

Universities Pension Fund - 2023

1. Financial Statements

Opinion

The audit of the financial statements of Universities Pension Fund for the year ended 31 December 2023 comprising the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2023 and the statement of financial performance, statement of changes in equity and cash flow statement for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, was carried out under my direction in pursuance of provisions in Article 154(3) of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka read in conjunction with the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018. My comments and observations which I consider should be report to Parliament appear in this report.

In my opinion, the accompanying financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Fund as at 31 December 2023, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Sri Lanka Public Sector Accounting Standards.

1.1 Basis for Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with Sri Lanka Auditing Standards (SLAuSs). My responsibilities, under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of my report. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

1.2 Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation of financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with Sri Lanka Public Sector Accounting Standards and for such internal control as management determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Fund's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Fund or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Fund's financial reporting process.

As per Section 16 (1) of the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018, the Fund is required to maintain proper books and records of all its income, expenditure, assets and liabilities, to enable annual and periodic financial statements to be prepared of the Fund.

1.3 Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

My objective is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Sri Lanka Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if,

individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements

As part of an audit in accordance with Sri Lanka Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Fund's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. However, future events or conditions may cause the Fund to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

The scope of the audit also extended to examine as far as possible and as far as necessary the following.

- Whether the organization, systems, procedures, books, records and other documents have been properly and adequately designed from the point of view of the presentation of information to enable a continuous evaluation of the activities of the Fund, and whether such systems, procedures, books, records and other documents are in effective operation;
- Whether the Fund has complied with applicable written law, or other general or special directions issued by the governing body of the Fund;
- Whether the Fund has performed according to its powers, functions and duties; and
- Whether the resources had been procured and utilized economically, efficiently and effectively within the time frames and in compliance with the applicable laws.

1.5 Non-compliance with Laws, Rules, Regulations and Management Decisions etc.

Reference to Laws, Rules, Regulations etc.	Non-compliance	Comments of the Management	Recommendation
Commission Circular No. 03/2022 dated 07 February 2022	Although the credit balance of the pension fund account of the contributor should be paid within 03 months after closing the account, since the payment was delayed from 08 months to 39 months in 04 occasions. As such, interest amounting to Rs.715,283 had to be paid to the pension fund for the delay period.	In relation to the four instances mentioned in the audit query, the pension benefits were paid to the respective contributor in less than a month after the pension benefit applications were duly completed and received by the pension department. Accordingly, the Pension Fund had not delayed any payment of pension benefit and the calculation of interest is in accordance with Section 95 of the University Act.	Circular instructions should be followed.

2. Financial Review

2.1 Financial Result

The operating result of the year under review amounted to a surplus of Rs. 3,182,236,075 and the corresponding surplus of the preceding year amounted to Rs. 1,957,339,557 thus observing an improvement amounting to Rs. 1,224,896,518 of the financial result. The increase in the investment income had mainly contributed for this improvement.

2.2 Trend Analysis of major Income and Expenditure items

The investment income of the year under review increased by Rs.1,426,240,569 or 62 percent compared to the investment income of the previous year. Increase in interest income from investments made in treasury bonds and debentures was mainly due to this increase.