

- (a) The Botswana Police Service had leased blocks of flats comprising 236 housing units owned by a private developer in the Maruapula area in Gaborone, effective from 1 April 2016, at a monthly rental of P1 288 000. Subsequently, the Police had proposed to purchase the flats at a price of P364 million for which the Public Procurement and Assets Disposal Board approval was granted in December 2017. However, related inquiries had disclosed that the earlier lease had not followed the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act requirement of approval by the Ministerial Tender Committee, but had only been facilitated by the Department of Housing. The implication is that the process of acquisition of the lease, including the test of whether the rental was competitive, had not been properly evaluated and approved by the appropriate authority, as contemplated by the Act. It could therefore not be ascertained whether Government had received value for money on these leases.
- (b) In May 2017 an agreement was entered into with a private property developer for a 5-year lease of an office block in Francistown, at a quarterly rental of P299 880. However, as at August 2018, some 15 months into the lease period, the Police had still not moved into the office block. The explanation offered was the delay with the installation of a back-up generator. I am concerned that rental payments continued to be paid without beneficial occupation of the premises as this constitutes nugatory expenditure.
- (c) In another case, the Police had occupied a private office block in Gaborone on a 5-year lease from November 2001 to 2012. During the currency of the lease, the Department of Lands acceded to the Police request to terminate the lease to take up occupation of another building in the Central Business District, Gaborone on condition that they gave 6-months notice. In the event, the Department over-stayed the period of notice by 8 months, incurring further rental expenditures on these premises.
- (d) Other cases noted related to instances where in one case an officer who had left service had not made proper arrangement for the payment of rental for the pool house that he had occupied and had accumulated rental arrears, and other cases where ex-officers had continued to stay in pool houses without authority. The concession of allocation of rent-free pool houses is a privilege which should be systematically safeguarded.