

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

**REPORT OF THE SPECIAL BUDGET COMMITTEE ON THE 2008 ANNUAL
BUDGET ESTIMATES OF THE OFFICE OF PARLIAMENT**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The 2008 Annual Estimates of the Office of Parliament was referred to the Special Budget Committee for consideration and report in accordance with the 1992 Constitution and Standing Orders of the House. This was after the presentation of the Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government for the year ending 31st December 2008 on 15th November, 2007 by the Minister for Finance and Economic Planning, Hon. Kwadwo Baah Wiredu. The Committee met with some officials from the Office of Parliament and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MOFED) and reports as follows:

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Reference Documents

To enable the Committee discharge its assigned duties effectively and efficiently, the Committee availed itself of the following documents:

- The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana.
- The Standing Orders of the House.
- The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for preceding years, notably the 2006 and 2007 Financial Years.
- The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2008 Financial Year.

- The Draft Annual Estimates for 2008 of the Office of Parliament

3.0 MISSION STATEMENT

The parliament of Ghana exists to perform efficiently in the passage of laws; to perform oversight responsibilities over the executive arm of government to be the custodian of the public purse; to be a deliberative and informative chamber and to build the confidence of the polity in democratic governance and in the pursuit of this the parliamentary Service shall facilitate the work of parliament, enhance its dignity, and adequately inform public on the activities of parliament. In fulfillment of the above Mission, the Office seeks to provide among others the following:

- Provide support services to Parliament and any Committee or agency of Parliament for the purpose of ensuring the full and effective exercise of the powers of Parliament;
- Advise the Speaker's Office and MPs by providing adequate information as well as arranging and facilitating the Sittings of Parliament;
- Bring Parliament closer to the people through public fora and inform the public on daily Parliamentary proceedings;
- Foster closer relations with world Parliaments world-wide and Parliaments within the sub-region;
- Develop the capacity of staff and MPs to provide efficient services to Parliament;
- Strengthen the systems for the delivery of services and develop its human resources base;

- Improve and strengthen parliament's oversight of the executive and other branches of government;
- Enhance parliament's representational functions by making it more relevant to the needs of the public;
- Foster closer relationship with other parliaments;
- improve the performance and management of parliament's legislative functions; and
- Improve the physical, logistical and information technology assets of the institution of parliament.

4.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES

In line with the GPRS II, Parliament is expected to play a pivotal role in the governance of the country by:

- a. introducing the required legislation that provides the legal basis for accelerated wealth creation through private sector-led investment while guaranteeing adequate protection for the vulnerable and excluded;
- b. Streamlining the exercise of power in such a manner as to ensure continued good democratic governance at both central and decentralized levels; and
- c. Exercising oversight for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the GPRSII, through a special parliamentary committee for the reduction of poverty.

5.0 2007 IN RETROSPECT

During the year under review, the Committee in its scrutiny realize that great successes were achieved with regard to the set goals and objectives for 2007.

These include the following:

I. Sittings of Parliament and Parliamentary Committees

As at December 18, Parliament has had a total number of 145 House Sittings and over 360 Committee Sittings. A number of Town Hall meetings within Ghana and outside the country were also embarked upon by some Members of the various Committees.

II. Exercise of Oversight Responsibilities

In the exercise of Parliament's oversight roles, a number of working visits and study tours were embarked upon by some Committees to project sites across the country to monitor and evaluate performance of MDAs and to ensure that funds voted for projects are judiciously applied for the intended purposes.

III. Legislations Passed

Bills passed during the year included the following:

- Bui Power Authority Act, 2007 (Act 740)
- Fair Wages and Salaries Commission Act, 2007 (Act 737)
- Credit Securities Depository Act, 2007 (Act 733)
- National Accreditation board Act 200 (Act 732)
- Domestic Violence Act, 2007 (Act 732)
- Transfer of convicted Persons Act, 2007 (Act 743)
- Anti –money Laundering Act

IV. Infrastructural Development

- The Committee was informed that as part of the Office efforts to provide adequate space for the work of Parliament, a number of infrastructural projects were undertaken. These included the work on the first phase of the conversion of the GNTC Block of Flats into Committee Rooms.
- The Committee also noted, with satisfaction, that the official residence for the Speaker of Parliament has been completed and furnished, and the Speaker has moved into occupation.
- Work on the construction of the 3-storey office complex is also on-going and expected to be completed in 2008. The facility when completed, is expected to provide the much needed office space for the Leadership of the House, key members of staff, as well as avail 8 Committee Rooms. This will go a long way to ease the current office accommodation problems and lack of meeting rooms confronting Parliament.
- The renovation works on the Chamber Block, the committee noted is on-going. The Office has so far succeeded in rewiring the entire block which is fully air-conditioned. Currently, work on the electronic systems including close circuit cameras, video conferencing facility, a new digital system and equipment for simultaneous interpretation as well as access control electronic voting systems and plasma screens are being installed.

V. Training and Development

The Committee was informed that a lot of training programmes geared towards upgrading the knowledge and skills of Parliamentary Service Staff and MPs were carried out. Notable among these are programmes such as included Good Governance and Development, Information, Communication Technology, Understanding the Labour Act, Modernizing the Human Resource Function, Financial Management and Budgeting.

A number of Parliamentarians also undertook internship and benchmarking programmes outside the country.

6.0 OUTLOOK FOR 2008

The Office of Parliament with a vision of making Ghana Parliament as a Center of Excellence in Africa will in 2008, continue to make steady strides in the discharge of its mandate. In lieu of this, the Committee was informed that a number of activities have been earmarked for implementation in the 2008 financial year. These among others, include the following:

- ❖ Holding of Plenary and Committee Sittings as way of continuing its legislative functions
- ❖ Improving the Capacity and competence of MPs and Staff to effectively discharge their duties with professionalism. Local and Overseas Training and Internship programmes will also be provided to some Members and Staff of Parliament.

- ❖ The Office will Participate in Overseas Conferences, workshops, meetings and Seminars (i.e. CPA International, CPA Africa, ACP-EU, NSCL, IPU, AU, PAP, ECOWAS PARLIAMENT)
- ❖ To strengthen the deliberative and informative capabilities of Parliament by continuing to build the capacities of members and staff of parliament.
- ❖ To improve and strengthen Parliament's oversight role, some vehicles will be procured to tour project sites, visit some MDAs and attend to some petitions.
- ❖ To properly position Parliament in the socio- political lives of Ghanaians by organizing public fora at various regional capitals.
- ❖ The on-going rehabilitation and refurbishment work on the Chamber Block and the Speaker's Block will be continued.
- ❖ Completion of the on-going construction and furnishing of the three-storey Office complex for some Members and Staff of Parliament.
- ❖ Works on the Tower Block (Job 600) will be continued if the structural integrity of the block is established.
- ❖ The second phase of the renovation works on the GNTC Block of Flats will also begin.

7.0 THE 2008 BUDGET ESTIMATES OF THE OFFICE OF PARLIAMENT

To enable the Office of Parliament carry out its planned programmes for the 2008 Financial Year, a total amount of **GH¢ 20,703,627.00** has been allocated to the Office to be disbursed as follows:

Personnel Emoluments	GH ¢ 7,109,304.00
Administration Expenses	GH ¢ 5,302,709.00
Service Expenses	GH¢ 5,103,996.00
Investment Expenses	GH¢ 3,187,618.00
TOTAL	<u>GH¢ 20,703,627.00</u>

8.0 OBSERVATIONS

During the scrutiny and analysis of the performance of the Office in 2007, the Committee observed the following as major hindrances that militated against the Office in achieving the set goals and objectives for the year:

- Inadequate office space for MP's and staffs.
- Virtual non- existence of workspace for Committee activities
- Untimeous release of funds to finance planned programs of activities
- Lack of general security cover for MP's particularly in their residences
- Inadequacy and insufficiency of logistical support for the business of parliament
- The smallness of and inadequate facilities in the library
- Lack of storage rooms for vital documents of parliament including Hausards

It was also observed that Parliament which plays a pivotal role in the three Arms of the Government is classified for all practical purposes, as one of the MDAs by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. Consequently, allocations to Parliament are not

based on its indispensable central role in the country's democratic dispensation but as one of the Institutions which were created by an act of Parliament.

The Committee observed that for the 2007 financial year many Committee missions could not be carried out because of lack of funds at the time the committees had programmed to undertake such missions and therefore many of such activities had to be scaled down considerably or be scraped all- together.

The Committee observed that by far the greater number of capacity- building workshops and training were programmed for staff of Parliament and not parliamentarians themselves. This is an anomaly which must be rectified. The Committee observed that often time when members of parliament had to travel it became difficult to provide logistical support and such support had to be provided by Members themselves before refunds were made later.

The Committee observed again that whereas for the 2008 financial year, a sum total of **thirty- three million, three hundred and eighty one thousand, six hundred and twenty- two Ghana cedis (GH ¢ 33,381,622.00)** was requested by the Office to execute its planned programmes of activities, the Office has been allocated only **twenty million, seven hundred and three thousand, six hundred and twenty seven Ghana cedis (GH¢ 20, 703, 622.00)**, leaving a shortfall of **twelve million, six hundred and seventy eight thousand Ghana cedis (GH ¢ 12,678,000.00)** Upon further consultations, deliberations and considerations the Committee was informed that the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning has assured the Leadership of the House that increasing the current allocation to twenty eight million, seven hundred and twenty six thousand, nine hundred and ninety four Ghana cedis (**GH ¢ 28,726,994.00**) would be given a very serious thought.

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- The Committee recommends to this House to appeal strongly against classifying Parliament as one of the MDAs. This, in opinion of the Committee does not accord the institution of parliament the priority it deserves as one of the three Arms of Government. The Committee therefore recommends that for the purposes of identifying Parliament's actual status as well as securing its financial autonomy, the office of Parliament should be properly classified as the Legislative Arm of Government and a vital cog in democratic governance.
- The Committee again recommends for an amendment of the Parliamentary Service Act so that it will be in line with the other Arms of Government. This, the Committee believes, will afford Parliament the opportunity to send its Budget requirements to the Office of President directly for approval and not through the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning who might equate Parliament role to that of the MDAs.
- In the performance of the duties of Parliament, the parliamentary Service Act bends overly in favour of the Parliamentary Service and not on Members of Parliament and hence it is recommended that in reviewing the Act the focus ought to be, appropriately, on the legislature.
- In order that committees and committee work may not be hampered, it is recommended that allocations to Committees should be escrowed so that approved programmes and activities would be smoothly funded.
- The Committee recommends that leadership, and the bureau of Parliament should take all necessary measures to ensure the security of Members given the recent incidences of robberies at the residences of members.

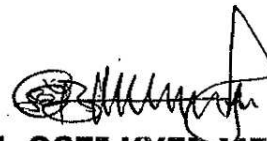
- Given the categorical statement of adequate releases to Parliament from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning against the background of the fact of inadequacy of funds at material times which negatively impact on the performance of Parliament and its committees, it is recommended that leadership engages the Service Board to streamline activities and programmes with a view to cutting down waste in the system.
- The Committee wishes to re-iterate that the achievements of Parliament impact directly on all citizens of this country and therefore there is the need to resource Parliament very well in order to achieve effectiveness, efficiency and economy which are prerequisites for economic development. The Committee therefore recommends for supplementary budget allocations for the Office to enable it carry out its intended programmes for the 2008 financial year.

Please see Appendix I for the breakdown of Service Vote for the 2008 financial year.

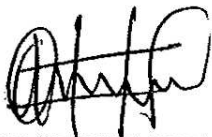
6.0. CONCLUSION

Without prejudice to the observations made above, the Committee recommends to the House, the approval of the sum of **GH¢ 20,703,627.00** and urge the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning to fulfill his pledge to add to the total budget vote for the 2008 financial year by **GH¢ 8,023,372** to enable the Office of Parliament carry out its intended programmes for the financial year ending 31st December 2008. It is also hoped that the recommendations made for the Office to be better resourced, would be taken into serious consideration by Government.

Respectfully submitted



HON. OSEI KYEI-MENSAH-BONSU
VICE CHAIRMAN



KOFI MENKAH
ASSISTANT CLERK

DECEMBER 2007

APPENDIX I

OFFICE OF PARLIAMENT

2008 ANNUAL BUDGET FOR PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES AND OTHER COST CENTRES

A. STANDING COMMITTEES

	GH¢
1. FINANCE COMMITTEE	100,000
2. PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE	100,000
3. CTTEE ON GENDER & CHILDREN	50,000
4. JUDICIARY COMMITTEE	60,000
5. CTTEE ON GOVT ASSURANCES	30,000
6. CTTEE OF MEMBERS HOLDING OFFICES OF PROF	30,000
7. COMMITTEE OF SELECTION	40,000
8. STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE	60,000
9. CTTEE ON SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION	50,000
10. SPECIAL BUDGET COMMITTEE	80,000
11. COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES	40,000
12. HOUSE COMMITTEE	40,000
13. BUSINESS COMMITTEE	100,000
14. APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE	60,000
	<u>840,000</u>

B. SELECT COMMITTEES

1.	COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS	100,000
2.	COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION	100,000
3.	COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE & INTERIOR	100,000
4.	COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE & TECH	100,000
5.	COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS	100,000
6.	COMMITTEE ON FOOD, AGRIC & COCOA AFFAIRS	100,000
7.	COMMITTEE ON LANDS & FORESTRY	100,000
8.	ROADS AND TRANSPORT	100,000
9.	TRADE	100,000
10.	WORKS & HOUSING	100,000
11.	YOUTH AND SPORTS	100,000
12.	CONSTITUTIONAL, LEGAL & P/AFFAIRS	100,000
13.	HEALTH	100,000
14.	EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL WELFARE & S.E	100,000
15.	COMMITTEE ON GENDER AND CHILDREN	<u>100,000</u>
		1,500,000

C. AD-HOC COMMITTEE

1.	POVERTY REDUCTION	50,000

		1,550,000

D. CAUCUSES

1.	MAJORITY CAUCUS	110,000
2.	MINORITY CAUCUS	70,000
3.	WOMEN CAUCUS	25,000
E.	SPEAKERS SECRETARIAT	100,000
F.	DEP. SPEAKERS SECRETARIAT	40,000

SUMMARY OF THE SERVICE ACTIVITIES BUDGET FOR 2008

1.	Total Estimates for Item 3		GH¢9,080,000
2.	Breakdown of Expenditure		
a.	Committees	2,460,000	
b.	Caucauses	205,000	
c.	Speaker's Secretariat	100,000	
d.	Foreign Travels	2,845,000	
e.	Membership subscription	250,000	
f.	Sitting Allowance/T&T	<u>400,000</u>	
	sub-total (Legislature)	6,230,000	
	Parliamentary Service	3,850,000	<u>9,080,000</u>

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