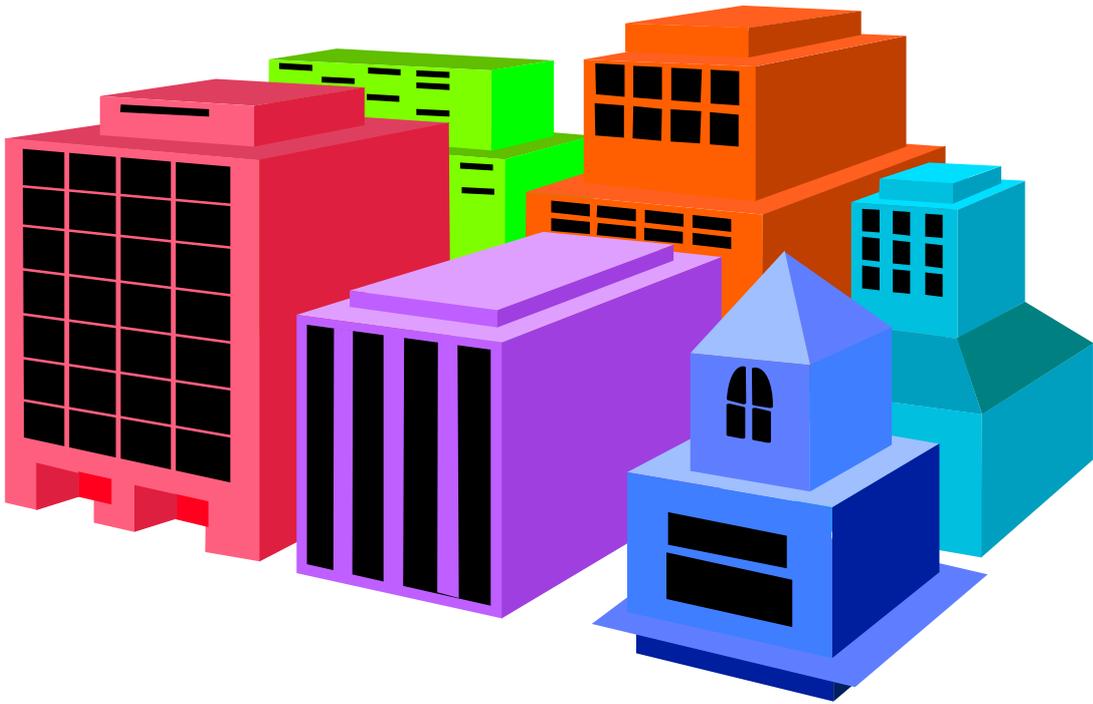


**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**  
**OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL**



***REPORT ON THE  
UTILISATION OF  
GOVERNMENT QUARTERS***

***MINISTRY OF  
WORKS, TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION***

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I am authorized to carry out performance audits in terms of Section 26 (1) (b) (iv) of the State Finance Act, (Act 31 of 1991) which reads as follows: (the Auditor General) ” may investigate whether any moneys in question have been expended in an efficient, effective and economic manner.”

The Housing Sub-Division with its approximately 8 354 Government quarters provides official accommodation to civil servants. The audit which has been undertaken revealed the following indicators of inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the allocation and utilization of Government quarters:

The system of waiting lists does not function properly, officials are not placed on the relevant lists and some lists such as the normal waiting list are not even looked at, there are approximately 600 officials who are waiting for the allocation of a quarter for more than six years. The system is inefficient in generating sufficient funds. The rent deductions are paid into revenue and maintenance is paid from the expenditure vote. Most quarters visited are in a bad condition, the roof sheets and shilling boards are falling down. This happens due to poor maintenance of quarters. It is difficult and unhealthy for the people to live in those quarters. Government loses large amounts of money because people illegally occupy many of the quarters. It is difficult for the Government to maintain these quarters because the revenue collected is not enough due to the poor administration of quarters. There are no clear laid down policies and procedures regarding allocation, maintenance, and record keeping as well as for procedures against illegal occupants.

In the northern regions such as Oshakati and Ondangwa, quarters can not be identified as Government property, because no quarter numbers are displayed. In Windhoek and Keetmanshoop most of the occupants are making business by renting out the garages and outside rooms and make more money than the rent they are paying to the Government.

I would like to make the following recommendations to improve the allocation process of Government quarters. Steps to implement these recommendations can and should be taken immediately:

- ❖ The housing sub-division should be given legal authority to remove illegal occupants in official quarters.
- ❖ The lease contract should include the rules and regulations of quarters and occupants should sign a lease contract before official quarters are allocated to them and occupants who do not follow those rules and regulations should be evicted.
- ❖ The housing sub-division should develop criteria to determine priority allocation of official quarters according to the most relevant motivations.
- ❖ The housing sub-division must be allowed to run a trade account, which will assist them to control rent and to be able to charge the Ministries rent directly.
- ❖ There should be full-time inspectors, to be able to inspect all quarters throughout the country and to oversee that all quarters are fully utilized.
- ❖ Inspection reports should be produced quarterly (every three-months) to inform management what is happening and how quarters are being utilized and also for management purposes.

- ❖ Inspectors should have special inspection cards to identify themselves to the occupants during inspections.
- ❖ The quarters should be clearly marked for identification purposes.
- ❖ The housing sub-division must create a link with personnel and salary offices in a form of regular meetings to assist them to update the records and to check whether occupants are still with the Ministries and paying the correct rent.

# CHAPTER 1

## 1.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF HOUSING

Since 1920, when the country became a mandate under the South African Government, the South African Government started building houses for civil servants from South Africa who worked in South West Africa. By that time housing was a condition of service. Housing was administered and controlled by a Housing Officer under Personnel Administration. Houses were also built in the regions, on Government research farms such as Neudam, in national parks, at hospitals etc. Those houses were designated accommodation for specific posts such as head of the parks, farm managers, medical superintendents at hospitals, etc. During the South African Government administration, civil servants were not able to build or buy houses in Namibia and they did not have a housing scheme or loan at that time.

When the interim Government took over from the South African Government in 1985 the Department of Works administered housing for the Central Government with its own housing office and housing committee. There were different Second Tier Authorities such as Administration for Whites, Coloureds, Hereros, Wambos, Damaras, Namas, etc and each had its own housing officer and housing committee. Namibian civil servants were no longer seconded civil servants from South Africa but citizens of this country and were allowed to buy their own houses.

After independence the Government continued with the housing policy that was used by the interim Government i.e. to provide accommodation for its civil servants. Housing was not a condition of service anymore but was seen as a privilege and the housing officer also managed a waiting list system, because most civil servants were now Namibian citizens without houses. Housing is administered and controlled by the Department of Works for the whole Government of Namibia.

As the Government owns approximately 8 354 quarters, it was decided to give civil servants the first option to rent. Government houses should still be occupied by civil servants including contract workers. Quarters were divided into two categories, namely designated and undesignated quarters. Designated quarters are defined, as housing which is still a condition of service, e.g. on Government research farms, and national parks, etc. Designated quarters were made available because there were no privately owned houses available at these places. Undesignated quarters are housing that is not a condition of service and officials have to pay a nominal amount of rent for this accommodation.

## 1.2 FUNCTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

The housing sub-division which is located within the Ministry of Works, Transport and Communication is responsible for providing official accommodation to civil servants and to control, manage and allocate official quarters in line with chapter H of the Public Service Regulations made under the Government Service Act of 1995 (Act 13 of 1995) and chapter Dvii/1 of the Public Service Staff Code, that regulates provision and allocation of official quarters. As such, the sub-division controls occupancy and manages the allocation of quarters on merit basis as per the recommendations of the Central Housing Committee, Regional and Sub-Regional Committees. It also ensures that rental charges, both nominal and economical, as determined by Ministry of Works, Transport and Communication, are paid by the tenant timeously to the State so that income is generated from such fixed properties. The sub-division should also ensure that maintenance of such properties takes place, when necessary, in order to upkeep these valuable properties. They also have to maintain the housing alienation scheme in terms of the Government Service Act, 1995 (Act 13 of 1995) as amended and repealed in terms of the regulations promulgated in this Act.

The responsibilities for the housing pool are divided between the division of fixed asset management and the division of Finance within the Ministry of Works, Transport and Communication. The division of Finance has control over the collection of rent, while the division of fixed asset management is responsible for administering the building conditions.

Houses are divided into two groups, namely assigned houses and unassigned houses. Furthermore assigned houses are divided into two categories, namely:

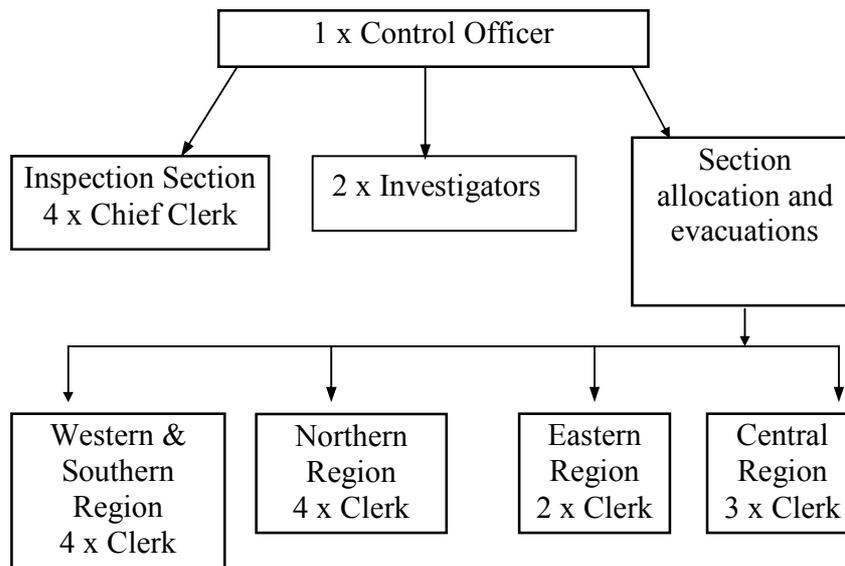
- ❑ Assigned houses within the boundaries of premises such as houses on school or hospital premises.
- ❑ Assigned houses outside the boundaries of premises such as police quarters and houses, which were built specifically for a certain department i.e. Department of Police.

### 1.3 ORGANISATION OF THE HOUSING SUB-DIVISION

#### 1.3.1 Staffing

There are 20 personnel employed in the housing sub-division excluding the deputy director and members of the Housing Committee.

#### 1.3.2 Organisational structure



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **2.1 REASONS FOR THE STUDY**

A pre-study that was carried out indicated that many Government quarters are improperly used, empty or are occupied by unauthorized people. As such the main audit focused on these three aspects of the utilization of Government quarters.

*The following factors which arise through the media and public outcry might be contributing to the problems:*

- No control over quarters.
- Poor record keeping.
- Poor maintenance of quarters because of insufficient funds.
- Two quarters are allocated to one official.
- No proper inspection of quarters.
- Quarters are in a bad condition.
- No clear policies on who is responsible for maintenance i.e is it the responsibility of the Department of Works or the tenants.
- Poor allocation process and policies.

### **2.2 LIMITATION OF THE AUDIT AREA**

There are 8 354 official quarters in total, which are located in four regions with sub–regions. Three regions, namely central, north and south were randomly selected and visited during the audit. The study focused on the allocation and utilization of Government quarters in Namibia.

### **2.3 METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

#### **2.3.1 Documents**

Documentation from the housing sub-division, indicating the names of occupants, number of quarters and departments where these occupants are working and other relevant documents from various Ministries were analyzed.

#### **2.3.2 Interviews**

During the audit the following people were interviewed:

- Director of Maintenance
- Deputy Director of Fixed Assets Management
- Chief Control Officers of Housing Sub-division
- Inspectors (Chief Clerks) of Housing
- Members of the Housing Committees
- Occupants (Tenants)
- Regional representatives

- Personnel Officers
- Housing Clerks

### **2.3.3 Observations**

Observations of quarters were made in the central, northern and southern regions. The one hundred and forty eight (148) quarters observed were randomly selected with the assistance of a computer software audit tool called Idea. (Interactive Data Extraction Analysis)

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **ALLOCATION OF QUARTERS**

#### **3.1. ALLOCATION PROCEDURES**

When applications are received from public servants, these are allocated to different lists and quarters on the basis of the criteria as stipulated in the policy on allocation of Government quarters. Applications are allocated to the three waiting lists. These lists are:

- VIP waiting list on which applications for political office bearers, consultants and foreigners are placed;
- preferential waiting list on which applications for Permanent Secretaries as well as ranks lower than Permanent Secretary are placed.
- the normal list on which the rest of all applications are placed.

In cases which involve officials lower than Permanent Secretaries, it is required that the applications are strongly motivated by the respective supervisors' of the applicants before their names are put on the preferential waiting list. All application forms are forwarded to the Housing Committee, which evaluates and categorizes in terms of priority or urgency.

#### **3.2 NOMINATION OR APPOINTMENT OF HOUSING COMMITTEE**

A member of the Committee is appointed by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Works, Transport and Communication by means of a letter. The Heads of Government Departments can forward nominations in the regions to the Works Regional Representative who is the chairperson of the relevant Housing Committee. The nominations will be sent to the Ministry's Head Quarter for the Permanent Secretary's approval. See Annexure C, paragraph 2.

The objective of a Housing Committee is to assist the Department of Works to evaluate, categorize and consider applications for housing in towns and regions over which the particular Housing Committee has jurisdiction. See Annexure C, paragraph 1.

##### **3.2.1 COMMENTS FROM AUDITEE**

The nomination and appointment of committee members is applied on an equal basis. Each member of the Housing Committee serves two (2) years only. At the end of the two (2) years the Ministry of Works, Transport and Communication (Housing Office) in particular requests the Accounting Officers or Regional Representatives of the Ministries (in case of the Regional Committee) to nominate one (1) person to serve on the Housing Committee for the prescribed period.

The Ministry of Works, Transport and Communication then select a number of members to the Committee according to the policy and rules of the Ministry.

## **Findings:**

The appointment requirements to the Housing Committee do not specify the skills and qualifications required. It was observed that members are appointed differently, for example, housing committee members at the central region are selected according to certain job specifications such as those who are knowledgeable in the staff code and rules, laws, finance and having housing background. Each member has different tasks in the housing committee, such as advising the housing sub-division on staff rules, law enforcement and finance. The housing committee members are supposed to rotate, so that each Ministry will have a chance to serve in the housing committee but this does not happen. It was observed that housing committee members at the central region are not rotating at all. At the other regions visited, it was noticed that members of the committee are selected on request from the Ministry of Works, Transport and Communication. This is done on a rotation basis and as a result all the Ministries will have an equal chance to be represented on the committee.

According to the housing committee members, the committee's main objectives are:

- to study the application forms and make decisions on who should get official accommodation; and
- to guide the housing sub-division on policies and make recommendations on the applications to the Housing Officers.

At the regions this is not the case, because the housing committee members perform other additional tasks such as:

- to inspect the quarters; and
- to check whether the right officials occupy the quarters. These tasks are however not part of their terms of reference.

From the above it is clear that there is no uniformity in nomination or appointment of the housing committee members in regions.

### **3.3 ALLOCATION OF QUARTERS TO DIFFERENT OFFICIALS**

According to the management divisional policy of 1997, the following criteria are used to allocate quarters:

1. If an official is single with dependents, he or she should qualify for a family quarter which can be two or three bedrooms, depending on the number of dependents;
2. Consultants and advisors from other countries of whom an agreement is concluded between the Government of Namibia and his/her Government are allocated official quarters on a preferential basis;
3. Officials on transfer from one town to another are allocated with quarters on preferential basis, and the type of quarter depends on the size of the family. See Annexure A

## **Findings:**

The audit revealed that allocation procedures were not followed. There are no laid down criteria for how these applications should be selected. It was also found that quarters are not allocated to the occupants according to the size of their families or dependents. In some cases single occupants were allocated to either a one or two bedroomed quarter while occupants with children were allocated to bachelor quarters. In the regions it seems that a quarter is allocated to staff employed at a certain Department or Ministry, because a particular quarter is permanently allocated to the specific Department or Ministry. This in practice means that if an occupant vacates his/her quarter, that Department or Ministry will keep it and re-allocate it to one of their staff members who needs accommodation, and only notifies the Housing Committee accordingly. This practice is against the allocation procedures. (For example, the Namibian police in the northern region keep the quarters for their staff, which sometimes causes the quarters to be empty for long periods of time).

### **3.3.1 COMMENTS BY AUDITEE**

Your 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence reads as follows: “There are no laid down criteria for how these applications should be selected.”

Applicants are placed on any of the lists established by the Housing Committee such as; normal waiting list, VIP list, preferential list etc. Various factors, merits and demerits of each application guides the committee to decide on which list an applicant should be placed.

Unfortunately, official quarters are insufficient taking into account the limited supply versus the demand for such quarters. Therefore, the Housing Committee first establish the urgency of the application compared to other applications forwarded for consideration. Transferences, scarcity of a post, foreign expert, political appointment etc. are amongst others some of the criteria used by the Housing Committee.

A bachelor flat or a flat with one bedroom is a single quarter. Family flat a two bedroom or a house with more than one bedroom is a family quarter. Insufficient or improper information from the applicants and their respective offices in many cases resulted in the Housing Committee making a judgemental error because of false facts. As a result a family quarter could then be allocated to an unmarried applicant or vice-versa.

As mentioned earlier, decisions taken by the Housing Committee are based on information provided by the applicant and their respective offices.

There are no rules as to who should be accommodated in a designated/assigned quarter. The responsibility to allocate an assigned quarter is vested with the user Ministry/Office or Agency to which the quarter is assigned and not the Housing Office or the Housing Committee.

In addition, all the Departments and Offices should make an effort to safeguard state property and to ensure that proper control and rules are adhered to. The Housing Subdivision cannot achieve

any success without the assistance of everyone involved. It should also be noted that rules of official accommodation are provided upon handing over of keys to the allocated tenants.

The Personnel Officers who allege that they do not know what to report to the Housing Office, as per your findings are ignoring or attempting to escape their responsibilities. Our numerous circulars emphasized clearly the exact information required by the housing office when a tenant is transferred, resigned, dismissed etc.

### **3.4 RULES AND REGULATIONS**

An occupant of an official quarter is not allowed to:

- ❑ Wholly or partly transfer to another person his/her privilege without the permission of the Head: Department of Works;
- ❑ Accommodate lodgers in an official dwelling either permanently or temporary. Only unmarried own children still dependant on the occupant and other dependants of whom the Head: Department of Works bears knowledge may be accommodated;
- ❑ Conduct a profitable trade in or on the premises without prior approval from the Minister of Works, Transport and Communication. This rule is also applicable for taking care of children against remuneration (if such children are not members of the occupier's household), hair dressing etc. Where an occupant or any member of his/her family contravenes any of these rules, the Head: Department of Works may deprive such occupant of this accommodation. See Annexure B, paragraph 4.

#### **Findings:**

The rules and regulations stated above are not strictly adhered to because the allocation process is not followed properly. It was observed that small families are allocated to larger quarters than needed. As a result they were renting out some of the rooms, which is against the rules.

In Windhoek and Keetmanshoop some occupants were renting out some of the rooms, such as the servant's room and garages to generate income at the average monthly rental of N\$ 200.00, whilst they pay to the Government four percent of their salaries which is in the range of N\$ 8.50 to N\$ 135.00 per month for single quarters and N\$ 17.00 to N\$ 270.00 per month for family quarters as determined in the table of tariffs of rent. In some quarters visited some rooms such as dining and (TV) television rooms are not used for these purposes, but as bedrooms. This is a major cause for the overcrowding of quarters.

It was also noticed in Windhoek that in many Government quarter complexes occupants had pets, are drying their linen and clothes on the balcony, etc which is against the rules and regulations. This resulted in quarters getting dirty and giving the impression that nobody is living in the quarter.

The following are only examples of problems experienced by the housing department:

- occupants are not co-operative with the housing office when they evacuate their quarter,
- they leave the quarter dirty,
- keys of quarters are handed to friends and relatives when evacuating quarters.

Personnel officers in Ministries are of the impression that the occupants should hand over the keys of their quarters themselves to the housing sub-division after evacuation. Therefore, they feel that there is no need for them to report that their staff have been transferred to other Ministries or duty stations, retired, resigned or have been discharged. This is a clear example that there is a lack of co-ordination between personnel officers in the line Ministries and the housing sub-division.

## CHAPTER 4

### MANAGEMENT OF QUARTERS

#### 4.1 INSPECTIONS

Before a tenant vacates the dwelling, a representative of the Works Department will inspect the accommodation and premises to establish and assess possible damages for which the tenant may be liable. There are four regions with Government quarters and each region has one Chief Clerk who executes inspections on a part time basis and they are based in Windhoek.

See *Annexure B, paragraph 8.*

##### 4.1.1 COMMENTS BY AUDITEE

The Chief Clerks mentioned in the report are not employed as inspectors, but they are tasked with this responsibility, as the Maintenance Division does not have sufficient manpower to conduct inspections when quarters are vacated. The Clerks at various Regional and Sub-Regional Offices are also responsible to conduct inspections of official quarters in their respective regions and forward the inspection reports to Head Office (Works).

##### 4.1.2 FINDINGS

Although it is clearly stated that inspections should be carried out before an occupant vacates the quarters, the audit revealed that no routine inspections are carried out during occupation.

It was observed that quarters were in a poor state due to very little maintenance and repairs that were done. Some quarters also remained vacant for a long period of time. For instance in twenty-two (22) out of one hundred and forty eight quarters observed, one or a combination of the following were found:

- broken windows;
- damaged doors;
- leaking roofs or water pipes.

The Chief Clerks have no proper identification to identify themselves and due to lack of legal backup to do inspections, occupants do not want to allow them to enter quarters for inspection purposes.

There are no inspection reports written. The only reports that are completed are the inspection forms that part-time inspectors normally use when occupants vacate the quarter. An inspection is only done on request by the housing sub-division e.g. complaints from the public, when occupants evacuate the quarter and when they take the key back to the housing sub-division. Some quarters are underutilized which sometimes carries on for a long time due to the fact that inspections are not carried out on a full time basis. Housing inspectors and housing officers should co-operate with Ministries/Offices/Agencies to make sure that quarters are fully occupied.

### **4.1.3 COMMENTS BY AUDITEE**

Your findings reveal that some quarters are left empty for a long time. Quarters stay empty for the following reasons:

- (a) Quarters assigned to different Ministries and Offices are not returned to the housing pool if they are of no further use to Ministries concerned.
- (b) Tenants themselves vacate the quarters without informing their Ministry or the Housing Office.
- (c) The tenants vacate the quarters and return the keys through friends. As a result of these practices the quarters end up being illegally occupied or standing empty, while the housing office is under the impression that the quarters are occupied.

All employees of the Ministry of Works, Transport and Communication including the Housing Sub-Division personnel, are provided with identification cards in order to have access to state property when conducting inspections.

## **4.2 RECORD KEEPING AND ILLEGAL OCCUPANTS**

The housing officers in Windhoek keep records in files on which the following information is kept:

- ❖ House number,
- ❖ Erf number,
- ❖ Name of occupants and
- ❖ The records of the Department where the occupants are working.

### **4.2.1 WHO ARE THE ILLEGAL OCCUPANTS?**

Illegal occupants are people who occupy official quarters without authorization.

If a staff member is found guilty of harbouring illegal lodgers in official quarters he/she loses his/her privilege to occupy the official quarters with immediate effect and has to pay to the Government all the money he/she has received from illegal lodgers.

Any staff member found contravening rules and procedures for official accommodation by occupying an official quarter illegally will be charged an economical rent of not less than N\$1 500 but not more than N\$3 500 per month for the period of illegal occupation. A non-staff will be liable to pay N\$3 500 per month for the period of illegal occupation. He/she will be required to vacate within seven (7) days. *See Annexure A, paragraphs 1.8 (i) and 1.14*

#### 4.2.2 FINDINGS

Officials who occupy the quarters are not recorded properly. In some villages such as Ruacana, Tsumkwe, Tsinsabis, Coblenz, Oamites, Otjinene, Okondjatu, records indicate that quarters are not allocated at all. In other places, such as Windhoek, Omatjenne, Hosea Kutako International Airport and Oshakati, different quarters are allocated to the same official. Some tenants are not paying rent due to the poor record keeping at the housing sub-division. It was also found that occupants as indicated on the housing records are not the ones who are occupying the quarters. (See Annexure E 1.2)

Records are incomplete, some have no street name, and house number and erf number, which makes it difficult to trace these quarters and to have sufficient control. Some quarters have no identification number. No identification number is displayed on the gates or wall or on the door and some are still having the old (BM) “Burgersake and Mannekrag” (Civic Affairs and Manpower) number, which are not reflected on the records anymore.

Transferred occupants from one Ministry to another and those who exchanged quarters are not updated on the housing records. Some quarters are not allocated to officials because there is a lack of communication between housing officers and personnel offices at the line Ministries. In some Ministries personnel officers do not know what to report to the housing sub-division because they do not inform personnel officers about the information needed from them e.g. ten (10) out of the fifteen (15) personnel officers interviewed do not know what kind of information should be reported to the housing sub-division and they also highlighted that the communication between them and the housing sub-division is not satisfactory. Housing officers are not providing information to Ministries on time, which causes the rent deduction to be outstanding for several months. Personnel officers at Ministries do not know whom to contact at the housing sub-division when they need information, due to the high staff turnover at both sides.

Some occupants handed their keys to friends or colleagues when vacating their quarters, which enabled their friends and colleagues to illegally occupy the quarters.

Housing officers have no power/authority to remove these illegal occupants from the quarter. Cases of illegal occupation are forwarded to the Office of the Attorney General for eviction of these occupants. This process is time consuming and in the meantime quarters remain illegally occupied.

It is a rule that names of occupants should be listed at the housing sub-division, but during observations it was noted that many occupants were not listed to the housing sub-division and therefore, they can technically be seen as illegal occupants. (See Annexure E 1.2)

Other documents studied indicate that some occupants who occupy official quarters already retired, are seconded, deceased or resigned from the Public Service.

The audit revealed that there were no regular inspections of Government quarters, nor were there updated records at the housing sub-division, therefore some people were able to occupy quarters illegally. (See Annexure E 1.2)

The audit sample extractions indicated that three hundred and seventy-nine (379 which is 36.2% of the total sample) occupants as indicated on the housing records are still staying in Government quarters but, the Ministry’s records indicated that they are no longer employing these officials.

These officials were either transferred, have resigned/retired/deceased or were seconded and in some cases were unknown at the Ministries/Offices/Agencies.

The housing sub-division does not always update their records when allocating or re-allocating Government quarters to occupants.

In my opinion record keeping at the Ministries/Offices/Agencies is poor and in some cases non-existent. These Ministries/Offices/Agencies do not inform the housing committees when occupants resign, retire, die or when occupants are seconded to other Ministries. Due to these, some of these occupants are not paying rent and some are no longer civil servants but still occupy Government quarters.

Legal action against illegal occupants takes a long time, because the housing sub-division has no power to remove illegal occupants.

#### **4.2.3 COMMENTS BY AUDITEE**

Many of the Government quarters countrywide did not have the official code Number which is displayed at all Government houses. This is still the case at some towns mentioned in your report.

The housing office already conducted inspections at Oshana, Ohangwena, Omusati and Kunene for the purpose of identifying and allocating BM Numbers to all the non-assigned and assigned quarters. This was done in an attempt to update the housing records.

#### **4.3 RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAINTENANCE OF QUARTERS**

Apart from normal wear and tear, the occupant shall keep the quarter in an acceptable living condition. Where the occupant or his or her family damage the property through recklessness or negligence, he or she shall arrange for the necessary repairs or replacement at his or her own expense and to the satisfaction of the Department of Works. The Department may do the necessary repair work against payment.

On occupation the occupant must satisfy himself or herself that the quarter is in an acceptable condition, if not, the occupant must notify the Department of Works immediately in writing.

The occupant is responsible for the following:

- ◆ the replacement of frames in doors and windows that were broken by him/her or his/her family;
- ◆ the safe custody of all keys received by him/her;
- ◆ the cleaning of chimneys;
- ◆ the replacement of broken electric light shades; and/or
- ◆ any damage to electric wiring of the housing caused by private electrical appliances.

The tenant will be held responsible for any damages as per State Finance Act, Section 11. The Department of Works will attend to emergency repairs relating to burst water pipes and electrical faults. *See Annexure B, paragraphs 9.1 – 9.5)*

**Findings:**

The occupants of some quarters did not know which repairs they were supposed to carry out themselves and which ones were to be carried out by the maintenance directorate. During the audit it was found that the occupants reported damages to the maintenance directorate but the directorate did not respond to most of these requests. This is one of the major reasons why quarters are in a poor condition. The Directorate is only responsible for the major maintenance and the tenants or occupants are responsible for the minor maintenance. (See Annexure E 1.5.)

It was also found that when quarters are allocated to officials the rules on maintenance were not explained to them. E.g. All fifteen occupants interviewed do not know what kind of maintenance they should execute or perform because the rules and regulations of quarter's were not explained to them.

## CHAPTER 5

### Conclusion

#### *General Conclusion*

The current housing system, as it is operating currently, is not sustainable. This is quite evident from a grossly inadequate budget for maintenance, questionable allocation of quarters and occupants who "stay for ever". The system is gradually killing itself and radical action has to be taken. Monthly tariffs of rent for assigned family and single quarters are outdated and had not been updated since 1995. The table used to determine the rent is uneconomical.

*The following are specific conclusions:*

1. The wrong sizes of quarters are allocated to officials. This is mainly due to the housing sub-division not following the laid down allocation procedures.
2. In the regions occupants are not aware of the rules and regulations, because they are not distributed. In the central region occupants do not follow rules and regulations.
3. Occupants are not co-operative in the process of returning their keys, which lead to the quarters being left empty for long periods and it also, lead to people illegally occupying quarters.
4. The audit concludes that there is a lack of regular inspections, which is due to the non-availability of full time inspectors at the housing sub-division. This might be a contributing factor to the lack of maintenance and underutilization of quarters.
5. Lack of co-ordination between personnel officers and the housing sub-division resulted in poor administration of Government quarters.
6. Quarters are underutilized due to incorrect allocation of the quarters to occupants and some quarters are empty or unallocated.
7. The maintenance policy is not clearly explained to occupants resulting in quarters not being in an acceptable standard.

## CHAPTER 6

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### *General recommendation*

Housing should be regarded as short term accommodation for new entrants in the public service who urgently need accommodation for a short period of time while he/she is looking for his/her own accommodation. Therefore, there should be a time limit for an official to occupy Government quarters.

*The following are the specific recommendations that should be taken into consideration as soon as possible:*

1. The maintenance policy should be explained to all occupants during allocation process.
2. The lease agreement, which should be signed by the occupants before occupying a quarter, should include the rules and regulations of the quarters. Occupants who do not follow the rules and regulations should be evicted.
3. The housing sub-division should develop criteria, which will enable them to allocate official quarters on an equal basis and according to the laid down procedures.
4. Procedures of nominating the housing committee members should be the same in all regions.
5. Inspections should be carried out regularly. There should also be full time-inspectors, who should inspect all quarters throughout the country and ensure that all quarters are utilized.
6. Records of official quarters should be updated every month.
7. Inspection reports should be produced quarterly. This should be a helping tool for management on the utilization and condition of quarters. This should assist Management in their decision making.
8. Inspectors should have special inspection cards to identify themselves to the occupants during inspections.
9. The housing sub-division should meet regularly with personnel officers of Ministries/Agencies/Offices. The aim of these meetings should be to enable both parties to update their records.
10. Quarters should be numbered in all regions to make them more identifiable. Maintenance of quarters should be done regularly to avoid high costs on renovations.
11. Monthly tariffs of rent should be reviewed.
12. Legal power should be given to the Department of Works to evict illegal occupants.
13. The Department of Works should compare their housing records with those, which appear on the accounts received from local authorities for property taxes and basic service charges.

If recommendations are followed there will be more funds available, which can be used for improvements and maintenance of quarters. The housing sub-division will also save more money on expenses related to maintenance if quarters are properly managed. If quarters are allocated according to the laid down criteria, it will minimize the chances for officials to unlawfully rent out rooms. If three bedroom quarters are allocated to single officials it will lead to underutilisation of the quarters. Allocation procedures should be followed properly and quarters should be allocated according to the needs of occupants.

If communication channels between Personnel offices, salary offices and the housing subdivision improve and if records are kept up to date, illegal occupation of quarters will reduce and under-utilization of quarters may be minimized and the Government's revenue may increase. Proper control by way of regular inspections of quarters may lead to the reduction of expenditure on the renovation of quarters.

If the recommendations are not implemented the situation may remain unchanged and the Department of Works may continue losing or spending money on renovations of quarters. Occupants may continue to rent out some rooms and some quarters will remain empty.

#### **APPRECIATION**

The assistance rendered by the Ministry of Works, Transport and Communication during the audit is sincerely appreciated.

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