors and/or High Commissioners employed on contractual basis on completion of 12 months' satisfactory service.

Medical Expenses

18.18.27 Home-based staff posted in our missions are refunded medical expenses at the rate of 90% whenever the expenditure is supported by a medical certificate. In case of hospitalisation for surgical intervention, the totality of medical expenses are refunded in respect of the officer, his/her spouse and dependent children aged up to 20 years.

18.18.28 Our attention has been drawn by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade that the National Audit Office has raised query regarding the claims made to home-based staff, on refund of medical expenses in countries where free medical care/treatment is available in public health institutions. We have examined the issue and consider that refund of medical expenses should be made strictly on the basis of documentary evidence.

Recommendation 9

18.18.29 We recommend that 90% of medical expenses, should be refunded to home-based staff posted in our missions subject to:

- (i) the production of duly signed and certified copies of medical certificates/prescription, invoices and receipts;**
- (ii) the claim being submitted on prescribed form as determined by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade duly signed by the officer making the claim and upon the recommendation of the Head of Mission; and**
- (iii) medical bills falling within the Protocol and Guidelines approved by Government.**

18.18.30 We also recommend that in case of hospitalisation for surgical intervention, the totality of medical expenses incurred in respect of the officer, his/her spouse and dependent children aged up to 20 years should be refunded, subject to the conditions set out at paragraph 18.18.29.

Warm Clothing Allowance

18.18.31 A Warm Clothing Allowance of £ 220 is paid to an officer proceeding to serve in our mission for the first time. The same allowance of £ 220 is paid to his/her spouse and each dependent child aged up to 20 years. The present provision is maintained and the quantum of the allowance is being revised.

Recommendation 10

18.18.32 We recommend that Warm Clothing Allowance equivalent to £ 240 in the currency of the country of posting should be paid to the officer, his/her spouse and dependent children aged up to 20 years on first posting and on subsequent posting, when a period of five years has elapsed since the previous overseas posting.

Foreign Service Allowance while on leave

18.18.33 Officers on casual/annual or vacation leave outside the country of posting are paid FSA up to one month. We are maintaining this provision.

Recommendation 11

18.18.34 We recommend that the FSA, up to one month, should continue to be paid to officers who are on casual/annual or vacation leave outside the country of posting.

Foreign Service Allowance during Study Leave

18.18.35 Married officers posted in our missions and who stay with their family, when sponsored to follow a course of study outside the country of posting, are paid FSA of up to a maximum period of four months. We are maintaining this provision.

Recommendation 12

18.18.36 We recommend that married officers posted in our missions and who have been sponsored to follow a course of study outside the country of posting, the FSA should continue to be paid up to a period of four months, provided the member/s of the family stay(s) in the country of posting.

Transfer Grant

18.18.37 Officers are paid transfer grant equivalent to 5% of the gross annual salary or an amount of £ 200, whichever is higher, while proceeding to an overseas mission on a first posting or on return from overseas or on transfer from one mission to another. We are maintaining this provision.

Recommendation 13

18.18.38 We recommend that officers should be paid transfer grant equivalent to 5% of the gross annual salary or an amount equivalent to £ 220, whichever is higher, in the currency of the country of posting while proceeding to an overseas mission on a first posting or on return from overseas or on transfer from one mission to another.

Travelling

18.18.39 The home-based staff posted in our missions are entitled to travelling facilities along the same lines as their counterparts serving in Mauritius. We are maintaining the existing provision.

Recommendation 14

18.18.40 We recommend that:

- (i) the same travelling benefits as granted to officers in Mauritius be applicable to home-based staff posted in our missions except for those drawing a monthly salary of Rs 102000 and above;**
- (ii) officers drawing a monthly salary of Rs 102000 and above, other than Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Permanent**

Representatives should, on posting to a mission, be allowed to use the official car and in case no official car is available for this category of officer, incumbent may be allowed to opt for the payment of a car allowance as provided at paragraph 18.2.118, of this Volume (Chapter 18.2); and

- (iii) Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Permanent Representatives and Officers drawing a monthly salary of Rs 102000 and above, be provided with an official government car and driver to attend official functions, and an official car (without driver) for private trips while on leave in the home country.

Baggage Allowance

18.18.41 At present, officers while proceeding to overseas mission on a first posting or on return from overseas or on transfer from one mission to another are entitled to the cost of excess air baggage consisting of personal effects up to an amount of £ 210 in addition to the baggage entitlement normally attached to the air ticket and to the cost of transportation by sea up to 10 cubic metres of personal effects not exceeding four tons. Any extra cost is borne by the officer. The present provision is maintained.

Recommendation 15

18.18.42 We recommend that officers while proceeding to overseas mission on a first posting or on return from overseas or on transfer from one mission to another, should be paid an amount equivalent to £ 230 in the currency of the country of posting, as excess air baggage allowance. These officers should also be refunded the cost of transportation of either a 20 feet container of personal effects by sea, subject to 15% of the overall costs inclusive of freight charges, which should be borne by the beneficiary, or the cost of transportation by sea of up to 10 cubic meters inclusive of packaging and crating of personal effects not exceeding four tons. However, officers choosing to carry their luggage by air may opt to do so, but the cost would be limited to the cost of transport by sea. Any extra cost should be borne by the officer.

Recommendation 16

18.18.43 We additionally recommend that officers should refund any unused amount in respect of baggage allowance and documentary evidence should be submitted in respect of the used amount. In case documentary evidence is not submitted within one month, it will be assumed that the allowance has not been used and the total amount would be deducted from FSA or any amount payable to the officer.

Subsistence Allowance

18.18.44 Home-based staff posted in our missions at short notice are entitled to a Subsistence Allowance for a maximum of 10 days and in exceptional cases, up to 15 days. The present provision is maintained.

Recommendation 17

18.18.45 We recommend the payment of a Subsistence Allowance for a maximum of 10 days and in exceptional cases up to 15 days, to home-based staff posted in our missions at short notice. However, the beneficiary would not qualify for any other allowance during this period.

Air Passages

18.18.46 Air passages are usually provided to home-based staff, spouse and wholly dependent children up to the age of 20, both on departure and on completion of a tour of service.

18.18.47 Situations arise whereby an officer on posting overseas, travel alone to the country of posting and his spouse and children travel after a certain period of time to join the officer and in some instances, even after two years or more.

18.18.48 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade has submitted for a review of the policy for the grant of air passages to Diplomates, posted in our overseas missions in order to enhance efficiency in the administration of the scheme and also to be in line with the Programme-Based Budgeting. We have studied the submission and are making appropriate provision to this effect.

Recommendation 18

18.18.49 We recommend that:

- (i) when an officer is posted in our overseas mission, air passages would be provided to the spouse/children in case they join the officer within a period of one year after the date of departure of the latter; and**
- (ii) the officer should make arrangements to return within a period of one year on termination/completion of the tour of service in order to benefit from air passages,**

18.18.50 The above recommendations should also apply in case of change in posting from one mission to another mission.

Tour of Service

18.18.51 The duration of a tour of service for Diplomatic Staff posted in our missions is normally for a period of three years. As and when necessary, the tour of service is extended for a further period of one year. Staff of the General Services are allowed to serve for only one tour of service but in countries

where the conditions of living are difficult, the tour of service may be of a shorter duration. We are maintaining the provision.

Recommendation 19

18.18.52 We recommend that a tour of service for Diplomatic Staff posted in our missions should continue to be for a period of three years. However, in exceptional circumstances, the tour of service may be extended for a maximum period of one year.

18.18.53 We also recommend that the Staff of the General Services should serve for only one tour of service and that the tour of service may be of a shorter duration in countries where the conditions of living are difficult.

Consul

18.18.54 Consuls are the official representatives of the Republic of Mauritius posted in the main cities to provide assistance to the citizens, promote trade and issue visas. They are also paid Foreign Service Allowance and Other Related Allowances which are being maintained.

Recommendation 20

18.18.55 We recommend that the Foreign Service Allowance and Other Related Allowances for Consuls should be as set out at Annex IV to this Chapter.

Compassionate Passages

18.18.56 Currently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, upon the approval of the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, grants one compassionate passage to Diplomatic Staff, including officers employed on contractual basis, to either the officer or his/her spouse in the event of the death of the father or mother of either spouse, any child or a close relative, that is brother or sister of an officer or his/her spouse, when the death occurs in Mauritius. The present arrangement is maintained.

Recommendation 21

18.18.57 We recommend that diplomatic staff and officers employed on contractual basis in our mission abroad, be granted one compassionate passage during the tour of service/duration of the contractual employment to either the officer or the spouse in the event of the death of the father or mother of either spouse or any child or a close relative (brother or sister of an officer or of the spouse), when the death occurs in Mauritius.

Foreign Service Committee

18.18.58 In between reviews, the Foreign Service Committee comprising the Supervising Officer of the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms and representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED), Statistics Mauritius and the Pay Research Bureau examines and report on matters related to conditions of service of officers posted in our overseas missions. The Committee may co-opt a representative of the Diplomatic class, whenever necessary.

18.18.59 We are maintaining the present arrangements.

Recommendation 22

18.18.60 We recommend that the Foreign Service Committee under the chairmanship of the Supervising Officer of the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms and comprising representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Statistics Mauritius, the Pay Research Bureau and a co-opted representative of the Diplomatic Class, continues to examine and report in between general reviews, on matters related to conditions of service of officers posted in our overseas missions, whenever required.

Annex I

City	Currency	Ambassador/ High Commissioner/ Permanent Representative	Minister Counsellor/ Deputy High Commissioner	First Secretary	Second Secretary	Attaché	Higher Executive Officer/ Confidential Secretary	Executive Officer/ General Services Executive	Word Processing Operator
Addis Ababa	Birr	27,190	23,950	19,960	13,785	11,665	8,795	7,535	6,480
Antananarivo	Ariary	4,917,750	4,349,370	3,572,940	2,490,750	2,051,000	1,614,695	1,374,210	1,202,430
Beijing	Yuan	36,065	32,975	27,050	19,000	16,025	12,115	10,390	8,975
Berlin	Euro	4,710	4,315	3,540	2,475	2,030	1,595	1,365	1,175
Brussels	Euro	4,710	4,315	3,540	2,475	2,030	1,595	1,365	1,175
Cairo	Egyptian Pound	14,575	12,800	10,500	7,330	6,030	4,750	4,055	3,520
Canberra	Australian Dollar	6,955	6,355	5,220	3,640	2,995	2,345	2,015	1,735
Geneva	Swiss Franc	9,210	8,410	6,890	4,825	3,945	3,115	2,650	2,310
Islamabad	Pakistani Rupee	108,800	96,120	79,015	55,025	45,465	35,730	30,530	26,340
Kuala Lumpur	Malaysian Ringitt	13,085	11,935	9,775	6,905	5,605	4,460	3,740	3,305
London	Pound Sterling	3,900	3,565	2,920	2,040	1,740	1,310	1,120	970
Maputo	MTN	65,455	59,790	49,090	34,235	28,140	22,175	18,880	16,385
Moscow	Russian Rouble	214,495	196,535	161,760	112,585	92,360	72,500	62,160	53,605
New Delhi/ Mumbai	Indian Rupee	98,325	89,890	73,825	51,430	42,350	33,265	28,395	24,665
Paris	Euro	5,355	4,890	4,020	2,805	2,310	1,835	1,550	1,345
Pretoria	Rand	21,540	19,680	16,150	11,265	9,285	7,290	6,220	5,405
Washington/ New York	US Dollar	5,960	5,450	4,470	3,115	2,575	2,015	1,725	1,380

Annex II

CEILING OF RENT AND UTILITIES PER MONTH (IN FOREIGN CURRENCY)

City	Currency	Minister Counsellor/ Deputy High Commissioner/ First Secretary	Second Secretary/ Attaché	Higher Executive Officer/Confidential Secretary/Executive Officer/General Services Executive/ Word Processing Operator
Addis Ababa	Birr	16,030	11,830	10,875
Antananarivo	Ariary	1,672,965	958,150	608,350
Beijing	Yuan	102,855	59,940	38,210
Berlin	Euro	2,460	1,645	1,535
Brussels	Euro	3,235	2,105	1,615
Cairo	Egyptian Pound	4,710	3,045	2,355
Canberra	Australian Dollar	3,260	1,960	1,565
Geneva	Swiss Franc	6,520	3,910	3,130
Islamabad	Pakistani Rupee	80,015	55,280	34,915
Kuala Lumpur	Malaysian Ringitt	5,220	3,260	2,610
London	Pound Sterling	1,825	1,175	980
Maputo	MTN	36,985	30,815	19,595
Moscow	Russian Rouble	82,330	55,000	51,255
New Delhi/Mumbai	Indian Rupee	64,735	45,100	29,095
New York	US Dollar	5,335	3,735	2,665
Paris	Euro	3,580	2,190	1,790
Pretoria	Rand	11,770	7,615	5,535
Washington	US Dollar	4,430	2,770	2,215

Annex III

ENTERTAINMENT ALLOWANCE PER MONTH (IN FOREIGN CURRENCY)

City	Currency	Ambassador/High Commissioner/ Permanent Representative	Minister Counsellor/Deputy High commissioner	First Secretary	Second Secretary
Addis Ababa	Birr	4,215	1,685	1,260	845
Antananarivo	Ariary	736,890	294,525	221,760	147,840
Beijing	Yuan	6,735	2,620	1,885	1,270
Berlin	Euro	860	350	265	175
Brussels	Euro	745	295	225	145
Cairo	Egyptian Pound	2,590	1,040	770	520
Canberra	Australian Dollar	1,190	475	360	235
Geneva	Swiss Franc	1,470	590	440	295
Islamabad	Pakistani Rupee	23,560	9,470	7,160	4,735
Kuala Lumpur	Malaysian Ringitt	2,330	935	705	460
London	Pound Sterling	580	235	175	115
Maputo	MTN	11,425	4,620	3,465	2,310
Moscow	Russian Rouble	28,760	11,550	8,665	5,775
New Delhi/Mumbai	Indian Rupee	20,900	8,315	6,235	4,160
Paris	Euro	900	355	270	180
Pretoria	Rand	4,120	1,655	1,155	820
Washington/ New York	US Dollar	925	365	280	185

Annex IV

ALLOWANCES FOR CONSUL

City	Currency	Foreign Service Allowance (FSA) per month (in Foreign Currency)	Ceiling of Rent and Utilities per month (in Foreign Currency)	Entertainment Allowance per month (in Foreign Currency)
		Consul	Consul	Consul
Mumbai	Indian Rupee	73,825	64,735	6,235
