



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

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**The Honourable Maxie Cuffie M.P.**  
**Ministry of Public Administration and Communications**

**Response to the Public Administration and  
Appropriations Committee**

**Inquiry: Examination into the Current Expenditure of Ministries and  
Departments under three (3) Sub-Heads: Current Transfers and  
Subsidies, Development Programme – Consolidated Funds and  
Infrastructure Development Fund**

Written Submission

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### **Background:**

The Report of the first Session of the Eleventh Parliament contains the details of the examination of thirty-two (32) Ministries and Departments with regards to three (3) Sub-Heads:

- a. Current Transfers and Subsidies;
- b. Development Programme - Consolidated Fund
- c. Infrastructure Development Fund.

In undertaking the examination, Ministries and Departments would have previously responded to requests for written submissions and the Committee would have conducted Public Hearings and Site Visits.

Emanating from the examination, certain pervasive issues and specific issues were identified. Ministries and Departments are now asked to review the observations and recommendations made by the Committee and prepare a paper in response.

### Responses to Recommendations:

Based on the Recommendations made by the Committee, the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications (MPAC) has put forward the following responses:

| Recommendation   | MINISTRY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATIONS' RESPONSES   |
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| <p><b>PERVASIVE ISSUES</b></p> <p><b>Communication Backbone (page 21)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“The MPAC mandated that all Ministries and Departments utilize the Government Communication Backbone in keeping with the Cabinet Minute. This will assist in producing economies of scale while demonstrating fiscal prudence.”</i></li> </ul> | <p><b>Communication Backbone</b></p> <p>In accordance with Cabinet Minute No. 2487 of October 20, 2011, the then Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Science and Technology, by respective Circular Memoranda in May 2014 and July 2015 informed all Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that all Government Ministries were to use the shared services infrastructure, inclusive of the <b>ttconnect</b> channels, the Government Wide Area Network and the Government Data Centre for provision of their services; and</li> <li>that Cabinet had agreed, inter alia, to the implementation of a national Government Cloud (“G-Cloud”).</li> </ul> <p>Further, Cabinet by Minute No. 2030 of August 13, 2015 approved Technical Standards and Guidelines for ICTs which would form the basis for compliance by all Ministries, Departments and Agencies.</p> <p>Thus, cognisant of the need for fiscal prudence to ensure that value is realised from GoRTT’s significant investment in GovNeTT and other ICT infrastructure; and noting the fast-paced change which characterises technology and its development, MPAC is pursuing approaches that will ensure the alignment of current and future GovNeTT iterations with the Government’s ICT policy direction. In so doing, MPAC will seek to ensure a focus on efficiency/improved productivity, cost containment and/or reduction and the avoidance of duplication of ICT expenditure within the public sector thereby reducing the impact on the public purse. As such, proposed activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>centralisation of GoRTT’s critical ICT resources and infrastructure platforms;</li> <li>establishment of collaborative mechanisms among Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies inclusive of IT Managers as a key resource group and Community of Practice which will assist, among other things, in identifying essential services for which there is a level of</li> </ul> |

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|   | <p>readiness among the MDAs; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collaborative formulation of appropriate policies and regulations including technical standards and guidelines that can provide the basis for pursuing interconnection of Government's ICT infrastructure, establishment of the requisite enabling environment to accelerate deployment of e-Services and the incorporation of emerging areas such as Cloud Computing and Open Source Software.</li> </ul> <p>The National ICT Company Limited (iGovTT) monitors the utilization by Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies of the services offered through the Government Communications Backbone.</p>   |
| <p><b>SPECIFIC ISSUES</b></p> <p><b>Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"MPAC completes the necessary recruitment , selection, training and development to increase the Monitoring and Evaluation capacity by December 2016"</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Fraud</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"MPAC takes immediate steps to implement a fraud policy. This policy should include mechanisms for distinguishing between fraud and error."</i></li> </ul> | <p><b>Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity</b></p> <p>Arising out of the recent realignment of the Ministries of Public Administration and Communications, a resource with Monitoring and Evaluation experience was assigned to the Programme Management Division (PMD) to increase its Monitoring and Evaluation capacity.</p> <p>Additionally, the PMD is working on a Project Management Policy Framework which includes guidelines and templates for designing projects that aids in identifying expected results and monitoring outputs and outcomes. This is expected to be implemented by February 2017.</p> <p>By March 2017 MPAC will commence training select employees involved in the project lifecycle, in the use of the M&amp;E tools and techniques entailed in the Framework. By March 2017 MPAC will institutionalize the usage of Contract Completion Report forms, Project Completion Report forms and Deliverable Acceptance forms on all projects as means of validation of project outputs and verification of payment information against such outputs.</p> <p><b>Fraud</b></p> <p>Currently the MPAC is undertaking Research for the Drafting of a Public Service-wide Fraud Policy pertaining to government expenditure. The first draft is expected to be completed by March 31, 2017.</p> |

**Internal Audit**

- *“MPAC widens the Internal Audit scope to include:*
  - *Analysis of strengths, weaknesses and threats;*
  - *Identification and assessment of risks;*
  - *Identification of conflicts of interests and*
  - *Evaluation of the achievement of economy, efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery.*

**Internal Audit**

Two (2) these functions are already being performed by the Internal Audit Unit:

- *Identification and assessment of risks; and*
- *Evaluation of the achievement of economy, efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery.*

The other two aspects will be incorporated into the Internal Audit Work Programme in 2017.