

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

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL BUDGET COMMITTEE

ON

**THE 2016 ANNUAL BUDGET ESTIMATES OF THE
ELECTORAL COMMISSION**

DECEMBER, 2015

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

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Draft Budget Estimates of the Electoral Commission (EC) was referred to the Committee on Special Budget for consideration and report, in accordance with Order 140(4) of the Standing Orders of the House. This followed the presentation to Parliament of the 2016 Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government by the Hon. Minister of Finance, Mr. Seth Terkper on Friday, 13th November, 2015 in accordance with Article 179 of the 1992 Constitution.
- 1.2 The Committee subsequently met with Mr. Amadu Sulley, Deputy Chairman (Operations), Director of Budget (MOF), Mr. Patrick Nomo; and officials from the EC and the Ministry of Finance and considered the Draft Budget Estimates of the Electoral Commission.

The Committee expresses its appreciation to all of them for their inputs at the Meeting.

2.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The Committee referred to the following documents in the discharge of its duties:

- a. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana
- b. The Standing Orders of the Parliament of Ghana
- c. The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2016 Financial Year

3.0 MISSION STATEMENT

The Commission is set up to organize and supervise all public elections and referenda and advance the course of democracy and good governance through the institutionalization of free, fair and transparent elections.

4.0 THE GOAL OF THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

The medium term development goal of the Commission is to be an institution adequately resourced, staffed with professionally trained and motivated personnel, totally independent in the performance of its functions and dedicated to efficient delivery of free, fair and transparent elections to advance the cause of democracy and good governance for sustainable development.

5.0 CORE FUNCTIONS OF THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

The core functions of the Electoral Commission are as follows:

- i. To compile the register of voters and revise it at such periods as may be determined by law;

- ii. To demarcate the electoral boundaries for both national and local government election;
- iii. To conduct and supervise all public elections and referenda;
- iv. To educate the people on the electoral process and its purpose;
- v. To undertake programmes for expansion of the registration of voters;
- vi. To store properly election materials; and
- vii. To perform such other functions as may be prescribed by law

6.0 PERFORMANCE IN 2015

6.1 Electoral Services Programme

In 2015, the Commission was able to conduct the District Assembly and Unit Committee Elections in all 216 MMDAs as well as two bye-elections in Talensi and Amenfi West, using two Biometric Verification Devices (BVDs) per polling station as dress rehearsal towards the 2016 General Elections and also supervised the elections of executives of various political parties.

The Commission continued with the expansion and maintenance of its VSAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal) Wide Area Network in its 231 electoral districts and also installed computer and Voter Management System (VMS) nationwide. The expansion of this VSAT equipment has significantly enhanced the Commission's Voter Management System.

The Commission also successfully organized various stakeholder fora and engagements with civil society organisations and other

interest groups to build consensus on the way forward in the upcoming 2016 General Elections.

Table 1.

The Breakdown of the total allocation and actual releases as at November 2015

ITEM	GOG ALLOCATION GH¢	ACTUAL EXPENDITURE GH¢	VARIANCE GH¢	% OF VA
COMPENSATION	18,476,918.00	16,937,173.00	1,539,745.00	8.33%
GOODS & SERV.	12,000,000.00	-	12,000,000.00	100%
CAPEX	1,500,000.00	-	1,500,000.00	100%
DONOR	3,723,536.00	-	3,723,536.00	100%
SUB TOTAL REGULAR ALLOCATION	*35,700,454.00	*16,937,173.00	*18,763,281.00	52.5%
ELECTIONS VOTE	*109,000,000.00	*90,212,774.00	*18,787,226.00	17.23%
GRAND TOTAL	144,700,454.00	107,149,947.00	37,550,507.00	25.95%

Table 1 depicts an allocation of **Thirty Five Million, Seven Hundred Thousand, Four Hundred and Fifty Four Ghana Cedis (GH¢35,700,454.00)** for the implementation of the regular programmes of the Electoral Commission in 2015. Out of the total sum, an amount of **GH¢31, 976,919.00** was to be funded by GOG, whilst the remaining **GH¢3,723,536.00** was a donor component. An additional sum of **One Hundred and Nine Million Ghana Cedis**

(GH¢109,000,000.00) was earmarked for DLEs to be released by the Ministry of Finance upon reasonable request by the Commission.

7.0 OUTLOOK FOR 2016

The following are some of the programmes to be implemented by the Electoral Commission in the 2016 financial year. They are:

- 7.1 The conduct of the 2016 General Elections in all 275 constituencies.
- 7.2 The creation of additional polling stations to ensure better voter management. The plan is to ensure that, voter numbers do not exceed 850 people per each polling station.
- 7.3 In addition, the Biometric Voter Register will be expanded to include persons who qualify to be registered in accordance with the law and the public sensitized on the electoral process.
- 7.4 Following complaints from some stakeholders on the quality of the voters register, the Commission will take the requisite steps to ensure a credible register prior to the general election. Various means have been proposed by stakeholders and are currently under consideration.
- 7.5 Also, the Commission will fully enforce the Political Parties Law to ensure compliance with all provisions in the law especially the submission of audited accounts and maintaining the requisite number of offices nationwide.

7.6 The Commission has also projected to complete the construction of its Greater Accra Regional Office and National Warehouse Complex for proper storage of its registration and voting equipment and materials, and also the construction of the Akosombo District Office among other projects.

7.7 Budgetary Allocation for 2016

For the implementation of the above programme and others, a Budgetary requirement totaling, **One Billion, Two Hundred and Two Million, Seven Hundred and Fifty-Five Thousand, Nine Hundred And Nine Cedis (Gh¢1,202,755,909.00)** was submitted by the Electoral Commission for 2016. However, the Commission has been allocated a total of **Eight Hundred and Twenty Six Million, Eight Hundred and Ninety Seven Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy Two Cedis (GH¢826,897,772.00)** for the implementation of its Programmes and activities for 2016. The breakdown is as follows in Table 2:

Table 2.

Break down of 2016 Budget Requirement and Allocation by Economic Classification

Activity	Budget Requirement Gh¢	Actual Allocation Gh¢	Difference Gh¢	%
Compensation	39,567,525.00	15,248,621.00	24,318,904.00	
Goods & Services (GOG)	1,153,390,221.00	800,000,000.00	353,390,221.00	
G & S (Donor)	-	800,054.00	-	
Assets (GOG)	9,798,163.00	7,648,879.00	2,149,284.00	
Assets (Donor)	-	3,200,218.00	-	
Total	1,202,755,909.00	826,897,772.00	375,858,137.00	31.2

8.0 OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 PERFORMANCE OF 2015 BUDGET

An allocation of **Thirty Five Million, Seven Hundred Thousand, Four Hundred and Fifty Five Ghana Cedis (GH¢35,700,455.00)** was made for the implementation of the routine programmes of the Electoral Commission. Out of the total sum, an amount of **GH¢31,976,919.00** was to be funded by GOG, whilst the remaining **(GH¢3,723,536.00)** was from donor sources. There was also an additional sum of **One Hundred and Nine Million Ghana Cedis (GH¢109,000,000.00)** earmarked for the District Level Elections (DLEs) to be released by the Ministry of Finance upon reasonable request by the Commission.

The Committee observed from Table 1 that, as at 11th December 2015, 92.7 % of the allocation for Compensation had been released. No release has been effected from the GOG Goods and Service and Capex Votes of the Commission. However, the Commission still implemented the routine administrative and management programmes to support the elections. As a result, expenditure of GH¢12,000,000.000 on the regular Goods and Services Votes of the Commission is outstanding.

With regards to allocation from Donor which constituted almost 10.5% of the 2015 Allocation, no release was made from it.

Ninety Million, Two Hundred and Twelve Thousand, Seven Hundred and Seventy Four Ghana Cedis (90,212,774.00) was spent out of the Special Elections Funds for the conduct of the District Level Elections.

8.2 Analysis of the 2016 Budget Allocation

Out of a total requirement of **One Billion, Two Hundred and Two Million, Seven Hundred and Fifty-Five Thousand, Nine Hundred And Nine Cedis (Gh¢1,202,755,909.00)** a sum of **Eight Hundred and Twenty Six Million, Eight Hundred and Ninety Seven Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy Two Ghana Cedis (GH¢826,897,772.00)** has been allocated in the 2016 Budget for the implementation of the routine programmes of the Electoral Commission and for the conduct of the 2016 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections. This will leave a funding gap of **Three Hundred and Seventy Five Million, Eight Hundred and Fifty Eight Thousand, One Hundred and Thirty-Seven Ghana Cedis (GH¢375,858,137.00)**, representing **31.7%** of the total requirement of the Commission.

Although the Committee worked tirelessly with the Electoral Commission and the Ministry of Finance over the recess to bring down the initial budget proposal of the Commission from **GH¢1,713,950,357** to **GH¢1,346,455,426** and then to the present requirement level of **GH¢1,202,755,909**, the current allocation of **GH¢826,897,772** made to the EC represents over 33% of the entire Goods and Service Votes for the country in the 2016 Budget. Given the limited budget envelope at the disposal of the Minister of Finance for allocation to all MDAs, the allocation for the conduct of the 2016 Elections pose serious financial challenges to the MDAs.

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The Committee is mindful of the current economic challenges facing the country, however according to the Commission, the funding gap of over 31% will have a devastating impact on the conduct of the Elections. Given the importance of the conduct of a successful election to the peace and stability of the Country, the Committee is cautiously urging the MOF to look for avenues for getting additional funding for the successful conduct of the Elections.

The Commission is also advised to look for innovative ways of further cutting down the budget for the Elections without compromising the integrity of the elections.

8.3 Concerns about the High Cost of Elections in Ghana

The Committee held several meetings with the EC and the Ministry of Finance over the huge budget requirement of the Commission for its regular programmes and the 2016 Presidential and Parliament Elections. The Committee raised concerns about the high cost of elections in the country, relative to elections in similar countries in the sub region. However, the Commission explained that, the cost is due to the introduction of certain reforms emanating from the recommendations of the Supreme Court Verdict on the 2012 General Elections petition.

The Committee was informed that, some of the reforms would include the limiting of voter population per polling station to a maximum of 850 registered voters, thereby increasing the polling stations from 26,000 nationwide in the last General Elections to 30,000. Also a two BVD per polling station policy would be applied

8.4 Transparency and Accountability in programmes of the EC

The Committee is of the view that the integrity of elections is premised on predictability and transparency. The EC is therefore urged in the spirit of transparency to avail the relevant aspects of their work programme to the various stakeholders in order for them to be able to adequately prepare themselves.

8.5 Timeliness and Flexibility in Releases of Budget to the Commission for the conduct of the 2016 General Elections

The Committee is of the view that the march towards the 2016 general elections has started. All stakeholders are entreated to commence their part of the process as early as possible. The Committee urges the Ministry to adhere strictly to the work and cash plan submitted by the Electoral Commission. The Committee is also reiterating its recommendation in the 2015 Budget Report of the EC, that election years are action packed with instant budgetary requirements, therefore the Commission would require timeliness and flexibility in the releases of funds.

As a result, the Committee recommends that, releases for procurements of some electoral materials and equipment should be made a priority requirement, so should some operational expenditures such as buying of consumables, payment of field operatives and other electoral exigencies be taken off the GIFMIS.

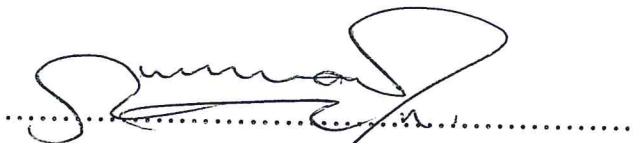
The Ministry of Finance and the GIFMIS Secretariat is therefore requested to put in place a special arrangement that would allow the Commission to have ready access to funds for the implementation of

its programmes towards the 2016 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections.

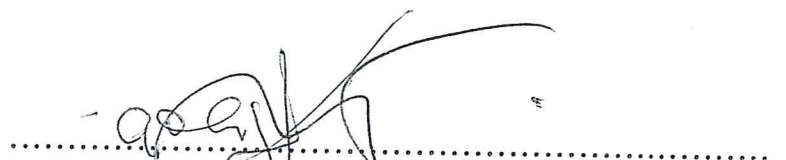
9.0 CONCLUSION

In light of the above, the Committee recommends to the House to adopt its report and approve the sum of ***Eight Hundred and Twenty Six Million, Eight Hundred and Ninety Seven Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy Two Cedis (GH¢826,897,772.00)*** for the Electoral Commission to implement its routine and electoral programmes in 2016.

Respectfully submitted.



**HON. ALBAN S. K. BAGBIN
(MAJORITY LEADER &
CHAIRMAN, SPECIAL BUDGET COMMITTEE)**



**MRS. AKUA DUROWAA OWUSU AGYEKUM
(CLERK, SPECIAL BUDGET COMMITTEE)**

15th, DECEMBER 2015

