17.1 Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture

It was decided to house the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture (NMCAC) at “La Tour Koenig” after the latter’s renovation. This Centre was estimated at Rs 50 million and since 1989, provisions were made in the capital budget towards its execution. The foundation stone for the Centre was laid in September 1998. Acquisition of a plot of land at La Tour Koenig was made in year 2000, that is eleven years later. However, in May 2001, Government changed its decision regarding location of the NMCAC.

The then General Post Office (GPO) was to be renovated for that purpose. The relocation of the NMCAC necessitated the vacation of the GPO premises, appointment of three Consultants and payment of a compensation of Rs 100,000 to an Architect who won an architectural competition for the Centre at La Tour Koenig. The GPO was vacated in May 2004.

The renovation work at the GPO, which was originally estimated by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport (MPI) at Rs 15 million in November 2003, was subsequently revised to Rs 33 million in July 2004. A total amount of Rs 514,534 has so far been paid to three Consultants appointed for the renovation of the GPO. In May 2005, the CTB launched tender for the renovation of the GPO. The quotes received ranged from some Rs 62 million to Rs 83 million. However, contract for the renovation work was not awarded.

In July 2005, Government decided that the NMCAC be relocated at the La Tour Koenig site. In December 2005, the Attorney General’s Office advised for a fresh tender exercise for an architectural competition. In January 2006, the Ministry proposed to appoint officers of the MPI for the design and supervision of the project. In June 2006, the cost of the Centre was estimated by the MPI at Rs 66,259,751 (Rs 21,331,695 for Phase I and Rs 44,928,056 for Phase II) with an implementation period of 76 weeks. As of September 2006, the Centre has still not materialised.

The following were noted:

- Foundation stone was laid some nine years after the decision to house the NMCAC at La Tour Koenig.

- Change in decision regarding location:
  - had been detrimental to the implementation of the project and had delayed the setting up of a proper infrastructure for the carrying out of the necessary activities by the NMCAC to meet identified objectives.
  - have been costly to Government in various ways. It has necessitated the vacation of the GPO building by the Mauritius Posts Ltd. This took four years to materialise not withstanding the incidental hassles resulting from such a decision the services of three Consultants for the renovation of the GPO.
Following the decision for relocation of the NMCAC to GPO building, the Architect who won the architectural competition was awarded a compensation of Rs 100,000. The maquette of the building, which was remitted to the Ministry in that context, was reported to be in a dilapidated state.

This project has proved costly to Government not only in terms of expenditure incurred but also in terms of other government resources mobilised in connection with above events. A total amount of some Rs 1.7 million had already been incurred.

**Ministry’s Reply**

Procedures for the survey and acquisition of the land took over nine years due to lengthy procedures that had to be completed by the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

Survey works also took almost two years and had even to be contracted out due to heavy workload at the Ministry of Public Infrastructure.

The lease agreement between NMCA and the Ministry of Housing and Lands could not be signed as there was no Board during the period 1995-97.

Procedures are underway for the construction of the building to house the NMCAC at La Tour Koenig.

**17.2 Promotion of Arts and Culture - Divali Celebration**

An amount of Rs 500,000 was budgeted for the Divali Celebration on a national scale. For this celebration, which was held in October 2005, the Ministry resorted to the services of foreign artists and that led to an increase in expenditure. Some Rs 3 million had been incurred for the celebration, Rs 1.5 million for the services of the foreign artists and another Rs 1.5 million for other expenses incidental to the show. The Central Tender Board’s approval for the securing of the services of the foreign artists was not seen.

27 return air tickets were to be provided though the group was to comprise of 25 persons. Furthermore, the list of 25 persons included a one year old baby, a main artist, three performing artists, a Coordinator and 20 other persons whose role was not defined.

**Ministry’s Reply**

The Ministry did not approach the Central Tender Board but financial clearance was sought and obtained before seeking Government approval for the Ministry to resort to the services of the foreign artists.