

**REPORT OF THE SPECIAL BUDGET COMMITTEE ON THE 2021  
ANNUAL BUDGET ESTIMATES OF THE NATIONAL MEDIA  
COMMISSION (NMC)**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2021 financial year was presented to the House on Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021 by the Hon. Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of Government Business, Mr. Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu

The Rt. Hon. Speaker referred the 2021 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 of Ghana and Pursuant to Order 140(4) of the Standing Orders of the House.

**2.0 DELIBERATIONS**

To Consider the Annual Estimates of the National Media Commission, the Committee met with 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 following documents served as reference documents during the Committee's 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 2021 Financial Year and;
- e. The Programmed Based Budget Estimates for 2021 for the National Media Commission.
- f. The Coordinating Program of Economic and Social Development Policy and
- g. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### **4.0 THE GOAL AND OBJECTIVES**

The National Media Commission seeks to maintain a stable, united and safe society for the people of Ghana, by improving participation of civil society through media, traditional authorities and religious bodies to promote national development.

The NMC as part of its agenda exist to ensure responsive Governance and Citizen Participation in national Development Dialogue.

## 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 SUMMARY OF 2020 BUDGET ALLOCATION AND EXPENDITURE

For the financial year 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, the National Media Commission (NMC) was allocated an amount of **Four Million, One Hundred and Seventy-Five Thousand and Four Hundred and Ten Ghana Cedis (GH¢4,175,410.00)** for its programs and activities.

The allocations were disbursed among two cost centers as below;

<u>Cost Centre</u>	<u>2020 Allocation (GH¢)</u>	
Employee Compensation	-	2,175,410
Goods and Services	-	2,000,000
Capital Expenditure	-	Nil
Development Partners Fund	-	Nil
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,175,410.00</b>

As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, the Commission received and expended an amount of **GH¢3,581,695.27** on employee compensation. This represented an increase of about 64% above the appropriated sum of 2,175,410 for compensation of employees for the 2020 financial year.

Out of 2,000,000 appropriated for goods and services, an amount of 1,318,975.00 or 65.9% was released to the Commission. The breakdown of expenditure is presented in table 1 below;

**Table 1: THE COMMISSION'S BUDGET PERFORMANCE AS AT 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020**

SN	ITEM	2020 APPROVED BUDGET (GH¢)	2020 ACTUAL RELEASED	VARIANCE (GH¢)	% RELEASED
1	Compensation	2,175,410	3,581,695.27	(1,406,285.27)	164%
2	Goods and Services	2,000,000	1,318,975.00	681,025	65.9%
3	Development Partners Fund	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4,175,410.00</b>	<b>4,900,670.27</b>	<b>(725,260.27)</b>	

**Note: In 2020 the compensation budget released was far above the appropriated sum of 2,175,410 by 1,406,285.27 representing 64.6% excess. This was an outstanding allowance to Commission Member for the third and fourth quarter 2019 including other Personnel emoluments allowance.**

## **7.0 ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2020**

The Commission achieved the following during the year under review:

The mandate of the National Media Commission under Article 167 is to secure free and responsible media in Ghana.

- The Commission set, monitored and enforced professional standards in the media space in the year under review.
- The Commission developed a framework mechanism on safety and responsible journalism in Ghana in collaboration with the Ministry of Information.
- The Commission developed guidelines on hate speech in collaboration with the National Peace Council, and developed a framework on Police-Media relations.
- The Commission undertook and resolved eight complaints on diverse matters that fall under its mandate.
- Facilitated an open forum for Police media relations and discussed the safety of journalist in order for the Police and journalist to understand their respective roles.
- Organized a forum with key stake holders and developed a frame work on police media relations and safety of journalist in Ghana stating guidelines for corporation between the Police and the media as well as end impunities for crimes against journalist.

## 8.0 OUTLOOK FOR 2021

In furtherance of its mandate and stated objectives, the National Media Commission will undertake the following activities in the 2021 financial year:

- ❖ National Media Commission will build a media monitoring system that tracks hate speech, incitement and plain insults which appear to have gained momentum in media content.
- ❖ Develop a legislative intervention to address institutional and policy lapses in media regulation.
- ❖ Furthermore, the Commission is resolved to complete the coordinated mechanism for the safety of journalists in partnership with stakeholders.
- ❖ Organize training for journalists and review guidelines in rejoinders, local language broadcasting, political advertising, equitable coverage by the state-owned media, and political journalism, print media, religious broadcasting, and broadcasting standards.

## 8.1 2021 BUDGETARY PROVISIONS

For the implementation of the above programs and activities, a total budget of **Six Million, Eight Hundred and Fifty-Nine Thousand, One Hundred and Nine Ghana Cedis (GH¢6,859,109.00)** has been allocated to the National Media Commission for the year 2021 from Government of Ghana Source, with no provision from Development Partners fund and CAPEX.

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

<u>Cost Centre</u>		<u>2021 Allocation (GH¢)</u>
Employee Compensation	-	4,175,410
Goods and Services	-	2 683,699
Capital Expenditure	-	Nil
Development Partners Fund	-	Nil
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6,859,109 .00</b>

## **9.0 OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **9.1 EXCESS EXPENDITURE**

The Committee observed that a total amount of GH¢ 2,175,410.00 was approved by the house to cater Compensation of Employees for the Media Commission in 2020. However, the Committee noted that as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, the Commission spent a total of GH¢ 3,581,695.27. This constituted an excess expenditure of about 64% of the approved expenditure.

The Commission explained that the situation had arisen as a result of by upward review of salaries by Government in the course of the year as well as upward adjustment of salaries of promoted staff of the Commission.

### **9.2 INADEQUATE STAFF STRENGTH**

The Committee noted that over the years, the staff strength of the National Media Commission has remained stagnant with only 11 technical staff.

The Executive Secretary informed the Committee that all efforts to recruit new staff to complement the existing staff proved futile as the Ministry of Finance continuously failed to grant financial clearance to the Commission to recruit additional staff.

The Committee was informed that the Commission requires additional 34 technical staff to augment the existing staff strength. These additional staff will include technical staff in local language proficiency to enable the Commission media houses that use local languages for transmission in the 16 Regions of the country.

The Committee is of the view that the Commission's request for financial clearance for recruitment of local language proficiency staff to be recruited is highly essential and justifiable as some ethnic, chieftaincy, political and religious conflicts are often caused by unguarded statements been made in local languages at some of our local radio stations.

The Committee strongly urges the Minister for Finance to grant financial clearance to the NMC to enable it recruit additional technical and local language proficiency staff to enable the Commission perform its Constitutional mandate.

#### 9.4 LACK OF MONITORING EQUIPMENT

The Committee was further informed that the Commission does not have equipment to enable it adequately and effectively monitor the pluralistic media landscape across the country. As such, the Commission often rely on reports and complaints been made by members of the public, A lot of harm and injurious statements would have been made with its attendant consequences before the attention of the Commission is drawn to it.

The Committee therefore wishes to urge the Minister responsible for Finance to consider relooking at the non-allocation to CAPEX in the event of mid-year review so as to make adequate resources available to enable the Commission acquire the needed monitoring equipment for the Southern and northern sectors of our country to ensure that freedom of expression is not abused to the detriment of peace, national cohesion and sanctity of our widely acclaimed democratic credentials.

#### 9.5 UNREGULATED SOCIAL MEDIA



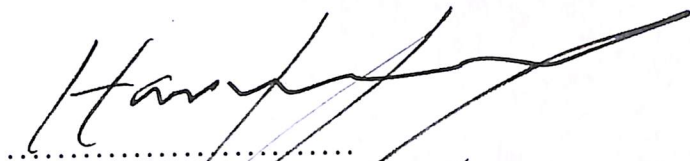
The Commission drew the attention of the Committee to the development of social media and how the rights of Ghanaian citizens have been trampled upon by the users of social media to disseminate information that often turn out to falsehood and injurious to the hard earned reputations of fellow citizens.

The Committee therefore calls upon the House to consider initiating a bipartisan debate and opening up a national dialogue on how to regulate the use of social media in the country

## **10.0 CONCLUSION**

The Committee after critical examination of the Budget Estimates of the National Media Commission and having regards to the significant role of the National Media Commission to stimulate free, independent and responsible media and ensure a sustained democracy as well as national development, recommends to the House to adopt its report and approve the sum of **Six Million, Eight Hundred and Fifty-Nine Thousand, One Hundred and Nine Ghana Cedis (GH¢6,859,109.00)** to enable the National Media Commission implement its programs for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

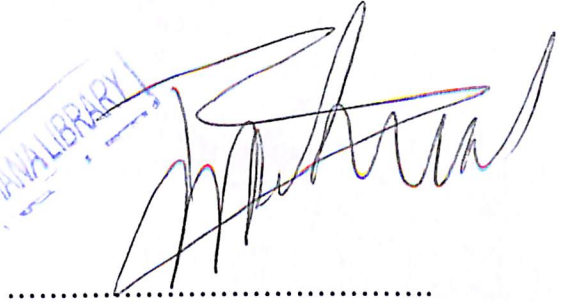
Respectfully submitted



HON. HARUNA IDDIRISU  
MINORITY LEADER AND VICE CHAIRMAN,  
(SPECIAL BUDGET COMMITTEE)

FOR: HON. KYEI-MENSAH BONSU  
THE CHAIRMAN

PARLIAMENT OF GHANA LIBRARY



INUSAH MOHAMMED (MR.)  
CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE