

On 08 August 2024, this Office received a complaint from staff of the Finance Section at the Ministry of Health and Wellness Headquarters, raising serious concerns regarding the conduct and management style of the then Manager Financial Operations (MFO. The complaint outlined the following issues:

1. **Staff Mismanagement:** It was alleged that the MFO created a toxic work environment through disrespectful communication, frequent rule changes, and threats of transfer or negative performance appraisals for those who did not comply.
2. **Work Disruptions:** Staff claimed that task allocations were altered every three months, which disrupted workflows, caused duplication of work, and negatively affected team cohesion.
3. **Financial Mismanagement:** Concerns were raised about inappropriate use of capital funds for recurrent expenditures and delays in processing payments, which reportedly led to around MUR 30 million being left unutilized.
4. **Mental and Moral Harassment:** The working environment was described as demoralizing, with staff reporting undue stress, humiliation, and a decline in motivation and mental well-being.

In light of the complaint, the views of the Ministry of Health and Wellness were sought which were obtained on 15th June 2025. The Internal Control Unit of the Ministry conducted an investigation into the anonymous allegations and made the following recommendations:

- (i) For the effective functioning of the Finance Department, officers should have maintained proper coordination to support the MFO in her duties. These included advising the Accounting Officer on various financial matters such as budget formulation, expenditure monitoring, and project financial management.
- (ii) As the Finance Section was staffed with approximately 21 Finance Officers and 24 General Cadre Officers, it was recommended that additional Finance Officers be posted from the Finance Cadre.
- (iii) Officers were reminded of the provisions of Financial Instruction No. 5 of 2013, paragraph 2, regarding timely payment to suppliers:
 - (a) Within 7 working days for invoices related to goods/services delivered by SMRs.
 - (b) Within 30 days for invoices from other suppliers, provided they were in order and certified.

(iv) Once payment files were processed, they were to be updated accordingly before being dispatched to the Registry of the Ministry.

Following its inquiry, the Internal Control Unit concluded that the allegations were unfounded. No staff members confirmed the allegations, and two officers specifically denied any inappropriate conduct by the MFO.

Regarding delays in supplier payments, the report emphasized that the AMFO should have ensured payments were made within the prescribed timeframes, and any causes of delay should have been communicated to the MFO.

While the Internal Control Unit could not investigate allegations related to moral and mental harassment—as these matters fell outside its scope—the Ministry conducted a discreet inquiry. It was determined that officers had no complaints and were operating in a safe and conducive work environment.

The Ministry reaffirmed its commitment to promoting a workplace culture that encourages open communication, collaboration, and staff well-being.

Lastly, the Ministry confirmed that the MFO retired from the public service on 24 March 2025.