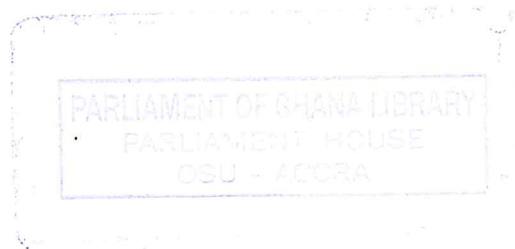


**IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE SEVENTH  
PARLIAMENT OF THE FOURTH  
REPUBLIC OF GHANA**

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON  
COMMUNICATIONS**

*ON THE*



**2017 ANNUAL BUDGET ESTIMATES OF THE  
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION**

---

---

---

# **REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS ON THE 2017 ANNUAL BUDGET ESTIMATES OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** The Hon. Minister for Finance, Mr Ken Ofori-Atta, in accordance with Article 179 of the 1992 Constitution, presented the Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government for the 2017 Financial Year to the House on Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2017. Pursuant to Order 140(4) and 182 of the Standing Orders of the House, the Rt. Hon. Speaker referred the Annual Budget Estimates of the Ministry of Information to the Committee on Communications for consideration and report.
- 1.2** The Committee thereafter met with the Hon. Minister for Information, Alhaji Mustapha Abdul-Hamid and his technical team on Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2017 and considered the referral.

The Committee is grateful to the Hon. Minister and his technical team for their co-operation.

## **2.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

The Committee was guided by the following reference documents during its deliberations:

- i. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana.
- ii. The Standing Orders of the Parliament of Ghana.
- iii. The Annual Budget Estimates of the Ministry of Communications for the 2016 financial year.
- iv. The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2016 Financial Year.

- v. The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2017 Financial Year.

### **3.0 MISSION STATEMENT**

The Ministry of Information exists to facilitate free flow of adequate, timely and reliable information and feedback between government and its various publics for socio-economic empowerment and enhanced democratic citizenship.

### **4.0 IMPLEMENTING DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

The following Agencies and Institutions are responsible for the implementation of the policies and programmes of the Ministry:

- a. Ghana News Agency (GNA.)
- b. Information Services Department (ISD).
- c. Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC).
- d. Ghana Publishing Company Limited(GPCL).
- e. Graphic Communications Group Company Limited (GCGCL).
- f. New Times Corporation (NTC).

### **5.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES**

The broad policy objectives of the Ministry in line with GSGDA II are to:

- i. Promote social accountability in the public policy cycle.
- ii. Mainstream development communication across the public sector.
- iii. Improve transparency and public access to information.

- iv. Enhance the capacity of the Media for sustainable development communication, accountability and press freedom.

## **6.0 PERFORMANCE FOR YEAR 2016**

**6.1** Between the years 2013 and 2016, the Ministry of Information was placed under the Ministry of Communications. For the 2016 financial year, a total amount of GH¢292,861,427.00 was allocated to the then Ministry of Communications to cater for both the Information and Communications Divisions of the Ministry.

**6.2** The Information Division of the Ministry of Communications was able to undertake the following activities among others in year 2016:

- It organised 9 Government for the People (G4P) Fora and 19 Meet-the-Press Series to inform the citizenry on government policies, programmes and projects.
- It undertook a nationwide public education campaign on year 2016 Budget Statement and Economic Policy. The campaign afforded citizens the opportunity to seek clarification on development plans contained in the Statement
- The Ghana Broadcasting Corporation acquired the franchise and provided live telecast of CHAN 2016, the CAF Super Cup, the Olympic Games and the AFCON 2017 qualifiers, including the live telecast of the AFCON tournament itself.
- Ghana News Agency established a Centre for journalism and multimedia training. With the establishment of the training centre, GNA now provides in-service training to staff members to improve productivity.

## 7.0 BUDGETARY ALLOCATION FOR YEAR 2017

A budgetary provision of **One Hundred and Forty-one million, and Seventy-eight Thousand, Seven Hundred and Two Ghana Cedis (GH¢141,078,702.00)** has been made for the Ministry of Information for the execution of its programmes and activities for year 2017. The breakdown is indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1 – Breakdown of 2017 Budgetary Allocation by source of funding and expenditure item**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>Compensation GH¢</b>	<b>Goods and Services GH¢</b>	<b>Capex GH¢</b>	<b>Total GH¢</b>
<b>GOG</b>	88,040,963.00	11,154,810.00	7,000,000.00	106,195,773.00
<b>IGF</b>		22,182,887.00	12,700,042.00	34,882,929.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>88,040,963.00</b>	<b>33,337,697.00</b>	<b>19,700,042.00</b>	<b>141,078,702.00</b>

## 8.0 OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 8.1 Main Ministry

8.1.1 It would be recalled that the Ministry of Information was subsumed under the Ministry of Communication between year 2013 and 2016. During this period, the Ministry's headquarters, which is an old building, did not receive the needed attention in terms of maintenance. At the moment, the roof is leaking, the floor tiles need to be replaced, the two lifts, which are out of order also needs to be fixed or replaced. The deplorable condition of the building calls for a complete renovation, which is estimated to cost GH¢4million. However, only GH¢2 million was provided for rehabilitation works.

8.1.2 The Committee was informed that the Ministry in its present state cannot boast of any asset. It has no furniture and office equipment such as computers, photocopiers, and printers. Currently, out of six vehicles given to the Ministry, only two are serviceable. In view of the nature of work of the Ministry which involves constant movement to educate, inform and interact with stakeholders and solicit feedback, the Ministry would urgently require vehicles and other equipment to facilitate its work. The Ministry is virtually new and does not have the full complement of staff. The Committee was informed that there would be the need to recruit staff for the Account/Audit Units, Administrative Unit and also hire other ancillary staff to get the Ministry fully functional.

8.1.3 The Committee was informed that apart from compensation, the Ministry's budgetary request submitted for Goods & Services as well as Capital Expenditure fell way below its requirements. For example, for Goods and Services, the Ministry requested for GH¢32. 2 million, but was given GH¢11,154,810.00. Also only GH¢7 million out of a request of GH¢109.9 million was approved for Capital Expenditure, leaving a difference of GH¢102.9 million. This means that the Ministry will find it difficult to procure critical logistics and equipment to carry out its operations.

## **8.2 Ghana News Agency (GNA)**

8.2.1 The Ghana news Agency is responsible for the collection, processing and disseminating truthful and unbiased information and news both internally and externally. Over the years, GNA has kept its track record as a source of credible news and stories in Ghana.

8.2.2 For year 2016, the Agency recorded 12,500 home stories and 8,600 foreign news stories as against a projected target of 22,320 and 12,240 respectively. The shortfall in the local stories was attributed to the lack of vehicles to send the reporters out to cover the stories. The Committee was informed that the few available vehicles procured about eight years ago are virtually unserviceable. In the circumstances, reporters pay for their own transportation to go and cover stories, pending the refund of

their transport allowance. Consequently, when releases delay or are not forthcoming to enable the Agency refund the transport allowance of reporters within a reasonable period, they lose the motivation to go out to cover stories at their own expense. Also, the Agency lacks the requisite staff due to their inability to obtain financial clearance to recruit.

8.2.3 It is informative to note that out of an amount of GH¢158,584.00 provided for Goods and Services in 2016, only GH¢40,696.62 representing 25.7% was released, thereby affecting the smooth operations of the Agency.

In spite of these challenges, the Agency achieved the following:

- i. Improved quality of work with the development of the GNA Journalism and Multimedia Training Centre.
- ii. Strengthened GNA Advertiser to improve advertising from the private sector with special emphasis on cash-based adverts from the public sector institutions, as well as selling on “own book” approach.
- iii. Improved ties with international news agencies by exploring further collaborations.
- iv. Built management capacity with management oriented training programmes.

8.2.4 For year 2017, the Agency has been allocated an amount of GH¢6,585,416.00 comprising a Compensation of GH¢5,985,416.00; and an amount of GH¢600,000.00 for Goods and Services. There was no allocation for capital expenditure. This means that the Agency may not be able to procure such items as vehicles and equipment which they so much require. They may also not be able to rehabilitate their office buildings. There is therefore the need for the Ministry of Finance to make provision for capital expenditure for the Ministry should there be



a mid-year review budget and also ensure that releases are made fully and on time.

- 8.2.5 The Agency informed the Committee that they generate some IGF from news subscription. However, due to advancement in technology which makes it easy for people to access information using various mechanisms, the Agency finds it difficult preventing people from taking their stories for free. Furthermore, when media Houses with satellite stations and multiple outlet channels buy news as a single outlet, they assume that the payment covers all their affiliates or sister stations and are therefore unwilling to allow such affiliates subscribe independently. As a result, they generate very little from news subscriptions.
- 8.2.6 It also came to the attention of the Committee that the Agency's website has been sublet to a private person/entity, who is currently managing the website. GNA explained that it did not have the money to pay for the services of the website engineer. Consequently it was agreed that the engineer manage the website and use the proceeds from the adverts thereof to offset the cost of his services. The Committee expressed serious concerns about this development and was particularly worried that a website that is supposedly in the name of a public entity like GNA is under the control of a private individual, in spite of the directive that all websites of government agencies should be hosted by the National Information Technology Agency (NITA). The Committee urges the Ministry of Information to rectify the anomaly promptly.
- 8.2.7 GNA informed the Committee that notwithstanding the challenges it face, it still remains relevant within the modern information society because it serves an important vehicle for gathering stories which, may ordinarily not have a commercial appeal to private media stations, but may be of great value to government in terms of how they feed into national policy agenda. The Committee noted that GNA, as an official news agency of the government of Ghana, has credibility as one of its trademark within and outside the country. This puts GNA in a very strategic position to become more viable and competitive if it is able to position itself to meet the demands of modern news reporting which

employs innovation and technology to present stories with pictures, videos and sound bites among others.

### **8.3 Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC)**

8.3.1 The Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, as a public broadcaster, will in 2017 give live coverage to 510 national events and other major international programmes to keep Ghanaians informed about government policies and actions both locally and internationally.

8.3.2 For the 2017 fiscal year, GBC has been allocated an amount of GH¢87,458,993.22. This is made up of a GoG Component of GH¢56,055,547.22 for the payment of compensation, and an IGF component of GH¢19,687,217.00 and GH¢11,716,229.00, for Goods and Services and Capital Expenditure respectively.

8.3.3 The Committee was informed that provision has been made under compensation to enable GBC recruit and also replace some technical staff who have been lost to resignation and retirement.

8.3.4 The Committee noted that apart from the allocation for compensation which is provided from GoG sources, the provision for the Goods and Services and Capital Expenditure is derived from the Corporation's Internally Generated Fund (IGF).

The Committee was informed that in 2016, GBC projected an IGF of GH¢50,942,209.01 but was able to realize only GH¢20,339,314.18, which represents 40% of the total projection. It is worth noting that out of the total IGF projection, the component for TV license fee alone was GH¢20,382,007.42, (40%). However, out of this projection, GBC was able to collect only GH¢968,915.14 which represents 4.8% of the total projection for TV license. This significantly affected the overall projection for the Corporation's IGF. The Corporation indicated that it has put in place mechanisms to improve collection of TV license fees. These include a portal which offers users of TV the opportunity and convenience to pay their TV License fees online, from any location. The

corporation has also introduced fees payment locations to provide easy access points for owners of TVs to pay their license. Such locations include banks, post office and GBCs local offices. Furthermore, a mobile money transfer platform has been introduced for payment of TV License. In addition to these, GBC has put in place structures to streamline and reintroduce manual collection of TV license by agents. According to officials of GBC, these measures, coupled with public education and enforcement of payment are expected to enhance the collection of TV license.

8.3.5 It came to the attention of the Committee that due to the shortfall in Goods and Services, GBC is currently in arrears of electricity bills to the tune of GH¢18,000,000.00. This means that if the outstanding electricity bill is settled out of the current year's allocation of GH¢19,687,217.00 for Goods and Services, the corporation will be left with only GH¢1,687,217.00 for its operations. Meanwhile, the IGF retention rate, which was previously 100%, has now been capped to 66%. This obviously has serious implications for the operations of the organisation in year 2017, especially, its preparation towards migrating from analogue to digital TV in September this year.

8.3.6 The Committee was informed that services provided by GBC to other government institutions are rendered without charges. Thus, GBC is unable to recover its operational costs for such services rendered. The Committee was of the view that in the midst of dwindling GoG allocations, there may be the need for GBC to consider charging for the operational costs associated with the services they render to some state institutions. In this regard, it may also be necessary for GBC to quantify the cost of public broadcasting to enable government really appreciate how much funding is required for the operations of GBC. In view of the peculiar challenge in which GBC finds itself, the Committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance should consider reviewing the IGF policy on GBC during its mid-year review of the Budget to allow them full retention of their IGF.

PARLIAMENT OF GHANA LIBRARY  
PARLIAMENT HOUSE  
CSU - ACCRA

Finally, the Committee urges GBC to find more innovative ways of doing business to be more competitive in the industry and thereby improve their revenue generation.

#### **8.4 Information Services Department (ISD)**

8.4.1 The Information Service Department is responsible for creating awareness on government policies, promoting Ghana's international marketing agenda, providing public relations support to the Presidency and MDAs and providing feedback reports of public reactions to Government policies.

8.4.2 The Department has been provided a budgetary allocation of GH¢28,000,000.22 to fund its operations for year 2017. The allocation comprises a Compensation of GH¢25,000,000.22, as well as GH¢1,500,000.00 and GH¢1,500,000.00 for Goods and Services and Non-Financial Assets respectively.

The Department plans to commit its allocation to undertake the following programmes, among others:

- i. Organise training to improve the skills of their staff for effective and efficient service delivery.
- ii. Procure ultra-modern cinema vans to enable the Department effectively undertake its outreach programmes.
- iii. Acquire various communication enhancing equipment's such as computers, video and Digital cameras for its offices in the regions and districts to enhance effective information gathering and dissemination.
- iv. Increase the number of information offices in Ghana's Missions abroad with the view to expanding its mandate of promoting the country's international agenda.

8.4.3 The Committee observed that even though there has been a significant increase in this year's allocation of GH¢28,000,000.22 over that of year 2016 (GH¢15,487,622.49), the allocation of GH¢1,500,000.00 for Goods and Services for year 2017 is inadequate to cater for the Department's programmes and activities. It is therefore necessary that the Department is adequately resourced to perform its mandate.

## 9.0 CONCLUSION

The Ministry of information performs an important function of collecting and disseminating information on government policies and programmes and providing government with feedback on the views of the citizenry to inform policy actions and interventions. However, the Ministry's capacity to pursue this agenda effectively and efficiently depends on the extent to which government is able to resource and position it to be more competitive within today's technology-oriented information age. It is therefore necessary for government to prioritise the operations of the Ministry within the governance framework and provide it with all the support that is required to enable it play its role as expected.

The Committee hereby recommends that the House approves the sum of **One Hundred and Forty-one million, and Seventy-eight thousand, Seven Hundred and Two Ghana Cedis (GH¢141,078,702.00)** for the services of the Ministry of Information for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2017.

Respectfully submitted.



.....  
**HON. KEN OHENE AGYEPONG**  
**(CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON**  
**COMMUNICATIONS)**

PARLIAMENT OF GHANA  
FIRST SENATE HOUSE  
CSO-40084



.....  
**JANET FRIMPONG**  
**(CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE)**

*March 2017*

---

---

---