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

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON
COMMUNICATIONS**

ON THE

**GHANA METEOROLOGICAL AGENCY (AMENDMENT)
BILL, 2019**

JULY, 2019

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS ON THE GHANA METEOROLOGICAL AGENCY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2019

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Ghana Meteorological Agency (Amendment) Bill, 2019 was laid in Parliament by the Hon. Minister for Communications, Mrs Ursula Owusu-Ekuful on Monday, 22nd July, 2019 and referred to the Committee on Communications for consideration and report, pursuant to Order 182 of the Standing Orders of Parliament.

Subsequently, the Committee met with the Hon. Minister for Communications, Mrs Ursula Owusu-Ekuful, a Deputy Minister, Mr. Vincent Sowah and officials from the Ghana Meteorological Agency on Saturday, 27th July 2019 and considered the referral.

The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Hon. Minister and her team for attending upon the Committee to assist in its deliberations.

2.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

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

- i. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana.
- ii. The Standing Orders of Parliament.
- iii. Ghana Meteorological Agency Act, 2004 (Act 682).
- iv. Ghana Civil Aviation (Amendment) Act, 2019 (Act 985)

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

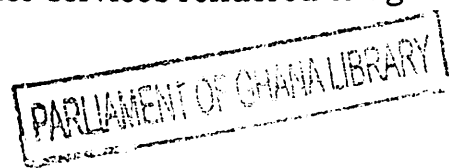
The Ghana Meteorological Agency was established in 2004 under the Ghana Meteorological Agency Act, 2004 (Act 682). Act 682 mandates the Agency to provide among others, weather forecast for agricultural, marine, civil aviation and related activities to mitigate the effects of natural disasters.

The Agency is also to ensure the provision of accurate and reliable weather and climate information to organizations such as the World Meteorological Organization in line with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

Although the Agency, has for the past fifteen years, since its establishment, provided valuable meteorological services to the country, its operations have been undermined by a number of challenges. Of particular concern is the inability of the agency to generate adequate funds to support its operations.

It is to be recalled that the International Civil Aviation Organization and the World Meteorological Organization at a Convention in Chicago in 1944 agreed that meteorological agencies should recover cost for services rendered to the aviation sector. This Convention was subsequently ratified by Ghana on the 9th of May 1957. However, no provision has been made in Act 682 to enable the Agency recover the cost of services it renders to the aviation industry.

The Bill therefore seeks to provide a financing mechanism for the Agency by adequately empowering it to collect fees for services rendered to agencies in the aviation sector.



4.0 PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The Bill seeks to amend the Ghana Meteorological Agency Act, 2004 (Act 682) to specify the percentage of fees and charges in the aviation sector to be used as sources of money for the National Meteorological Fund and for related matters.

5.0 OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The Committee was informed that the Ghana Meteorological Agency (GMet) prior to the attainment of ISO 9001, 2015, was audited by the Certification Group Limited, United Kingdom (UK).

The auditors assessed the risk and opportunities within the Agency's business environment and identified the lack of a secured and a sustainable source of funding as a major risk to the operations of the Agency. It is important to observe that, the operations of Meteorological Services are generally capital

intensive. Unfortunately, the Government of Ghana (GoG) allocation to the Agency over the years has been inadequate thereby rendering the Agency incapable of replacing some of its obsolete and defective equipment. Although GMet provides aeronautical data to the aviation industry for which it is expected to generate funds internally, the aviation industry does not always pay for the services rendered in respect of aeronautical data provided to the Ghana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) and the Ghana Airport Company Ltd (GACL). This situation, is attributed to the lack of adequate legal provisions mandating GMet to charge for services rendered.

The Committee expressed optimism that the amendment will provide for a financial recovery arrangement with the aviation sector to allow GMet receive fees and charges for services it renders to the Ghana Civil Aviation Authority and the Ghana Airport Company Limited.

It was noted that, having a secure and sustainable source of funding will help minimize the major risks identified by the Certification Group Limited, UK and also ensure that GMet sustains the ISO standards in line with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) agreement which was signed in 1944 (Chicago Treaty), and ratified by Ghana in May 1957.

5.2 The Certification Group Limited UK, identified staff of GMet as a major stakeholder for the attainment and maintenance of the ISO 9001, 2015 Certification. The auditors observed that, the staff attrition rate was very high and therefore posed a risk to the full realisation of the objectives of the Agency.

The amendment which provides for a secure and sustainable source of funding would help the Agency improve the conditions of service of staff and thereby reduce the high attrition rate. It will also enable the Agency attract and retain the right calibre of persons for employment.

5.3 The Agency informed the Committee that with the passage of the Bill, it would be able to raise a minimum of forty-one million cedis in year 2020. The amount to be generated will far exceed the annual budgetary allocation of about twenty-two million cedis to the Agency for year 2019. The amendment will bring about some certainty and predictability in the financing of meteorological activities and programmes and provide a secure and sustainable source of funding for

GMet. This could eventually enable GMet wean itself off government subvention.

- 5.4 The Committee noted that the funds generated internally, will enable GMet acquire and install some state-of-the-art meteorological equipment to ensure accurate, reliable and timely weather and climate information. This will help prevent avoidable disasters caused by the weather and climatic changes and safeguard lives and properties. The acquisition of a Data Dissemination Platform for instance will enable GMet exchange data information to enhance analysis for weather and climate outlook.

The acquisition and installation of state-of-the-art meteorological equipment will also enable GMet implement the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) standards for international air aviation. This will lead to an increased confidence in the use of Ghana's airspace, attract more airlines into the country and thus position Ghana as a hub for international air navigation in Africa. This could boost revenue generation and contribute to socio-economic development.

- 5.5 The Committee observed that Clause 1 of the Bill seeks to amend subparagraph (iii) of paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section 4 of the Act. Per the current law, the Geography Department of the University of Ghana is the only institution required to have a representative on the Governing Board of the Agency. The amendment therefore is to increase the pool of tertiary institutions from which the President can appoint a representative.

Clause 2 of the Bill is to also amend section 4 of Act 682 to specify the percentage of charges to be used as sources of money for the National Meteorological Fund.

6.0 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Clause 1 – Amendments proposed - line 5, after 'science' add "nominated by the Minister"

Clause 2 - Amendments proposed - line 2, after "of" add "subsection (2) of"



Clause 2 - Amendments proposed - lines 5 and 6, delete and insert the following:

"(i) ten percent of all Landing Charges collected by the Ghana Civil Aviation Authority in accordance with section 36 of the Ghana Civil Aviation Act, 2004 (Act 678)"

Clause 2 - Amendments proposed - lines 7, 8 and 9, delete and insert the following:

"(ii) ten percent of Over-flight Charges collected by the Ghana Civil Aviation Authority in accordance with section 36 of the Ghana Civil Aviation Act, 2004 (Act 678)"

Clause 2 - Amendments proposed - lines 10 and 11, delete and insert the following:

"(iii) five percent of the Airport Tax collected by an aerodrome operator in accordance with section 1 of the Airport Tax Act, 1963 (Act 209)."

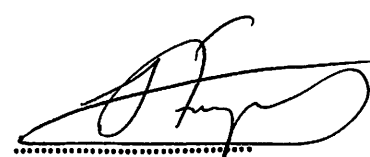
7.0 CONCLUSION

The Committee having thoroughly examined the Bill, is of the considered view that the amendments will to a large extent, enable the Ghana Meteorological Agency raise adequate funds and reposition it to effectively deliver on its mandate of providing cost-effective weather and climate services, to support the sustainable socio economic development of the country.

In the light of the foregoing, the Committee recommends that the House adopts its report on the Ghana Meteorological Agency (Amendment) Bill, 2019.

Respectfully submitted.


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FREDERICK OPARE-ANSAH (HON)
(CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON
COMMUNICATIONS)


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JANET FRIMPONG
(CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE)

July 2019