11.1 Replacement of Air Conditioning System and Electrical Installations at the Emmanuel Anquetil Building

In 2001, a project for the replacement of the air conditioning system and the electrical network at the Emmanuel Anquetil Building (EAB) was initiated and estimated by the Ministry of Public Utility (MPU) to cost Rs 2 million for consultancy services and Rs 36 million for the execution of works. This project was not properly managed.

The design and supervision of the project which was outsourced to a Consultant were eventually sustained by MPU and the Ministry of Public Infrastructure (MPI).

The estimates for the works which were revised on several occasions to reach Rs 170 million, was finally brought down to Rs 90 million.

Delays in implementation of the project impinged on the working environment at the EAB, including disruption in the functioning of the air conditioner.

11.1.1 Design and Supervision

During 2003-04, the design and supervision up to final handing over of work was outsourced to a consultancy firm (Firm) as MPU did not have the necessary expertise for the scope of work involved. It was to be paid at the rate of six percent of the cost of works without a ceiling being set for the fees. As of June 2008, some Rs 2.2 million had been paid to the Firm.

However, during 2007, MPU and MPI were also entrusted with the design and supervision of the project. The proposed expenditure to be incurred by MPU and MPI alone for this design and supervision amounted to some Rs 3.2 million, that is some Rs 1.2 million above the original estimated cost for consultancy services. The design and specification were finalised and submitted to the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) in November 2007. As of August 2008, approval for payment was not seen except for payments totalling:

- Rs 125,000 in respect of preparation of tender documents apportioned to two officers of MPI, and
- some Rs 300,000 for the review, design, drawing and preparation of tender documents apportioned to five officers of MPU.

11.1.2 Estimates for the Works

The works which were originally estimated at Rs 36 million by MPU were revised on several occasions by the Firm to reach some Rs 170 million. Subsequently, the estimated figure of Rs 170 million was reduced to Rs 90 million:
➢ by Rs 31 million, by the Consultant after considering the use of items in working condition, and

➢ by Rs 50 million by MPU.

**11.1.3 Delays in Implementation**

Tenders for the execution of works were launched in November 2005. However, contract for the execution of works was not awarded as the scope of work contained in the final tender document floated in November 2005 was reported as having been exaggerated. In March 2007, MPU and MPI were to take up the project on a priority basis. Fresh tender documents were to be prepared by MPU and MPI. The tenders were to be launched by end June 2007 and works were to start in September 2007. Start of works was revised to February 2008.

However, invitation to tender was made in March 2008 with closing date for submission of bids of 2 April 2008 which was subsequently extended to 17 April 2008. In July 2008, contract for the works was awarded for a sum of Rs 85 million (including VAT, contingency and provisional sums). The works were then scheduled for completion in June 2009.

PMO had expressed concern about the delays in the implementation of the project as the working environment at EAB was difficult especially during the summer period. Moreover, the refrigerant used in the existing air conditioner was expected to last around March 2008. This would lead to disruption in the functioning of the air conditioner.

**11.2 Grant to Media Trust Fund**

During 2007-08, an amount of Rs 500,000 was granted to the Media Trust Fund (MTF) although there was no duly constituted Board of the MTF. The Board of Trustees was last constituted in 2004-05 and was in office up to December 2005. The amount granted to the MTF from January 2006 to June 2008 totalled Rs 2.5 million. In the absence of the Board of Trustees, disbursements by the Media Trust might not be in order. Moreover, grant memoranda were not seen for the grants.

**Ministry’s Reply**

➢ The Board could not be constituted for the years 2006 and 2007 as the representatives of the Press who were elected to sit on the Board subsequently submitted their resignation. For the years 2007 and 2008, two attempts at electing two Editors-in-Chief as members of the Board of Trustees have been unsuccessful.

➢ The outgoing Chairman and a Manager, Financial Operations of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment were managing the affairs of the Trust.
Civil Status Division

The Civil Status Division (CSD) embarked on a project to improve its services. A computerised Registration System to deal with the registration activities of the CSD was implemented. As such, the number of days taken to process an application has decreased from seven to three days.

11.3 Payment for the Issue of Certificates

The Civil Status Act 1981 provides for the payment of a fee for each “certificate” of an entry applied for. A fee of Rs 25 was in force since January 1995 and was levied by means of stamps, which were affixed on the certificates issued by the CSD.

With the coming into effect of the Post Office (Transfer of Undertaking) Act 2002 (effective as from 1 March 2003), the cost of stamps sold by the Mauritius Posts Ltd (MPL) and affixed on the certificates was not refunded to Government.

In November 2003, the Ministry of Finance suggested that the CSD submit claims to the MPL for the refund of the value of stamps based on the number of extracts of civil status documents and the number of change of name entries. Annually, CSD processed some 150,000 applications for “certificates”, representing some Rs 3.7 million in terms of stamp fees. As of June 2008,

- Some Rs 18 million have yet to be claimed from the MPL for the period 2003 to June 2008.
- A memorandum of understanding between the MPL and Government for the refund of the value of stamps affixed on “certificates” was not seen.

An amendment to the Civil Status Act was made in July 2004 and provides for the payment of a prescribed fee of Rs 50 to the Registrar of Civil Status or any District Court Cash Office for a “certificate” other than the first certificate delivered. As of August 2008, this amendment to the Act has not yet been proclaimed.
11.4 Review of previous Audit Reports

A review of the previous audit reports on Police Department showed the following improvements:

- **Passport Personalisation System (PPS)**

  As compared to the passports issued prior to 2005, the digitised passport issued through the PPS has enhanced security features on the Data Sheet and other pages.

- **Registry System**

  The Registry system now provides better monitoring of movement of files and registration and performance of queries on incoming and outgoing mails.

- **Helicopter Unit**

  A Committee has been set up to monitor the procurement of spares and services for helicopters and to avoid expensive purchase of spares on “Aircraft on Ground” basis.

11.5 Renovation Works of Police Quarters at Les Casernes, Curepipe

The area of the two blocks of flats at Curepipe, constructed some 100 years ago, total 2,490 m². Each block comprises two floors. In March 2005, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure (MPI) observed that the flats were in a poor state and advised demolition. In October 2006, the Police Department decided to renovate the flats for used by the Central Police Stores (CPS) as office and store. The MPI estimated the renovation cost to the tune of Rs 13.6 million. Contract was awarded in December 2006. The project was scheduled for completion on 27 August 2007. As of 30 June 2008, some Rs 12.7 million were disbursed for the renovation works.

Management had difficulty in evacuating the flats, which were occupied by 16 officers. Works were delayed due to unavailability of site. While the project was ongoing, the MPI pointed out that the first floor of both buildings could not be used as store as initially planned. However, this should have been foreseen at the very start of the project.

A building was handed over on 21 January 2008 and the second one was completed in May 2008. As of August 2008, the CPS has not yet occupied the renovated buildings. Moreover, provision for lighting and partitioning was not yet earmarked for the project.

The objective for undertaking this project was not met. Further, in view of the high cost involved in the renovation, construction of new blocks could have been more beneficial and less costly.
11.6 Police Quarters/ Rent Allowance

The Police Department provides either quarters or grants rent allowance to eligible Officers.

As of 30 June 2008, there were some 670 quarters allocated to Police Officers. Rent allowance to the tune of Rs 80 million was also paid during fiscal year 2007-08.

11.6.1 Database

The database of quarters was not regularly updated. Name of officer and date of occupation were not always disclosed. Further, documentation on allocation of police quarters and rent allowance were kept separately. This rendered the control and monitoring difficult.

Some officers, no longer eligible as they had resigned/retired and families of deceased officers were still occupying quarters. For example, an officer, who had retired since September 2004, was still occupying the quarters.

Some police officers have never occupied the quarters allocated to them. A quarter allocated since July 1997 at the Montreal Family Complex, Coromandel was still unoccupied.

11.6.2 Overpayment of Rent Allowance

Some officers were granted both rent allowance and quarters. Eight officers were still enjoying both. Overpayment of Rs 142,200 as rent allowance was thus made as of 30 June 2008. This involved two cases as far back as October 2003.

In nine other cases, payment of rent allowance was stopped. However, action was not yet initiated to recover the overpayment of Rs 167,300.

Allocation of quarters and payment of rent allowance should be closely monitored. Prompt action should be taken to recoup all amount overpaid.

11.7 Police Mechanical Workshop

11.7.1 Closure of Line Barracks Police Mechanical Workshop (LBPMW)

As mentioned at paragraph 11.4 of the 2006-07 Audit Report, Government decided to close down the Police Mechanical Workshop.

The LBPMW was still in operation as of 30 June 2008 and disruption in its activities was noted. Bids for “Maintenance” were under process while tender documents for “Repairs” have not yet been worked out.

As of 30 June 2008, 67 vehicles awaiting major repairs and another 108 involved in accidents were grounded for long periods. There was also a significant number of vehicles which remained grounded during the fiscal year under review due to delay in procurement of spares.
The workshop was frequently running out of stock as some spares were procured piecemeal and in limited quantity.

Grounding of vehicles over long period had worsened the problem of the shortage of vehicles in the police fleet.

_Police Department’s Reply_

With effect from 1 October, 2008, Police Vehicles are being maintained, serviced and repaired at respective local agents.
Mauritius Prisons Service

In the recent years, the Mauritius Prisons Service has enhanced its rehabilitation programme. Training courses were identified, out of which eight were ongoing. Women detainees had been empowered in beauty care. Various activities including the production of vegetables, fresh milk and cattle breeding were carried out to help detainees to be empowered for their reintegration in society. Numeracy and literacy programmes have also been introduced to bring change in attitude of the detainees.

11.8 New Prison Complex

The Project for a new prison complex to accommodate 500 detainees was initiated during 1999-2000 to alleviate in some way the problem of overcrowded prison. Land for that purpose acquired in 2001 at Rose Belle was found to be unsuitable. A new site was identified at Melrose in 2005 and the project value was revised to Rs 600 million. In February 2007, the Quantity Surveyor estimated the project to cost Rs 1.4 billion. The new prison complex was expected to be completed by December 2009.

As of September 2008, tenders for construction of the new prison have still not been launched. The Programme-Based Budget Estimates 2008-09 provided a total of Rs 302 million up to 2010 for its construction. This provision may fall short of the revised project estimates.

Mauritius Prisons Service’s Reply

- In view of the high cost, it was decided to scale down the project value to a reasonable figure. The project will be implemented in three phases. The site plan was changed and the revised estimates had been brought down to around Rs 870 million for Phase 1.

- Tenders for construction work are expected to be launched around August 2009, with a contract period of 18 months for Phase 1.