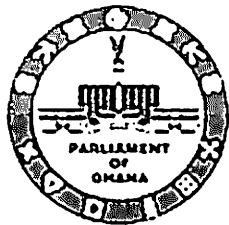


PARLIAMENT OF GHANA LIBRARY



IN THE THIRD SESSION OF THE SEVENTH PARLIAMENT OF THE FOURTH REPUBLIC OF GHANA

REPORT OF THE

SPECIAL BUDGET COMMITTEE

ON THE

2020 ANNUAL BUDGET ESTIMATES

OF THE

NATIONAL MEDIA COMMISSION

DECEMBER 2019

**IN THE THIRD SESSION OF THE SEVENTH PARLIAMENT OF THE FOURTH
REPUBLIC OF GHANA**

**REPORT OF THE SPECIAL BUDGET COMMITTEE ON THE 2020
ANNUAL BUDGET ESTIMATES OF THE NATIONAL MEDIA
COMMISSION (NMC)**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Following the presentation of the Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government for the year ending 31st December 2020 by the Hon. Minister for Finance, Mr. Ken Affori Atta on Thursday 13th November, 2019, the Rt. Hon. Speaker referred the Annual Budget Estimates of the National Media Commission to the Special Budget Committee for consideration and report in accordance with Article 179 of the 1992 Constitution and Order 140(4) of the Standing Orders of the House.

2.0 DELIBERATIONS

The Committee was assisted during its deliberations by the Acting Executive Secretary of the Commission, Mr. Alexander Bannerman, officials of the Commission, and technical officers from the Ministry of Finance and reports as follows

3.0 REFERENCE

The Committee referred to the following documents during its deliberations:

- a. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana.
- b. The Standing Orders of the Parliament of Ghana.
- c. National Media Commission Act 1993, Act 449
- d. The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2020 Financial Year and;
- e. The 2020 MTEF Estimates for the National Media Commission.

- f. The Coordinating Program of Economic and Social Development Policy.
- g. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

4.0 VISION AND MISSION

The National Media Commission exist to promote free, independent and responsible media to sustain democracy and national development. As part of its core functions NMC is mandated to take measures to ensure that persons responsible for state owned media afford fair opportunities and facilities for the presentation of divergent views and dissenting opinions.

5.0 CORE FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMISSION

- i. The Commission exist to promote and ensure the freedom and independence of the Media and Mass communication or information.
- ii. Take all appropriate measures to ensure the establishment and maintenance of the highest journalistic standards in the mass media, including the investigation, mediation and settlement of complaints made against or by the press, by the mass media or other mass media.
- iii. To insulate the state-owned media from Governmental control and;
- iv. Make regulations by Constitutional Instruments for the registration of newspapers and other Publications, except that the regulations shall not provide for the exercise of any direction or control over the professional function of a person engaged in the production of newspapers or other means of mass communication.

6.0 2019 BUDGET ALLOCATION AND EXPENDITURE RETURNS

During the year under review the National Media Commission (NMC) was allocated an amount of **Five Million, Thirty-Two Thousand, Two Hundred and Twelve Ghana Cedis (GH¢5,032,212)** for its programs and activities for the 2019 financial year. This was made up of **Three Million, Nine Hundred and Seventeen**

Thousand, Two Hundred and Fifty- Four Ghana Cedis (GH¢3,917,254) from Government of Ghana source and One Million, One Hundred and Fourteen Thousand, Nine Hundred and Fifty- Eight Ghana Cedis (GH¢1,114,958) from Development Partners Fund. This allocations was disbursed among four cost centers as below;

<u>Cost Centre</u>		<u>2019 Allocation (GH¢)</u>
Employee Compensation	-	3,175,410
Goods and Services	-	741,844
Capital Expenditure	-	Nil
Development Partners Fund	-	1,114,958
TOTAL	-	5,032,212

As at 30th September 2019, the Commission had expended an amount of **GH¢1,428,191.70** which represents 28.4% of its approved budget of **GH¢5,032,212.00** for the 2019 financial year. The breakdown of expenditure is presented in table 1 below;

Table 1: THE COMMISSION'S BUDGET PERFORMANCE AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2019

SN	ITEM	2019 APPROVED BUDGET (GH¢)	2019 ACTUAL RELEASED 30/9/2018 (GH¢)	VARIANCE (GH¢)	% RELEASED
1	Compensation	3,175,410.00	808,654.70	2,366,755.30	56.6
2	Goods and Services	741,844.00	619,537.00	122,307.00	43.4
3	Development Partners Fund	1,114,958.00	Nil	1,114,958.00	Nil
	Total	5,032,212.00	1,428,191.70	3,604,020.30	

7.0 ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2019

In pursuit of its mandate the Commission during the year under review achieved the following:

1. The Commission received 25 complaints and out of which 15 were resolved with 10 still pending. This was achieved in accordance with the NMC regulations 1994, LI.1587 (Complaints Settlement Procedure).
2. The Commission visited some selected media houses to appreciate the work of media practitioners and the challenges they face in the daily discharge of their duties.
3. The National media Commission is a Member of the African Regulatory Communication Authorities Network (ACRAN). The Authority assisted the Commission to benchmark regulatory activities to improve media and professionals within the industry.
4. The NMC as part of its achievement, toured seven regions to consult with stakeholders on the need to have a policy guideline which will be acceptable by industry players.
5. The NMC successfully developed Guidelines on religious broadcasting to help sanitize the media airwaves and improve dissemination of information by the various religious bodies.
6. The Commission Organised a three-day capacity building workshop to equip its Members with the requisite skills to enable them carry out their mandate in February 2019.

8.0 OUTLOOK FOR 2020

In furtherance of its mandate and stated objectives, the National Media Commission will undertake the following activities in 2020 financial year:

- a. Collaborate with Regional Media Advisory Councils to deploy its officers to regions to assess pre-election activities and other Media related issues in the regions.
- b. Continue to organize public, media and stakeholders to collate views for content Policy in the remaining regions for the Digital Migration.
- c. Deploy key officials to educate and broaden the understanding, scope and perspectives of migration process with journalist and the public.
- d. Develop effective and efficient performance of the Commission through monitoring and evaluation of media activities.
- e. Implement training programs to upgrade the skills of staff for effective delivery in the areas of quality assurance, internal controls, and risk management, monitoring and evaluation and revenue generation.
- f. To promote and ensure the freedom and independence of the media for mass communication.
- g. To ensure development, publication and dissemination of monitoring results.

8.1 2020 BUDGET PROVISION TO THE NATIONAL MEDIA COMMISSION

For the implementation of the above programs and activities, a total budget of **Four Million, One Hundred and Seventy-Five Thousand and Four Hundred and Ten Ghana Cedis (GH¢4,175,410.00)** has been allocated to the National Media Commission for the year 2020 from Government of Ghana Source, with no provision from Development Partners fund.

The allocations are to be disbursed among two cost centers of the Commission.

<u>Cost Centre</u>		<u>2020 Allocation (GH¢)</u>
Employee Compensation	-	2,175,410.00
Goods and Services	-	2,000,000.00
Capital Expenditure	-	Nil
Development Partners Fund	-	Nil

TOTAL

-

4,175,410.00

For the 2020 Financial Year, the budgetary allocation for Goods and services will be expended on two programs and seven sub-programs.

Table 2 below shows the budgetary allocations to the various programs of the Commission.

S/N	PROGRAMME	SUB-PROGRAM	AMOUNT (GH¢)
1	Program 1 Fin &Admin	Training and development	80,000.00
		Monitoring and Evaluation	100,000.00
2	Program 2 Media Regulation management	Media and election monitoring	850,000.00
		Content policy on Digital Migration consultancy	426,023.00
		Review of Guidelines	200,000.00
		Visits to Media Houses	123,977.00
		Complaints settlements	220,000.00
		Total	2,000,000.00

9.0 OBSERVATIONS

9.1 Decrease in 2020 Budgetary Allocation to the NMC

The Committee observed a significant decrease of about 20.5% in the budgetary allocation of the sum of **GH¢4,175,410.00** to the NMC in 2020 as against the approved allocation of **GH¢5,032,212.00** in 2019.

Table 3 is summary of the 2019 provision as compared to 2020 allocation

SN	Cost Centre	2019 Allocation (GH¢)	2020 Allocation (GH¢)	Variance (GH¢)
1	Compensation of Employee	3,175,410.00	2,175,410	(1,000,000)
2	Goods and Services	741,844.00	2,000,000	1,258,156
3	Capital Expenditure	Nil	Nil	Nil
4	Development Partner Fund	1,114,958.00	Nil	
	TOTAL	5,032,212.00	4,175,410.00	(856,802)

The Committee noted in Table 3 above that, the Commission has been allocated an amount of **GH¢ 2,175,410** as compensation for employees, for the 2020 financial year, representing a decrease of 46% far below 2019 allocation of **GH¢ 3,175,410.00**. Officials from NMC informed the Committee that, for the year 2020 the Commission will require **GH¢49, 400,000** for its planned programs and activities summarized as follows:

Compensation of Employee	- GH¢ 11,310,000
Goods and Services	- GH¢ 18,070,000
Assets	- GH¢ 20,020,000
Total Proposed Budget	- GH¢ 49,400,000

The Committee noted that, the Ministry of Finance however allocated a sum of **GH¢ 4,175,410.00** which is woefully inadequate to pursue any major program for the Presidential and Parliamentary general election in the year 2020.

The Committee is of the view that, the activities of the National Media Commission are indispensable especially as the nation prepares to go for its general election in year 2020. There is the need for the required funding to be extended to the NMC to implement their activities and to provide democratic regulation of the media to ensure decent and progressive public space.

The Committee observed that the National Communication Authority (NCA) by law grants licenses to Media House in consultation with the National Media Commission. Whereas the NCA retains a percentage of fees charged by the NCA, nothing is given to the Media Commission. In the light of the debilitating financial handicap of the NMC over the past decades and the need for the NMC to be adequately funded to carry out its mandate, the Committee wishes to recommend to the Ministry of Finance to seek Parliamentary approval for the NMC to retain 10% of the Internally Generated Funds (IGF) from the licences fee charged by the NCA to support the operations of the NMC.

The Committee also appealed to the Ministry of Finance to ensure a timely release of approved budgetary allocations in 2020 to enable the National Media Commission implement its prioritized programs as captured in the Medium Term Expenditure Frame-work for 2020.

9.2 INADEQUATE BUGETARY ALLOCATION FOR GOODS AND SERVICE

The Committee also noted the Commission was allocated GH¢2,000,000 for 2020 for Goods and Services, representing an increase of 63% over the 2019 approved sum of GH¢741,844.00. Notwithstanding the significant increase in the provision for goods and services. The Commission stated that it requires a sum of **GH¢ 18,070,000** out of which only **GH¢ 2,000,000** was allocated for goods and services in the budget ceiling. The NMC indicated that it requires the amount to train journalists in peace journalism and to develop regulatory mechanisms for combating social media disinformation.

Also, part of the funds was budgeted for the training of media monitors and to support the creation, training and operations of Regional Media Advisory Councils in the 16 Regions of the Country as it is impracticable for the member commission to monitor the over 400 media houses in all the 16 Regions with some of the radio stations using local dialects that may not be understood by the few members sitting in Accra.

The Committee was also informed that the Commission requires Guidelines for Local Language Broadcasting and Guidelines for Political Advertising to provide the framework for decent standards in media practice.

All the above-mentioned initiatives would require funds from the allocation for Goods and Services.

The Committee observed that as the nation prepares for its general election in 2020, there is the need for the NMC to provide democratic regulations of the media to ensure decent and broad-minded public space and to set standards for media practice, monitor and to enforce compliance.

The Committee recommends to the Ministry of Finance to reconsider its allocation to Goods and Services to the Media Commission during a Mid-year review to enable it carry out its mandate in the crucial election year in 2020.

9.3 LACK OF BUDGETARY ALLOCATION FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE (CAPEX)

The Committee observed with great concern the consistent lack of budgetary provision for Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) to the Commission. The Committee

noted that the 2020 financial year budget did not allocate resources to meet the capital expenditure requirements of the National Media Commission.

The Commission explained to the Committee that, the monitoring equipment procured with support from the European Union to spot any dangerous material on the airwaves is currently broken down due to lack of funds for maintenance and protection from rains due to leakage from the facility that housed the equipment.

The NMC informed the Committee that the Commission proposed the sum of **GH¢20,000,000** to meet its capital investment expenditure activities in 2020. The Commission would also require the equivalent of \$7,000,000 United States Dollars or GH¢20,000,000 to procure, install and maintain two monitoring systems in the southern and northern zones to track hate speech and identify harmful media content.

The Commission contends that two monitoring equipment is required to monitor the standards and to ensure that all radio, TV stations and newspapers conform to standards. The equipment would be use to monitor the southern and northern sectors of the Country. The monitoring equipment will enable the Commission to track deficits in media practice as early warning mechanism.

Additionally, the Commission requires funds to develop mechanisms for containing hate speech and online disinformation to curtail malicious campaign of disinformation using online and social media platforms. They argued that these expenditures are all capital intensive.

The Committee is worried about lack of concern and commitments on the part of governments over the years with respect to acquisition of needed monitoring capabilities by the Commission as it portends danger in the light of the proliferation of media house and abuse of social media.

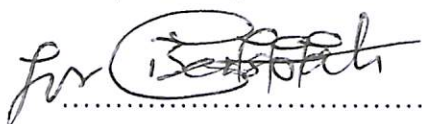
The Committee is of the view that since donor funding is not forthcoming, Ministry of Finance should as a matter of urgency provide adequate budgetary support for capital expenditure during the mid-year budget review

to enable the NMC carry out its planned capital investment programs and projects.

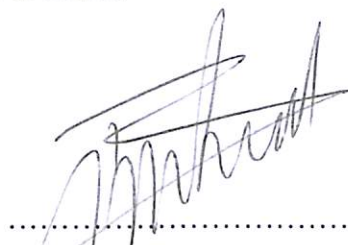
10.0 CONCLUSION

The Committee having regards to the significant role of the National Media Commission to promote free, independent and responsible media for the sustenance of our democracy and national development and after critical examination of the Budget Estimates of the National Media Commission recommends to the House to adopt its report and approve the sum of **Four Million, One Hundred and Seventy-Five Thousand and Four Hundred and Ten Ghana Cedis (GH¢4,175,410.00)** to enable the National Media Commission implement its programs for the financial year 2020.

Respectfully submitted


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HON. OSEI KYEI-MENSAH-BONSU
MAJORITY LEADER AND CHAIRMAN,
(SPECIAL BUDGET COMMITTEE).


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INUSAH MOHAMED (ALHAJI)
(CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE)

