

Statement on Negotiations With CSA

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Submitted by cjoseph on Mon, 2017-04-03 18:04

Castries, April 3, 2017 – St. Lucia Electricity Services Limited (LUCELEC) and the Civil Service Association (CSA) representing LUCELEC’s line staff met with the Labour Department on Monday, April 3, 2017. The meeting was an attempt to find a resolution to the impasse between LUCELEC and the CSA on the implementation of a grade structure for the line staff. The proposed grade structure is in keeping with what has been implemented for the rest of the staff.

Monday’s meeting was unable to arrive at a resolution of the issue. The Labour Department has since advised the parties that it will recommend to the Minister for Labour, Honourable Stephenson King, that the matter be referred to the Labour Tribunal for its consideration and decision.

Toward the end of last year, the CSA had written to the Minister for Labour giving notice of a dispute between the CSA and LUCELEC and of their intention to take strike action. The Minister for Labour met with the parties in January and asked them to seek to resolve the outstanding matters between them, and had given them until March 31, 2017 to do so. Thereafter he would meet with the parties again.

There were five issues in dispute – the implementation of a grade structure for the line staff that is in keeping with what has been implemented for the rest of the staff, compensation for Live Line work, a change in the Company’s Merit Pay Policy and Appraisal System, and the retirement age.

The parties have come to agreement on the compensation for Live Line work. So that matter is no longer in dispute. The parties had different interpretations of the retirement age but have agreed to allow this matter to go to Tribunal for a ruling that would be clear to all and binding. The parties have also agreed on a way forward for further discussions on the Merit Policy and Appraisal System. The implementation of the grade structure remains unresolved.

Both parties agree to the fundamentals of a new grade structure, the salary ranges, and to the effective date being January 2011. The main difference is that the Union wants the salary ranges to include 15 discreet steps that employees are pegged to, while LUCELEC’s position is that the salary ranges have no discreet steps in between, as obtains for all the other grades in the Company.

At the heart of the issue is that each side believes the other has reneged on what had been agreed to via exchanges of letters during negotiations on the 2011 – 2013 collective agreement.

LUCELEC hopes that the Tribunal can deal with this matter expeditiously so that the parties can achieve closure on this issue.

Tags:

[St. Lucia Electricity Services Limited](#) [1]

[LUCELEC](#) [2]

[Union Negotiations](#) [3]

[Grade 1](#) [4]

[CSA](#) [5]

[negotiations](#) [6]

[Tribunal](#) [7]

[Strike](#) [8]

[Roger Joseph](#) [9]

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[3] <https://www.lucelec.com/tags/union-negotiations> [4] <https://www.lucelec.com/tags/grade-1>

[5] <https://www.lucelec.com/tags/csa> [6] <https://www.lucelec.com/tags/negotiations>

[7] <https://www.lucelec.com/tags/tribunal> [8] <https://www.lucelec.com/tags/strike>

[9] <https://www.lucelec.com/tags/roger-joseph>