

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



**REPORT OF THE
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS**

ON THE

**2020 ANNUAL BUDGET ESTIMATES OF
THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION**

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MINISTRY OF INFORMATION FOR THE 2020 FINANCIAL YEAR**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In accordance with article 179 of the 1992 Constitution, the Hon. Minister for Finance, Mr. Ken Ofori-Atta presented the Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government for the 2020 Financial Year to the House on Wednesday, 13th November 2019. The Rt. Hon. Speaker, pursuant to Order 140(4) and 182 of the Standing Orders of the House referred the Annual Budget Estimates of the Ministry of Information to the Committee on Communications for consideration and report.

1.2 Consequently, the Committee met with the Hon. Minister for Information, Mr. Kojo Opong Nkrumah and Officers of his Ministry on Thursday, 5th December 2019, and considered the referral. Officials of the Ministry of Finance were also present at the meeting to assist in the Committee's deliberations.

The Committee extends its appreciation to the Hon. Minister and his team and Officers from the Ministry of Finance for their co-operation.

2.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The Committee was guided by the following documents in 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 Information for the 2020 Financial Year.

- iv. The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2019 Financial Year.
- v. The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2020 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 DEPARTMENT AND AGENCIES

The Ministry exercises oversight over five (5) Agencies and a Department. These subvented and non-subvented Agencies and Department listed below, have the responsibility of implementing 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 the Medium-Term Development Plan are to:

- i. Deepen transparency and public accountability.
- ii. Enhance capacity for policy formulation and coordination.
- iii. Demystify the Presidency and bring the President closer to the people.
- iv. Promote the fight against corruption and economic crimes.

- v. Improve participation of civil society (media, traditional authorities, religious bodies) in national development.
- vi. Promote discipline in all aspects of life.
- vii. Ensure responsive governance and citizen participation in the development dialogue.

6.0 PERFORMANCE FOR YEAR 2019

6.1 The Ministry of Information was allocated an amount of One Hundred and Seventeen Million, Nine Hundred and Fourteen Thousand, Three-Hundred and Thirty Ghana Cedis (GH¢117,914,330.00) for its programmes and activities in year 2019. This allocation was reviewed upward in the mid-year budget to GH¢120,292,434.00. However, as at November 2019, GH¢71,158,354.46 representing 59.2% had been released by the Ministry of Finance, and same expended by the Ministry of Information. Table 1 gives a summary of releases as at November 2019.

Table 1

Budget Performance as at November 2019

Expenditure by Economic Classification (GoG/IGF)	2019 Appropriation (GH¢)	2019 Revised Budget (GH¢)	Actuals as at Nov. 2019 (GH¢)	Variance in Amount (GH¢)	Variance in percentage %
Compensation	75,249,486.00	68,278,101.00	52,986,274.71	15,291,826.29	22.4%
Goods & Services	9,204,391.00	19,204,391.00	6,427,669.75	12,776,721.25	66.5%
CAPEX	2,059,952.00	1,409,441.00	1,409,441.00	-	0%
Donor	-	-	-	-	-
IGF	31,400,501.00	31,400,501.00	10,334,969.00	21,065,532.00	67.1%
GRAND TOTAL	117,914,330.00	120,292,434.00	71,158,354.46	49,134,079.54	40.8%

SOURCE: Ministry's presentation on year 2019 performance

6.2 The Committee noted that as at November 2019, an amount of GH¢52,986,274.71 out of the revised allocation of GH¢68,278.101.00 for Compensation had been released. Out of the revised budget of GH¢19,204,391.00 for Goods and Services, GH¢6,427,669.75 had been released. The total revised allocation of GH¢1,409,441.00 approved for Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) had been released as at November 2019. An IGF of GH¢10,334,969.00 out of the approved budget of GH¢31,400,501.00 had also been released. It is informative to note that as at November 2019, no release had been made out of the sum of GH¢10,000,000.00 provided under Goods and Services and earmarked for preparatory works for the implementation of the Right to Information Act 2019, (Act 989). This continues to affect the Ministry's ability to undertake some critical activities under this programme.

6.3 Notwithstanding the financial constraints, the Ministry implemented various activities in fulfilment of its mandate of disseminating information on public policies, programmes, projects and activities to the citizenry and also gathered feedback for policy review. In the year under review, the Ministry achieved the following among others:

- Held five (5) Town Hall Meetings including two diaspora Town Hall Meetings in London and Washington to explain key government policies and programmes to the citizens. This was to ensure citizen participation in democratic governance.
- Held One (1) National Policy Summit in Cape Coast under the theme *"Meeting the sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Emphasis on Fisheries and Sanitation"*. The objective of the National Policy Summit was to provide the platform for Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to articulate government policies and programmes, elicit feedback and build partnerships.

- Held 57 Ministers Press Briefings, 2 Ghana @Work Campaigns, 12 events on #AsktheInfo Ministry and 6 regional tours all in a bid to improve transparency and public access to information.
- Organised Twenty-two (22) Meet-the-Press events to create the platform for Ministers to give account on the developments in their sectors to the public and stakeholders. MDA's who had their turn at the Meet-the-Press Series included Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Works and Housing, the Registrar General's Department and the Public Procurement Authority.
- Information Services Department (ISD) embarked on a public education on key government policies such as the National Identification Exercise. As at August 2019, the ISD had produced 193 situational and 91 reaction reports. The numbers increased to 324 and 425 respectively by the end of November 2019.
- The Ghana News Agency produced 11,339 Home News Bulletin/Feature articles to educate the public on Health, Education, Science, Business, Human Interest and Economic issues. It also developed an enhanced website to expand retail news service which would also help generate significant revenue from advertising.
- The Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) through its numerous live programmes in the mainstream media informed, educated and entertained its viewers. The Corporation broadcast 470 TV programmes and 5,640 news bulletins in the local languages.

7.0 BUDGETARY ALLOCATION FOR YEAR 2020

7.1 The Ministry of Information has been provided a total budget of **One Hundred and Forty million, Two Hundred and Thirty-Six Thousand, Eight Hundred and Twenty-Three Cedis (GH¢140,236,823.00)** to implement its programmes and activities for year 2020. Table 2 gives a summary of the allocation to the Ministry.

Table 2

Summary of Budgetary Allocation by Sources of Funding and Economic Classification for 2020

ITEMS	GOG (GH¢)	IGF(GH¢)	ABFA (GHC)	D/P (GHC)	TOTAL (GH¢)	%
Compensation	83,084,667	-	-		83,084,667	59.25
Goods & Services	32,526,137	19,590,002	-	-	52,116,139	37.16
CAPEX	-	2,176,667	-	2,859,350	5,036,017	3.59
Total	115,610,804	21,766,669	-	2,859,350	140,236,823	100
%	82.44	15.52	-	2.04	100	

Source: Appendix 4 A & B of the Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government

7.2 The Committee observed that 82.44% of the Ministry's allocation for the 2020 fiscal year will be funded from the Government of Ghana (GoG) budget. 15.52% of the budget would be financed from Internally Generated Funds (IGF) while funding from Development Partners (DP) would contribute 2.04% of the allocation. The Committee was informed that the Donor allocation was found to have been classified in error since the Ministry of Information does not have any donor funded programme. The Ministry of Finance has therefore agreed to re-classify that allocation to either GoG or IGF funds. The Committee further observed that 59.25% of the budget is allocated to Compensation, 37.16% to Goods and Services and 3.59% to Capital Expenditure. Table 3 presents a detailed breakdown of the allocation to the various cost centres.

Table 3

Breakdown of 2020 Budgetary Allocation to the Cost Centres

COST CENTRE	GOG			IGF			DP FUNDS			TOTAL
	CoE	G&S	CAPEX	CoE	G&S	CAPEX	CoE	G&S	CAPEX	
Head Office	1,757,111	29,026,137	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,859,350	33,642,598
O/W RTI		(20,000,000)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(20,000,000)
ISD	28,124,017	2,000,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30,124,017
GNA	5,132,650	1,500,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,632,650
GBC	48,070,889		-	-	19,590,002	2,176,667	-	-	-	69,837,558
TOTAL	83,084,667	32,526,137	-	-	19,590,002	2,176,667	-	-	2,859,350	140,236,823

SOURCE: Ministry's Presentation to the Committee

Table 4 provides a comparison between the 2019 and 2020 allocation to the Ministry

Table 4

Comparison between the 2019 and 2020 Budgetary Allocation

Item GoG & IGF	2019 Revised Budgetary Allocation (GH¢)	%	2020 Budgetary Allocation (GH¢)	%
Compensation	68,278,101.00	56.45	83,084,667.00	59.25
Goods and Services	19,204,391.00	15.89	32,526,137.00	23.19
CAPEX	1,409,441.00	1.70	2,859,350.00	2.04
IGF	31,400,501.00	25.96	21,766,669.00	15.52
TOTAL	120,292,434.00	100	140,236,823.00	100

SOURCE: Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government for Years 2019 and 2020

A cursory look at the Ministry's allocation for year 2020, shows an increase of GH¢19,944,389.00 over the 2019 allocation of GH¢120,292,434.00. (See Table 4)

8.0 OUTLOOK FOR YEAR 2020

- 8.1 The Ministry in year 2020 will commence full-scale implementation of the Right to Information (RTI) Law which was passed in March, 2019. The implementation of the law will ensure transparency and accountability in governance. The Ministry will therefore pursue the programme of sensitising all stakeholders on the implementation of the RTI Law.
- 8.2 The Ministry plans to organise four(4) National Policy Summits, 10 Regional and Diaspora Town Hall Meetings, 80 Minister's Press Briefings, 34 Meet-the-Press Series, 10 Ghana@Work Campaigns and 10 "#AsktheInfoMinistry". This would entrench the policy to deepen transparency, public accountability and ensure responsive governance and citizen participation in the development dialogue.
- 8.3 To create a positive social change through the promotion of information exchange, the Ministry will continue to pursue the application of a Development Communication Model to communicate government flagship programmes aimed at securing wide public commitment and support.
- 8.4 Through the Information Services Department(ISD), the Ministry will embark on a massive transformation agenda to expand and strengthen government's development communications efforts. Additionally, the Department would purchase ultra-modern cinema vans and equipment to effectively reach out to all Metropolitan, Municipal and District Asemblies (MMDA's) and also provide timely feedback for government.
- 8.5 The Ghana News Agency in year 2020 would pursue digitalisation of its operations to offer valued services to the state and stakeholders and also acquire an ultra-modern TV Studio for the production of audio/visual content for subscribers.
- 8.6 Pursuant to the objective of improving access to national news and programming with bold, educative and relevant entertaining content, the GBC would launch its

presence through the establishment of Regional Radio Stations in the six newly created regions.

9.0 **OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 Budgetary Allocation

The Committee was informed that the Ministry presented a proposed budget of GH¢247,046,030.50 to enable it effectively execute its programmes and projects for year 2020. This figure was made of GH¢83,084,667.00 as compensation, GH¢55,600,487.05 as Goods and Services, GH¢86,600,329.46 as Capital Expenditure and an IGF component of 21,760,546.99. The Ministry's 2020 allocation of GH¢140,236,823.00 therefore represents a shortfall of GH¢106,809,207.50 of the proposed budget. The Committee observed that the shortfall may pose some challenges to the Ministry in the performance of its functions.

It came to the attention of the Committee that the Ministry and its Agencies are confronted with some serious challenges which requires immediate redress. Most of their staff work in deplorable conditions. The Agencies lack equipment and vehicles required for their effective operations. Some Agencies are compelled to use very obsolete equipment which have a high maintenance cost. Undoubtedly, the lack of basic tools and equipment hampers the effective and efficient performance of the Ministry. The shortfall in the allocation will make it extremely difficult for the Agencies to operate at their optimum level.

9.2 **HEAD OFFICE**

9.2.1 The Headoffice plays a lead role in the Development Communication Agenda. Its functions are categorised into two – (i) improved transparency and public access to information and (ii) Improved partnership building with relevant stakeholders to promote good governance.

The Committee was informed that Headquarters in year 2019, initiated additional programmes under these two areas to enhance the Development Communication Agenda. It introduced the Ministers' Press Briefings to fill a state communication void and ensure that the news space is regularly filled with content that highlights government work and also provide quick responses from government.

9.2.2 It also introduced social media as a major communication plank. The newly established social media unit set a target of reaching 90,000 people. It is interesting to note that the Ministry has succeeded in cultivating an audience of about 76,453 across twitter, facebook and Instagram. The Ministry's target is to reach 80,000 people by the close of the year and hopefully grow the number to 150,000 by the end of December 2020. The social media platform helps the Ministry to directly engage with citizens at a lower cost and also obtain direct feedback on many issues. Again, the Ministry introduced the Meet-the-Press by Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Eecutives (MMDCE's). MMDCE's are expected to proactively engage the press on various matters in their districts and municipalities. The Committee noted that the objective of these new initiatives is to enhance citizen involvement in the development process.

9.2.3 It came to light during deliberations that an amount of GH¢20,000,000.00 out of the GH¢32,526,137.00 GoG component for Goods and Sevices for year 2020, will be committed to the full scale implementation of the Right to Information Act, 2019 (Act 989). It is worth noting that an amount of GH¢10,000,000.00 was provided under Goods and Services in year 2019 for preparatory works towards the implementation of the Act. However, as at November 2019, no release had been made. The non-release of funds stifled the work of the Ministry. The Ministry by law, is expected to fully implement the Act in year 2020. It is therefore important that the Ministry of Finance release these funds, and on time to enable the Ministry carry out its mandate.

The Committee noted that with the allocation of GH¢20,000,000.00 earmarked for the implementation of Act 989 in 2020, the Ministry will be left with only GH¢12,526,137.00 to expend on the rest of its programmes. Out of this, GH¢3,500,000.00 is allocated to the GNA and the ISD for their activities. An amount of GH¢3,630,137.00 out of the remaining GH¢9,026,137.00 will be required for operational expenditure at the Ministry's headquarters leaving merely GH¢5,396,000.00 for the various development communication programmes. To deepen our democracy, there must be regular and non-partisan engagement between government officials and their stakeholders. It is important therefore that the Ministry of Finance provides the needed resources to the Ministry to lead this engagement.

9.2.4 It came to the fore that the Ministry has embarked on an exercise to re-organise its Agencies to ensure efficiency. The Ghana Publishing Corporation for instance, has received authorisation to invest its IGF to purchase equipment to improve security features of state documents they print, particularly, in this era of fake news.

The ISD's transformation programme, projected to cost about GH¢130,000,000.00 is to ensure that all ISD offices are provided with computers, internet and video vans on ground to enable them undertake their activities efficiently and effectively. This will require substantial governmental support by way of funding if the agenda is to be achieved.

As part of the re-organisation exercise of the Agencies, the Ministry is putting measures in place to institute standard human resource practices such as biometric clocking mechanism, rewarding performance and applying sanctions. Furthermore, the Ministry will introduce standard management practices such as regular meetings, regular reporting and performance reporting.

9.2.5 The Committee was happy to note that the Press Centre has been refurbished into a state-of-the-art facility. The Committee further noted that although the Ministry

did not receive funding for this project, it found an alternative means to execute the project. The role of the media in creating and sustaining democracies cannot be overemphasised. It is important therefore that the Ministry creates a congenial atmosphere for the press to work. The Committee commends the Ministry for this initiative.

9.2.6 It has been identified that the media landscape in Ghana lacks the necessary conditions to take full advantage of the democracy-enhancing and developmental potential of the media. Against this background, the government through the Ministry, seeks to enhance the capacity of the media by identifying major gaps in the sector and proposing mechanisms to bridge these gaps. Some gaps identified include poor working conditions, lack of professionalism, abuse of frequency and lack of capacity. The Ministry in response to these challenges is introducing a Media Capacity Enhancement Programme aimed at improving the capacity of media personnel and media houses/institutions. The State is expected to provide seed money as funding for the programme, while additional resources are raised through the private sector.

9.3 Ghana News Agency (GNA)

9.3.1 The Ghana News Agency has been allocated an amount of GH¢6,632,650.00 for its programmes for year 2020. Out of this amount, GH¢5,132,650.00 is for compensation of employees, while the remaining amount of GH¢1,500,000.00 is for Goods and Services. There was no allocation for Capital Expenditure.

9.3.2 The mandate of GNA is to provide for the dissemination of truthful and unbiased news. The Agency contributes to the political, social and economic development of the country through gathering and processing of high quality news throughout Ghana, Africa and the rest of the world. As at November 2019, 16,079 local stories and 1,766 foreign news stories that cover health, politics, science, education, sports, economics, media, culture, crime, social issues, gender issues, and entertainment had been processed.

It is worth mentioning that GNA has built an enviable reputation for itself over the years and serves as a credible source of news verification. Unfortunately, the Agency is confronted with a myriad of problems. The delay and in some cases the non-release of funds affected the Agency's ability to carry out some of its planned programmes. The Committee noted that the Agency's Capital Expenditure budget has seen a downward revision over the years. This situation has been compounded by the fact that no release had been made for Capital Expenditure as at November 2019.

9.3.3 It is worth emphasising that no allocation has been made to the Agency for Capital Expenditure for year 2020. This will no doubt affect GNA's ability to carry out some capital expenditure initiatives such as purchase of licensed software, WAN Connectivity, setting up an Ultra modern studio for production of audio/visual content for subscribers, and setting up an automated News Management System which is more user friendly, cost effective, fast and accessible anywhere in the world. It will further impact negatively on the Agency's ability to address some major requirements ahead of the 2020 elections. GNA operates with old and obsolete technology and equipment and intends to digitalise its operations by leveraging on technology. The Agency lacks functional vehicles to carry out its work. The Head office relies on two overaged vehicles which are in a bad state. Editorial staff either have to use their own vehicles or public transport to facilitate their movements to news assignments.

There is the need therefore for the Ministry of Finance to provide funds for the Agency to invest in multimedia software and equipment and logistics to be able to provide valued services to the state, subscribers and the public.

The Committee noted that although the Agency generates some funds internally, it does not retain any percentage of the funds generated. Having regard to the challenges of the Agency, the Committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance

grants authorisation to the Agency to retain 100 percent of its IGF to support some activities and programmes for the 2020 fiscal year.

9.3.4 The Committee was informed that over the years, GNA has lost some of its staff to retirement and resignations. The Agency urgently needs to fill 54 vacant positions, particularly in the editorial department to drive modern news agency practices. Unfortunately, the Agency has not obtained the needed clearance from the Ministry of Finance to recruit. It must be noted that stories for the Home News Bulletins emanate from the rural areas and all 254 districts of the country. Due to the limited number of reporters, the Agency sometimes rely on stringers (part time reporters) to improve rural news reporting and coverage. Sadly, the Agency has not paid the required fees to stringers it engaged in year 2019 due to delay in the release of funds. This has affected the morale of stringers to go out to gather stories; as a result, GNA finds it extremely difficult to attract high calibre of persons as stringers.

9.3.5 GNA is indebted to four institutions to the tune of GH¢575,481.34. The Agency owes the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) GH¢ 75,714.16 for bungalows procured sixteen (16) years ago, Graphic Communications Group Limited GH¢328,251.34 and the New Times Corporation GH¢102,456.44 for subscription of news papers and advert placements since 2014, and Ghana Cocoa Board GH¢69,059.40 for office rent in Kumasi and Sunyani since 2015. SSNIT and Ghana Cocoa Board have threatened to eject officials of the Agency should it fail to settle its outstanding debts. Under the circumstance, the Agency risk losing the bungalows which have and continue to serve as residential accommodation for its staff in the regions.

The Committee underscored the need for the Ministry of Finance to resource the Agency to enable it effectively pursue its mandate and reposition itself in the media space.

9.4 **Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC)**

9.4.1 Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) has been provided an amount of GH¢69,837,558.00 to fund its programmes and activities for the 2020 financial year. This comprises GH¢48,070,889.00 as Compensation, GH¢19,590,002.00 as Goods and Services and GH¢2,176,667.00 as Capital expenditure.

9.4.2 The rate of attrition of staff of GBC is quite high. The Corporation continues to lose its core technical and editorial staff to resignation and retirement and is currently understaffed in critical operational areas. The Committee was informed that the Corporation's salary structure makes it difficult to retain the requisite skills set. Attempts by the Corporation to obtain clearance from the Ministry of Finance to recruit has so far not yielded the desired results. Contrary to what people believe, the industry is a specialised one and requires the engagement of people with the requisite skills and competencies.

9.4.3 The Committee was informed that GBC's debt stock arising from arrears of electricity bills, outstanding payments for long service awards and judgement debt stands at GH¢81,831,063.57. The Corporation for instance experiences regular disconnections by ECG as a result of the debt owed ECG, and this usually has serious implications on its operations. Interestingly, various public institutions owe GBC for various services. Urgent steps must therefore be taken by the Corporation to retrieve these monies to support its operational activities and settle part of its outstanding commitments. As reiterated by the Committee in the past three years, GBC needs to explore other sustainable ways of funding itself.

9.4.4 It came to the attention of the Committee that GBC lacks some critical equipment for its smooth operations. The Corporation is often confronted with frequent breakdown and high maintenance cost of old and high energy consuming transmitters. It came to the fore that GBC spends over 50% of its IGF on electricity to run these transmitters.

Again, GBC has an Outside Broadcasting (OB) Van which is analogue. The Corporation is unable to cover some international events with its analogue OB Van and therefore has to rent one. GBC incurs a cost of \$17,000.00 per day for rental of a High Definition (HD) OB Van for assignments. GBC as a national media broadcaster is mandated to broadcast important national programmes using audio-visual, tailored to suit the general public. As a public broadcaster, the Corporation for instance would be required to cover the 2020 general elections.

9.4.5 GBC intends to expand its operations to the six (6) newly created regions by establishing six (6) regional radio stations and also increase local language programming across the country. Despite the increase in digital media, GBC remains the only hope in some areas. The Corporation has estimated a total amount of GH¢68,133,981.00 for the establishment of regional radio stations, the purchase of critical equipment for election 2020, and for public service broadcast. It is evident that the total budgetary allocation of GH¢69,837,558.00 is inadequate to support this project.

It has become imperative for the Ministry of Finance to provide adequate resources to GBC to invest in new and modern equipment so as to reduce its cost of operations, and enable the Corporation function effectively to remain competitive in the media landscape.

9.5 Information Services Department (ISD)

9.5.1 An amount of GH¢30,124,017.00 has been earmarked for spending by the Information Services Department (ISD) for the financial year 2020. This constitutes an amount of GH¢GH¢28,124,017.00 as Compensation and a sum of GH¢2,000,000.00 as Goods and Services.

9.5.2 The ISD is the principal public relations outfit of the government both home and abroad, operating in 10 regions, 182 districts and three foreign missions (London, New York and Washington). The Department's main operations include creating awareness on government policies, providing feedback on public reaction to government policies and promoting Ghana's international marketing agenda. The Department however faces a serious challenge as its equipment to execute the Development Communication mandate are either inadequate or obsolete. For instance, all of its cinema vans are over ten years and needs to be replaced. The Department does not also have vehicles to carry out its monitoring exercise to ascertain whether the public education and sensitiation campaigns have achieved the anticipated impact.

Unfortunately, no allocation was made to the Department for Capital expenditure for year 2020. The Committee was informed that the Department, through the Ministry of Information, is embarking on a massive transformational programme and therefore requires some allocation to kick-off the project. The benefits to be derived from the transformational programme include an upgrade of the Department's multimedia capacity through the acquisition of ultra-modern cinema vans and equipment to effectively reach all MMDAs with pertinent government information and also provide timely feedback for government. The programme will also improve the skills of staff through the implementation of relevant and comprehensive training programmes. Furthermore, it will improve the efficiency of regional and district information officers in sending timely reports for policy improvement. This current financial situation of the Department, undermines its capacity to deliver.

10.0 CONCLUSION

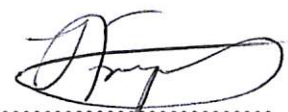
The Ministry of Information is a strategic government institution for providing a credible and reliable information outlet where government policies and programmes could be well articulated to the citizenry. It is worth noting that in emerging democracies like ours, the role of the Ministry has become even more significant as far as promoting inclusiveness, social cohesion and citizens participation in the governance process are concerned.

Sadly, such important Agencies of the Ministry, which are recognised for credibility of information delivery in this era of fake news have over the years been starved of the resources required to effectively carry out their functions. The Committee highlights the role of the Ministry as a very critical factor in our national development and calls on the Ministry of Finance to provide adequate resources to the Ministry of Information.

In this regard, the House is hereby requested to approve the sum of **One Hundred and Forty Million, Two Hundred and Thirty-Six Thousand, and Eight Hundred and Twenty-Three Cedis (GH¢ 140,236,823.00)** for the services of the Ministry of Information for the Financial Year ending 31st December, 2020.

Respectfully submitted.


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


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JANET FRIMPONG
(CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE)

December 2019