GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
MAJOR GENERAL (RET'D) THE HONOURABLE EDMUND DILLON
MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY

NS: 35/27/4 Vol. IV No. 2.

January 30, 2018

The Honourable Bridgid Mary Annisette-George
Speaker of the House
Parliament
Level 2, Tower D
The Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre
1A Wrightson Road
Port of Spain

Dear Honourable Annisette-George,

Re: Fourth Report of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee on Examination of the System of Inventory Audit within the Public Service

Your letter *Parl.: 5/7/16,* dated October 9, 2017 on the subject above, refers.

In this regard, please find attached, the response of the Minister of National Security to the recommendations/comments on the Report at caption.

Yours respectfully,

Dillon

Edmund E. Dillon
Major General (Ret'd)
Minister

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THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY'S RESPONSE TO THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE (PAAC)

Fourth Report of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee on Examination of the System of Internal Audit within the Public Service

Head 22 – Ministry of National Security

I. Staffing of Internal Audit Units:

- **Recommendation**

  The Ministry of National Security should submit a report to Parliament on the status of the initiatives being taken to fill the vacancies within the Internal Audit Units by November 30, 2017.

Response:

There are twenty-one (21) positions on the establishment within the Ministry's Internal Audit Unit. Currently, fourteen (14) of the twenty-one (21) positions within the Unit are filled, of the eight (8) positions that are not filled, there are five (5) officers acting in those position. The Ministry of National Security continues to liaise with Service Commissions Department to have all vacant positions on the establishment filled.

- **Recommendation**

  The Accounting Officer should develop mechanisms to ensure that the Ministry adheres to all the recommendations made by the Internal Audit Unit.

Response:

The Internal Audit Unit has recommended that the Ministry address the following issues:

➢ **Stores**

- ***The absence of a Computerized Inventory System***

The Ministry has embarked on a comprehensive exercise to tag all of the Ministry's assets. A computerized database of all items tagged was established which is in conjunction with the Ministry's manual inventory register. The computerized database is standardised in accordance with the recommended template contained in the Comptroller of Accounts Circular No. 5 dated April 13, 2017. This exercise is 60% completed and is expected to be fully completed by June, 2018. The Ministry of National Security (MNS) is aware that the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications (MPAC) is currently testing and evaluating an application software relating to inventory. As such, the MNS will approach the MPAC to ascertain whether said software can be used to assist the MNS in fully optimising inventory controls.

It should be noted that, the Permanent Secretary held a meeting with stakeholders responsible for matters relating to the Immigration Division's Revenue, Deposit Accounts and backlog of previous years' allowances. The following details the findings of said meeting:

- **Revenue**

- ***The Receipt and Disbursement statements are not submitted to Comptroller of Accounts in a timely manner***

It was identified that Immigration Officers were not sufficiently trained and exposed to revenue collection and the Financial Regulations, 1965 guidelines. Consequently, a letter was prepared and sent to the Ministry of Finance requesting assistance with training the relevant officers in the areas of Revenue and Deposit Accounts in accordance with the Financial Regulations.

- **Deposit accounts**

- ***The Deposit Account Register is not updated in a timely manner***

A decision was taken after consultation with the Director of Finance and Accounts and the Chief Immigration Officer to put the necessary systems in place to ensure strict enforcement of the use of the Financial Regulations, 1965 guidelines. This system would guide the updating and maintenance of the Immigration Division's Deposit Account Register.

- **Previous years' allowances**

- ***There is a backlog of various categories of allowances to be paid to Immigration Officers.***

There were several reasons given by the Immigration Division for the backlog of allowances owed to Immigration Officers. These include:

- **Acting Allowance**

  - Late submission of recommendation for acting
  - Late receipt of approvals for acting from the Human Resources Unit
  - No funds available for payment

- **Travelling and Subsistence Allowance**

  - Late Receipt of Approvals
  - Tardiness of submission by officers due to lack of receipt of approval
  - No funds available for payment
  - Slow return of queries to the Accounts Division for processing payment

It should be noted that all tardy submissions of claims for travelling allowances are accompanied by a certified explanation for the late submission which must be endorsed by the Head of Department in keeping with the Travelling Allowances Regulations.

Overtime Allowances in the Accounts Department prior to 2016 were audited and are to be paid upon the availability of funds.