ANNEXURE: B

PUBLIC SERVICE
PRECAUTIONARY SUSPENSIONS
GUIDE

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION
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1. PREAMBLE

These guidelines aim to provide managers in the public service with a uniform framework to manage precautionary suspensions within their respective departments. They will also attempt to –

♦ Provide managers with principles which apply to the process of suspending employees; and

♦ Promote best practice in giving effect to suspensions in their departments.

2. DEFINITION

“Precautionary suspension” is an interim measure imposed, not as a disciplinary sanction, but for reasons of orderly administration. Precautionary transfer is an alternative to precautionary suspension.


“Suspension” means precautionary suspension as contemplated in Item 7.2 of the Disciplinary Code and Procedures or item 2.7(2) Chapter 7 of the SMS Handbook

“Transfer” means precautionary transfer as contemplated in Item 7.2 of the Disciplinary Code and Procedure for the Public Service

“Framework” means the Disciplinary Code and Procedures for the Public Service in conjunction with Chapter 7 of the SMS Handbook

“PSA” means the Public Service Act, 1994

“Employer” refers to both national and provincial departments
3. PRINCIPLES

- The employer must have valid and fair reason for imposing a precautionary suspension against an employee, based on fair labour relations principles.

- The period of precautionary suspension must be reasonable and justifiable but should not exceed 60 calendar days.

- Precautionary suspensions must be reviewed on a regular basis.

- There must be a clear balance between the interests of the employee in continuing his or her daily work and the disciplinary and operational requirements of the employer.

- Employees must, without delay and throughout the process be informed of the process steps that the Department is initiating.

- If suspended, the employee is entitled to a speedy and effective finalisation of the disciplinary process.

- The employee **must** return to work should the hearing not be concluded within 60 calendar days; however this does not prohibit/ preclude the employer from continuing with the disciplinary process nor does it render the employee immune from the allegations preferred against him/ her.

- Precautionary suspension in terms of the framework does not constitute a judgement, and must be on full pay.

- Disregard of the peremptory provisions of a statute is fatal to the validity of the proceedings affected.

4. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

Item 7.2 of the Disciplinary Code and Procedures and 2.7(2) of Chapter 7 of the SMS Handbook provides for managers to suspend an employee on full pay or transfer an employee, as a precautionary measure, under the following circumstances:

- If the employee is alleged to have committed a serious offence, and
If the employer believes that the presence of an employee at the workplace might jeopardise any investigation into the alleged misconduct, or endanger the well being or safety of any person or state property.

The framework furthermore provides for the employer to hold a disciplinary hearing within a month or 60 calendar days, depending on the complexity of the matter and the length of the investigation. The chair of the hearing must then decide on any further postponement.

Notwithstanding a month or 60 calendar days period to hold a disciplinary hearing and the provision on the complexity of the matter and the length of the investigation, the employer should strive to complete the investigation process within 14 days of suspension.

The employer guideline on the management of precautionary suspensions is necessary to ensure that such transfers/suspensions are managed in accordance with the principles of administrative justice, natural justice and fairness. The maintenance of a good labour relations atmosphere in the workplace requires that acceptable and fair procedure is in place and observed.

This guideline serves a dual purpose in that it provides a policy framework, which enables management to maintain satisfactory standards, and employees to have access to procedures whereby alleged failures to comply with these standards may be fairly and objectively addressed.

The guideline on the management of suspensions shall be in writing, consulted with labour, and made available to employees. The essential elements of any procedure for dealing with suspension are:

- that the basis for the suspension is clear,
- that the reasons for suspension are well defined,
- that the employee is informed of the reasons for the decision, and
- that the employee has the opportunity to respond to the impending suspension.

5. LEGISLATION

Senior Management Service (SMS) Handbook Chapter 7 Misconduct and Incapacity

Resolution No 1 of 2003 of the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council
The Public Service Act, 1994, and

The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995


Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998

Regulations on Terms and Conditions of Employment of Educators

SA Police Service Discipline Regulations (Agreement No 1 of 2006)

6. DELEGATION

Departments are required and encouraged to develop their respective Labour Relations Delegations of Authority in terms of section 42A of the PSA.

7. GROUNDS FOR SUSPENSION

Item 7.2 of the Disciplinary Code and Procedure and 2.7(2) Chapter 7 of the SMS Handbook provides for the circumstances under which an employee may be transferred or suspended on full pay. A decision to transfer/suspend should be taken with care, in the light of the circumstances involved. There are essentially two aspects to consider when transferring/suspending an employee:

- Reasonable suspicion of misconduct

Transfer/suspension may be appropriate once sufficient investigation has established at least a reasonable basis for suspicion that and alleged disciplinary misconduct might have occurred.

- Reasonable belief that the employee may interfere

If there is a reasonable basis for believing that the presence of the employee at the workplace might interfere with the investigation, the witnesses and evidence, the transfer/suspension of the employee shall be a last resort to ensure the continued progress of the disciplinary hearing.
Transfer/suspension shall only be considered a precautionary measure, where the continued presence in the workplace is inappropriate due to:

- The effective operation of the workplace;
- The interests of the public;
- The interests of the employee;
- The interests of his or her fellow employees; and
- A reasonable and objective apprehension on the part of the manager that there is a real possibility of the misconduct being repeated.

With regard to the employer and all employees falling within the registered scope of the SSSBC, the employer may suspend with full pay or temporarily transfer an employee on conditions determined by the National Commissioner. In respect of an employee who has been suspended, the National or the Provincial/Divisional Commissioner (the Commissioner) may suspend the employee without pay, if the Commissioner on reasonable grounds, is satisfied that the misconduct of which the employee is accused of serious misconduct and that the case against the employee is so strong that it is likely that the employee will be convicted of a crime and dismissed; Provided that:

- Before issuing a directive in terms hereof the employee is afforded an opportunity to make written representations
- The Commissioner considers the representations
- The disciplinary process must be initiated within 14 days of the decision to suspend without pay
- If the disciplinary process is not completed within 60 days from inception, the question of continued suspension without pay must be considered by the Commissioner who shall take any such decision of continued suspension within 7 days of receiving written representations on continued suspension and a decision that the suspension continues shall only be for a further period of 30 days.

Subject to the provisions of section 20 (1) of the Employment of Educators Act, the Labour Relations Act or any collective agreement concluded by the Education Labour Relations Council, the employer may at any time before or after charging an educator with misconduct suspend that educator from duty on such conditions as the employer may determine.

With regard to the Regulations on Terms and Conditions of Employment of Educators, the employer or his or her delegate may summarily suspend, in terms of section 14(2) of the Act, a person appointed in terms of regulation 92 from his or her duties without pay, in terms of Regulation 93, if:

- prima facie evidence exists that his or her appointment was based on false information; or
• in the opinion of the employer, reasonable evidence exists that the continued performance of duties by such a person may jeopardise the progress with and/or the integrity of the examination process.

A person referred to above shall leave the premises on which the examination-related duties are performed, immediately upon suspension from his or her duties.

Upon completion of the said examination, a disciplinary investigation against the said person shall be conducted in terms of section 13 of the Act. If the employer decides not to charge the said person with misconduct or if the person is found not guilty of misconduct, the person will receive a remuneration equivalent to what he or she would have been paid had he or she not been suspended.

Before an employee is suspended it should be ensured that a hearing is conducted in compliance with the audi alteram partem rule, giving the employee an opportunity to present his reasons to opposing the precautionary suspension. The process involved does not require the “criminal justice” model of workplace disciplinary action in that the employer can make a decision on whether to suspend or not on a balance of probabilities.

The approach to hold a hearing before suspension is consistent with fair dealing in the employment context. This means that an employee should not be suspended unless there are prima facie grounds for believing that the employee has committed serious misconduct and there is some objectively justifiable reason for excluding the employee from the workplace.

8. FORMS OF SUSPENSION

8.1 Transfer or re-assignment of duties (alternative to suspension)

The employee is temporarily transferred to another work location or re-assigned other duties as a precautionary measure. The intent is for temporary removal from the place of work or nature of work to avoid circumstances where, for instance, the presence of an employee at the workplace or in the specific environment might jeopardise any investigation into the alleged misconduct.

The officer remains against his/her post on the fixed establishment.

Re-assignment of duties or transfer shall always be given priority over a precautionary suspension in order to curb expenditure whilst salaries are paid with no services rendered.
8.2 Suspension with Full Emoluments Salary

The employee is not allowed to take up his/her duties until the suspension is lifted, but must be available at a location acceptable and accessible to the employer for the purpose of completing the investigation. Any condition attached to a suspension shall be regarded as a lawful instruction. Breach of the instruction could result in further disciplinary action in appropriate circumstances.

Suspension shall not amount to a breach of contract by the employer because the employee remains on full pay although prevented by the employer from performing duties, which shall be within a month or 60 days, depending on the complexity of the matter and the length on the investigation.

9. PROCEDURE

- These procedure guidelines shall ensure the management of suspensions in an efficient and effective way.

- If there are grounds for removing the employee from the current workplace, the manager shall, as the next step, consider whether to-

  - Transfer the employee to another work location;
  - Re-assign duties; or
  - Suspended the employee from the place of work.

After a decision has been made to transfer or suspend, the manager shall schedule a meeting with the employee and advise the employee in writing of the proposed action and the time of the meeting. Written reports or documents upon which the proposed action is based shall accompany the notice of the meeting whenever practicable to do so.

- The delegated authority shall conduct the meeting. An officer from the Labour Relations component shall attend the meeting in an advisory capacity. The employee has a right to be represented by a fellow employee or a representative of a recognised trade union during the meeting. Minutes shall be taken of the proceedings. Failure to attend the above-mentioned meeting without good cause shown will result in suspension, without being given the opportunity to make representations as to why the employee should not be suspended.
The employee may be relieved of his/her duties at this stage. An example of a notice of intention to suspend is attached as Annexure A.

Following the meeting, the recommendation, supporting evidence, and the employee’s response or evidence, the delegated authority shall carefully review these to ensure that there is sufficient evidence, or legitimate reasons, for the transfer/suspension.

The employee reserve the right to request for a review of the decision to suspend. After the review the delegated authority shall render a decision. The final decision must be conveyed to the employee in writing and the notice shall contain:

- The nature and extent of the allegations of misconduct against him or her;
- The reasons why the department saw it fit to transfer/suspend the employee, based on the representations made by the employee;
- The possible length of the transfer/suspension;
- The conditions of access to the workplace during the course of the suspension; and
- An indication that the employee will continue to receive remuneration as agreed.

Written confirmation of the transfer/re-assignment of duty/suspension of an employee shall be served on an employee and take effect from a current date. Examples of a notification transfer or re-assignment of duties and a notification of suspension are attached as Annexure B and Annexure C, respectively. The transfer of an employee should not result in the financial loss to the employee as a result of such a precautionary measure.

Since transfer/suspension is a precautionary measure, the said transfer/suspension will terminate on the last day of the 60 days suspension period and a suspended employee will be allowed to resume duty with immediate effect pending the finalisation of the investigation and the outcome of the disciplinary process.

NB. Departments should note that it takes only one thoroughly prepared charge to prove a case successfully without having to resort to endless alternative charges that shall invariably result in delaying the finalisation of disciplinary cases.

In terms of section 14 of the Employment of Educators Act, unless the employer directs otherwise, shall deem an educator appointed in a permanent capacity to have been discharged from service on account of misconduct who:
(i) while suspended from duty, resigns or without permission of the employer, assumes employment in another position
(ii) while disciplinary steps taken against the educator have not yet been disposed of, resigns or without permission of the employer assumes employment in another position

9.1 Record keeping

The employer shall keep records of each transfer/suspended employee specifying the following:

- The nature of the alleged transgression.
- The reasons for the transfer/suspension.
- The period of transfer/suspension.
- The financial implications of the transfer/suspension.
- The written notifications of the transfer/suspension.
- Responses from the employee in regard to the transfer/suspension.
- The reasons for the extension of a suspension.
- Date of termination of the transfer/suspension.

10 REVIEW OF SUSPENSION

The Framework provides that –

- If an employee is transferred or suspended as a precautionary measure, the employer must hold a disciplinary hearing within a month or 60 days, depending on the complexity of the matter and the length of the investigation; and

- The chair of the hearing must decide on any further postponement.

- If it is decided that the transfer/suspension should be extended, the employee must be informed of the valid reasons for the further extension and given an opportunity to make representations.

- The reasons for the extension, and the employee’s response, if any, shall be carefully reviewed by the delegated authority to ensure that there are sufficient reasons to extend the transfer/suspension.

- The suspension shall be lifted after the lapse of 60 days as prescribed in the framework unless otherwise ordered by the chair of the hearing.
The disciplinary procedure shall, notwithstanding the decision to lift a transfer/suspension, be continued with until the disciplinary process has been finalised.

Where the investigation into alleged misconduct finds no grounds for a charge of misconduct, it is desirable to give written notice of termination of suspension, effective from a specified date, which may indicate that no grounds for a charge of misconduct were found and that no further steps will be proceeded with.

11. **DELEGATIONS OF AUTHORITY ON DISCIPLINE**

The Public Service Labour Relations Delegations are recommended in line with the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council Resolution 1 of 2003 – Disciplinary Code and Procedure for the Public Service/ Chapter 7 of the SMS Handbook/ Public Service Act, 1994 (as amended)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Matter</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Lowest graded post, the incumbent who will have authority to approve</th>
<th>Conditions in terms of PSCBC Resolution 1 of 2003/Handbook/PSA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1        | When an official is accused of serious misconduct the employer may initiate a disciplinary enquiry (investigation) to investigate the matter and obtain evidence in order to determine whether or not there are grounds for a charge of misconduct against the official concerned. | 1. An investigating officer will be appointed to conduct the investigation.  
2. The investigating officer should submit his or her report to the relevant * line manager within 14 working days, and should grounds exist for a charge, the concerned official will be charged.  
3. Charges should be formulated and notice of disciplinary hearing forwarded to the concerned official at least five working days before the hearing.  
4. Departmental Representative and Chair must be appointed for the | * Line Manager                                                                 | Par. 6 of PSCBC Res. (Par.2.6 Handbook)                                                                                                                                                           |
<p>|          |                                                                        |                                                                考古                                                                                                                                | * Labour Relations Manager                                             | Par. 7.1 of PSCBC Res. (Par. 2.7 Handbook)                                                                                                                                 |
|          |                                                                        |                                                                考古                                                                                                                                | * Line Manager                                                        | Sec 42A of PSA                                                                                                               |</p>
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<td>2</td>
<td>When an official is accused of serious misconduct and sufficient evidence exist <em>(prima facie)</em>, the official will be charged with misconduct.</td>
<td>1. Misconduct charges will be formulated and charge sheet signed. Notice of disciplinary hearing must be forwarded to the concerned official at least five working days before the hearing.</td>
<td>Head of Unit of concerned official</td>
<td>Par. 6 &amp; 7.1 (Par. 2.6 Handbook)</td>
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<td>2. Relevant Labour Relations Officer to observe and guide.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Departmental Representative and Chair must be appointed for the disciplinary hearing.</td>
<td>Head of Section of concerned official</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>When an official is accused of serious misconduct that warrants precautionary suspension, the employer may suspend an official on full pay.</td>
<td>1. Supporting documentation/evidence must be submitted to the relevant manager for evaluation and decision.</td>
<td>Head of Unit of concerned official</td>
<td>Par. 7.2 of PSCBC Res. (Par. 2.7(2) Handbook)</td>
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<td>2. Audi letter to be handed to the employee.</td>
<td>* Line Manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Letter of suspension should be handed to official.</td>
<td>Head of Unit of concerned official</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. A disciplinary hearing must be held within a month or 60 days from date of suspension.</td>
<td>* Line Manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Charges should be formulated and notice of disciplinary hearing forwarded to the concerned official at least five working days before the hearing.</td>
<td>* Line Manager/ Labour Relations Manager</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Departmental Representative and Chair</td>
<td>Line Manager</td>
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</table>

* Line Manager/ Labour Relations Manager
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<td>must be appointed for the disciplinary hearing.</td>
<td>Res. (Par.2.6&amp;2.7(3) Handbook)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 4       | If a Chair finds an official guilty of misconduct, he or she shall pronounce a sanction. | 1. Sanctions consist out of:  
   - Counselling  
   - Written warning valid for six months  
   - Final written warning valid for six months  
   - Suspension without pay for no longer than three months  
   - Demotion  
   - A combination of the above  

   - Dismissal  

   - Dismissal  

2. Informing the concerned official of the outcome of the disciplinary hearing in writing. | Relevant line manager (to give effect)  
Head of Department (to give effect)  
Relevant Executive Authority in the case of Head of Department  
* Line Manager | Par. 7.4(a) of PSCBC Res.  
Sec 16B (1) of PSA, 1994  
(Par.2.7(4) Handbook)  
Section 16B (1)(b) of PSA  
Sec 16B (1)(a) of PSA, 1994  
Sec 42A of PSA |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Lowest graded post, the incumbent who will have authority to approve</th>
<th>Execution</th>
<th>Other relating prescripts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Transfer and secondment of an employee (as precautionary measure)</td>
<td>Chief Director: Human Resource&lt;br&gt;Head of Department</td>
<td>The employer may transfer an employee if: - the employee is alleged to have committed a serious offence - if his or her presence at the workplace might jeopardise any investigation into the alleged misconduct - or endanger the safety of any person or state property</td>
<td>Par. 7.2(a) of PSCBC Res. (Par.2.7(2) Handbook)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>17 (2) (a)</td>
<td>Discharging an employee, for reasons other than his or her own unfitness or incapacity, that his or her discharge will promote efficiency or economy or will otherwise be in the interest of the public service</td>
<td>Director General</td>
<td>Action after all necessary steps have been taken to improve performance and disciplinary measures complied with</td>
<td>Section 17(2)(a) of the PSA, 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>17(2) (c)</td>
<td>Discharging an employee on account of unfitness for his or her duties or incapacity to carry them out efficiently</td>
<td>Director General</td>
<td>Action after all necessary steps have been taken to improve performance and disciplinary measures complied with</td>
<td>Section 17(2)(c) of the PSA, 1994</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>17 (2) (d)</td>
<td>Discharging an employee on account of misconduct, excluding a head of department</td>
<td>Director-General</td>
<td>A Chair during a disciplinary hearing that finds an accused guilty as charged may pronounce a sanction of dismissal, but the Director-General should give effect to the sanction. In terms of legislation, this authority may not be delegated.</td>
<td>PSCBC Res. 1 of 2003, par. 7.4.a.vii. Section 16B(1) of the PSA, 1994 (Par. 2.7(4) Handbook)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>17 (3) (a) (i)</td>
<td>Discharging an official on grounds of abscondment</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>1. Relevant official discharges himself due to deeming provision of Section 17 (3) (a) (i) 2. Letter of abscondment 3. Letter of discharge</td>
<td>Section 16B(1) of the PSA, 1994 Sec 42A of PSA Section 16B(1) of the PSA, 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>17 (3) (c)</td>
<td>Reinstatement of an employee who was deemed to have been discharged in terms of Section 17 (3) (a) (i)</td>
<td>Executive Authority</td>
<td>Motivation for reinstatement should be forwarded to the Executive Authority for a decision and signing of reinstatement letter.)</td>
<td>Sec 17(3)(c) of PSA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. REFERENCES

14. ANNEXURES

A. Notice of intention to suspend
B. Notification of re-assignment of duties
C. Notification of suspension
Dear Mr/Ms

POSSIBLE SUSPENSION FROM SERVICE

The department intends suspending you from service, with full salary, in terms of clause 7.2 of the Disciplinary Code and Procedures/ 2.7 (2) of the SMS Handbook Chapter 7 Misconduct and Incapacity (the framework) in view of a possible charge of misconduct against you, in terms of the said framework, it is alleged that you-

In order, however, to apply the *audi alteram partem* rule, I shall be glad to receive your representations as well in this regard as well as any possible reasons why you should not be suspended.

Your reply must please be forwarded within five working days from the date of receipt of this letter, through Mr/Ms........(*insert name and designation*)............for transmission to Mr/Ms........(*insert name and designation*).............................. at ....(*insert address*)..............

Yours faithfully

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE:
Dear Mr/Ms

NOTIFICATION OF RE-ASSIGNMENT OF DUTIES

With reference to the meeting held on (date and time) regarding the appropriateness to re-assign your duties please be advised as follows:

It has been decided to re-assign your duties in terms of clause 7.2 of the Disciplinary Code and Procedure for the Public Service. You are therefore directed to report for duty at (place of work) on (date and time) to (supervisor) where you shall be responsible for the following duties:

(give a short description of duties)

The nature of the allegations of misconduct being brought against you are as follows:

(state the allegations)

Reasons for the re-assignment of duties are as follows:

(state reasons)

Yours faithfully

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE:
Dear Mr/Ms

SUSPENSION FROM SERVICE

My possible suspension letter dated ............................./Your comments in the above regard dated ............................................. refers.

Kindly take note that, after careful consideration of the facts to its disposal, the Department has decided to suspend you from service, with emoluments, in terms of clause 7.2 of the Disciplinary Code and Procedures/ 2.7 (2) of the SMS Handbook Chapter 7 Misconduct and Incapacity, as from the date of this letter, in view of pending misconduct charges against you in terms of Annexure A of the said Policy.

You are therefore, directed not to enter the premises of the Department during your period of suspension.

Please note that, if this suspension is not withdrawn/lifted before the last day of the disciplinary hearing it shall automatically lapse on the last day of the 60 day suspension period as prescribed in the framework and you will be allowed to resume duty with immediate effect.

You are kindly requested to acknowledge receipt of this letter by signing the attached copy thereof and return it to Mr/Ms............................................... at ..................................................

Yours faithfully

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE
NOTIFICATION OF RE-ASSIGNMENT OF DUTIES

The department intends re-assign your duties, with full salary, in terms of clause 7.2 of the Disciplinary Code and Procedures/ 2.7 (2) of the SMS Handbook Chapter 7 Misconduct and Incapacity (the framework) in view of a possible charge of misconduct against you, in terms of the said framework, it is alleged that you-

In order, however, to apply the *audi alteram partem* rule, I shall be glad to receive your representations as well in this regard as well as any possible reasons why your duties should not be re-assigned.

Your reply must please be forwarded within five working days from the date of receipt of this letter, through Mr/Ms........(*insert name and designation*).............for transmission to Mr/Ms........(*insert name and designation*).......................... at ....(*insert address)*..................

Yours faithfully

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: