IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE SIXTH PARLIAMENT OF THE FOURTH REPUBLIC OF GHANA

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS ON THE ANNUAL BUDGET ESTIMATES OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2013

REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS
MARCH, 2013

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Draft Budget Estimates of the Ministry of Communications for 2013 was referred to the Select Committee on Communications for consideration and report in accordance with Orders 140 (4) and 182 of the Standing Orders of the House. This followed the presentation to Parliament of the 2013 Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government by the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning (MoFEP), Mr. Seth Terkper, in accordance with Article 179 of the 1992 Constitution and Order 140 (2) of the Standing Orders of the House. The Minister of Communications, Hon. Edward Omane Boamah, and a technical team from the Ministry and its Departments and Agencies assisted the Committee during its deliberations.

1.1 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The Committee consulted the following documents:
- The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana;
- The Standing Orders of the House;
- The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2013 Financial Year;
- The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2012 Financial Year;
- Report of the Ministry of Communications on the actual releases and expenditure of the Ministry of Communications for 2012.

1.2 VISION AND MISSION OF THE MINISTRY

The vision of the Ministry of Communications (MoC) is to take advantage of the emergence of Information Communications Technology (ICT) to facilitate the creation of a knowledge economy founded on technological excellence to promote rapid socio-economic growth and wealth creation and, to improve upon the overall global competitiveness of the nation. Its mission is to facilitate the development of a reliable and cost effective world-class communications infrastructure and services, driven by appropriate technological innovations to enhance economic competitiveness in a knowledge-based environment.

In order to realize its mission, the Ministry has set out strategies aimed at furthering various policies, aims and objectives. These are targeted at achieving specific results.

1.3 OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES
1.3.1 Objectives
The broad objectives are to develop policies, programmes, regulations and laws that will help integrate communications technologies and public information systems for national development, and also harness the full potential of resources for effective communication. The objectives include:

  i.   To promote rapid development and deployment of the national ICT infrastructure.
  ii.   To strengthen the institutional and regulatory framework for managing the ICT sector
  iii. To promote the use of ICT in all sectors of the economy

iv. To facilitate the provision of quality Meteorological data and forecasts in support of weather sensitive sectors of the economy.

v. To promote e-Government and e-Governance activities for transparency in government business

vi. To promote and encourage the expansion of postal and courier services for the social and economic development of the country

vii. To invest in and strengthen the institutional and human resource capacities for quality service delivery

viii. To ensure that modern information and communication technologies are available and utilized at all levels of society

To pursue these broad objectives the MoC has set specific tasks which include, but are not limited to the following:

i. To facilitate the developments of nationwide communications and technologies infrastructure and services at minimum cost to promote accelerated growth in agriculture, industry, trade and services sectors to ensure poverty reduction.

ii. To facilitate the interoperable application of computers and networks to improve the quality and efficiency of public services, to strengthen government information flow internally as to promote accountability and transparency in governance.

iii. To review and develop policy regulations and laws that will enhance the efficient functioning and self-financed regulatory bodies dedicated to the sustenance of a pro-competitive postal, electronic telecommunications and ICTs environment.

iv. To support the creation of a broad based communications and technological environment that will enhance the promotion of private sector investments and accelerate the vibrant development of IT or IT -Enabled Services industry.

v. To strengthen the institutional and human resource capacities through training and development to enable the human capital adapt to new range of educational, legalistic and technical obligations contingent to the successful implementation of 'e' applications to development.

vi. To develop and oversee policy and legislation that will promote hardware and software development and marketing at national and international levels.

vii. To undertake sectoral and institutional education on HIV/AIDS and its implication on integrated national development.

1.3.2 Policies

The Ministry's policy is based on the global commitments and benchmarks for the promotion of an Information Society and it aims at spreading the use of ICT as an enabler for wealth creation, promotion of national cohesion and growth as well as a tool for poverty reduction. Specifically, the policies aim at

i. Promoting Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as tools that facilitate the production, transmission and processing of information for competitiveness in the global market place.

ii. Providing an open, affordable, secure, globally available, seamless communications infrastructure and access to information for the country at all times – "Universal Access".

iii.   Enhancing reliability and efficiency in the provision of communication services.

iv.   Facilitating the injection of new technological innovations into existing forms of economic activities in the micro, small and medium scale enterprises.

v.   Promoting the mechanism through which ICTs can lead to 'e' governance and better government services at all levels from the local to the national levels in health, education and environmental sectors.

vi.   Using the medium of ICTs access, including access to the internet to promote 'e'-commerce to enable local business have access to the improved trends on global market in their import-export transactions and thereby reduce transaction cost of business and in the process improve internal efficiency.

vii.   Promoting aggressive private sector participation in telecom service delivery in a liberalised, regulatory and tax environment conducive for the attraction of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and venture capital needed to revamp businesses.

viii.   Streamlining and updating the regulatory laws and regulations in conformity with changing industry trends to maximise benefits.

ix.   Using communications and meteorological forecasting through global positioning satellites to determine where, when and how to plant crops to promote increased agricultural productivity and food security.

x.   Promoting the requisite capacity building framework to support human resource development and specialised technical skills needed to meet the market growing needs ICT talent.

xi.   Building trust among the public, private and civil society to acknowledge the Internet as a potentially helpful tool rather than a cure-all tool.

1.3.3 Strategies
The Ministry will adopt the following strategies in furtherance of its objectives and policies: it will –

i.   Promote Ghana to become the leading international ICTs centre in the sub-Saharan region by facilitating the establishment of major network application centres and operational data centres for international companies in the sub-region to source information.

ii.   Encourage and facilitate the development of national broadband communications infrastructure to bridge the digital divide and build an Internet based economy.

iii.   Institute a transparent, pro-competitive and conducive regulatory regime to ensure fair, equitable and accelerated development of Ghana's ICTs industry.

iv.   Implementing the ICTs reform in such a manner that it will be viewed as a component of reform programmes of other sectors as to eliminate complexities which may lead to policy failures.

v.   Facilitate the acceleration of business formation in the ICTs and their related ventures leading to high turnouts of ICT literates engaged in a vibrant economy.

vi.   Promote business support systems in the public and private sectors, based on ICTs in areas such as Human Resource Development, Budget Management, facilities management, performance and reward management.

vii.   Promote research into general and applied technology while efforts are made using available data to develop new technologies.

1.4   KEY AGENCIES UNDER THE MINISTRY

The Ministry of Communications oversees the development and implementation of policies and programmes related to the operational effectiveness of the communications sector. The organizations under the purview of the Ministry include:

i.   Ministry of Communications – General Administration
ii.   National Communications Authority (NCA)
iii.   IT Enabled Services (ITES) Directorate
iv.   Ghana Post Company Ltd.(GP)
v.   Ghana Meteorological Agency (GMA)
vi.   Ghana-India Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT (KACE)
vii.   Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communications (GIFEC)
viii.   National Information Technology Agency (NITA)
ix.   Ghana Multimedia Centre.(GMIC)
x.   Postal and Courier Service Regulatory Commission (PCSRC)
xi.   Data Protection Commission (DPC)

Pursuant to the mandate of the Ministry, these Agencies have the responsibility of handling specific operational functions of the sector, which have substantial impact on the private sector industry players and the nation as a whole.

2.0   2012 IN RETROSPECT

TABLE 1 – 2012 ACTUAL EXPENDITURE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS

	Approved Budget GH¢	Actual Expenditure GH¢	Variance GH¢
Employee Compensation	3,973,400.00	8,118,696.00	+4,145,296
Goods & Services	1,101,214.00	620,778.00	-561,360.00
Assets	2,096,624.00	214,309.00	-1,877,973.00
IGF	1,162,030.00	862,295.00	-258,956.00
Donor	32,478,465.00	13,331,379.00	-19,147,086

In 2012, the Communications sector of Ghana witnessed significant transformation – it expanded in scope as well as in technological excellence. Ghana was acknowledged by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) as one of the countries in the developing world with the fastest growing ICT industry. As per the summarised table above, the Committee exceeded some of its budgetary allocations while in some cases the releases were not forthcoming.

2.1   Telecommunications

In the area of Telecommunications, the total telephone subscription for both cellular/mobile and fixed lines, in Ghana, as at December, 2012 was 25,903,408 yielding a tele-density of 105 %. This does not mean that every single Ghanaian owns a telephone line. It may rather be attributed to the fact that some subscribers own multiple lines because some areas have no network access whatsoever. Be that as it may, this is still is a marked improvement from the December 2008 figure of 11,713,699 representing 52.4% tele-density.

2.2   Mobile Number Portability (MNP)

There has been an improvement in average porting time from 5 hours, 21 minutes as at July, 2011 to between 7 and 8 minutes towards the end of 2012.

2.3   National Subscriber Identity Module (SIM)

In 2011, the Ministry through NCA implemented the policy of national registration of Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) cards and by the end of December 2012 approximately 100% of Ghanaian phone users had been properly registered. The essence of the registration is to generate a database to facilitate the battle against crime.

2.4   Managing Fraud in International Telephone Traffic to Ghana

Under the verification exercise undertaken by the National Communications Authority (NCA) that formally begun in June 2010, the number of 'SIM Box Fraud' numbers detected reduced across most of the networks. The operation led to the arrest and conviction of ten (10) illegal SIM Box operators in 2012.This accomplishment in checking phone termination fraud, led to increase in revenue from the sector. Coupled with the implementation of the Electronic Communications Amendment Act 2009, Act 786, Government received revenue amounting to $89 million from the telecom sector within two years (2011 & 2012). Ghana's experience subsequently has become the best practice, which other countries are emulating so as to benefit from the non-taxable revenue from international telephone traffic.

2.5   Digitization of manual records

One of the milestones achieved thus far in this area is that, Five million manual records of the Birth and Death Registrar(BDR) are being digitized and indexed. In addition to the BDR, a considerable amount of records of the Ghana Registrar General (GRD) have been digitized. By the end of January 2013, over 70,000 companies had had their manual records digitized and the same is ongoing at the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA).

2.6   Government e-Payment/e-Commerce Platform (GEPP)

The Setup/Installation of GEPP has been completed on the Virtual Server Environment provided by NITA at the Pilot Data Centre to host the GEPP e-Commerce platform. GEPP domain (epay.gov.gh) and secure web has been provided with all the requisite certificates (SSL Certificates).

2.7   Development of National Portal

NITA built a national portal where access to e-services can be accessed. A pilot to test this service was ran with 11 agencies consisting of Passport office, NCA, GTA, NIA, Mineral Commission GPS-CID, NITA, FDB, and Births & Deaths. The Ghana Integrated Financial Management System (GIFMIS) also runs on this e-Government Network. Currently there are about 70 MDAs nationwide connected to this platform through the e-Government network.

2.8 E-Immigration

The aim of the Ghana entry system for visitors is to manage the growth of visitor numbers in a cost-effective way through the use of cutting edge technology and to deliver a level of service consistent with the expectation of today's travellers. The deployment of an Integrated e-Immigration system, capable of regulating entry into and exit from Ghana, will not only provide a case management system for permit processing, but will also meet the current and future needs of the Ghana Immigration Service, as well as improve on the quality of service they offer to the public. This will also help regulate and monitor the activities of foreigners in relation to employment and residence.

Bid documents for the automation of the Airport, the land borders of Aflao and Elubo, as well as the Ghana Immigration Service Headquarters had been evaluated awaiting for feedback from the World Bank.

2.9 Deployment of Ghana Online Services

To enhance Ghana online services, a portal infrastructure was deployed to provide a platform for Content Management, Document Management, e-Forms and Service Integration as well as Information and Application Security for the various Government Agencies. The pilot phase of the project commenced in August 2012 with government agencies like the Drivers and Vehicle License Authority (DVLA), the Passport Office, National Information Technology Agency (NITA), National Identification Authority and the Minerals Commission. Additional MDAs that benefited from the pilot project are the Births and Deaths Registry, the Police CID, the Food and Drugs Board (FDB), Ghana Tourist Board, National Communications Authority (NCA) and Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA).

2.10 Pilot Data Centre infrastructure and Network Operating Centre

The construction of the Pilot Data Centre which started in August 2012 has been completed with the installation of all network and data communication equipment finalized. Integration of internet into the network core for redistribution to the MDAs had also been successfully done. The Data Centre and Network Operating Centre (NOC) are supporting the Government Network that will connect all MDAs, Regional Centres and District offices, Hospitals and the Police. NITA provided 24 MDAs with e-mail services. Additionally, 156 MDAs, Regional Centres & Districts had also been connected to the internet.

2.11 Data Protection Commission

The Ministry in 2012 established the Data Protection Commission subsequent to the enactment of the Data Protection Act, 2012, Act 843. It is expected that the Commission will build confidence in Ghana's ICT deployment and its application for electronic governance and cyber-security management.

2.12 Internet Registry

The Ministry in collaboration with the Global IPv6 Forum established an IPv6 Test Laboratory and innovation centre at the Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT. The main objective is to prepare for the eventual migration to the Internet addressing space when it becomes imminent. This way, data networks and systems across the country can enjoy a smooth transition without damages/interruptions.

2.13 Review of National ICT for Accelerated Development Policy

In response to technological and contemporary global developments, the Ministry reviewed the National ICT Policy to include issues of Broadband Policy; Cyber security Policy, ICT, Environment and Climate Change Policy; and Geo-Information Policy through an all-encompassing stakeholder consultation. The updated policy document was subsequently finalized and is ready for implementation in 2013.

2.14 National Digital Broadcasting Migration

In compliance with the Geneva 2006 (GE06) Agreement, a contract has been awarded for the implementation of the Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) Network Infrastructure. In addition to this, the National Digital

Broadcasting Migration Committee (DBMC) has completed the development of the Final Draft Minimum Specifications for the Free to Air (FTA) (DTT) Receivers (i.e. digital decoders and integrated TVs).To guide companies interested in investing in digital receivers and also prevent the importation of inferior products

2.15   Ghana Meteorological Agency (GMET)

The Ghana Meteorological Agency (GMet) modernized its weather observing systems at the airports by installing state-of-the-art Automatic Weather Surveillance Rader which was commissioned on 13th June 2012 at the Agency Headquarters by His Excellency the President John DramaniMahama, then Vice President.
Additionally, the Ministry continued its consultation process with the Attorney General's Department for the review of Act 682 to empower Ghana Meteorological Agency (GMet) to charge fees for commercial services rendered to the aviation industry so as to generate funds internally and become financially self-sustaining.

2.16   ICT Skills and Human Resource Development

The Ministry in collaboration with the EU, through AITI-KACE sponsored PASCAL Network of Excellence and Jozef Stefan Institute to establish an Artificial Intelligence laboratory which will support research and development at the university level in Ghana and the West African sub-region.

2.17   Expansion of Universal Access

To promote the policy of the availability of postal communications, as universal service rights of the citizenry in the country, the Ministry through Ghana Post is facilitating the construction of Community Information Centres / post offices across the country. So far sixty – six of such facilities are at various stages of completion. Some of the facilities have been provided Internet connectivity and being supported by GIFEC under the universality fund arrangement.

2.18   Development of Technology Park

In May 2012 the Hon. Minister for Communications commissioned and cut the sod for works on the Tema ICT Park Project to begin. The First Phase of the construction has been contracted to Berock Ventures Ltd. and is expected to be complete by July 2013.

3.0   EXPECTATIONS FOR 2013

This sector has developed a strong policy to facilitate improvement in communications infrastructure in order to attract investment for a number of ICT ventures. These include Internet service provision, software and IT hardware service development, and IT Enabled Services (ITES) ventures. To achieve these, the ministry will continue to focus on the following key policy areas in 2013.

3.1   Transparent and Accountable Government

The implementation of the e-application platforms to ensure transparent and accountable governance will continue by utilizing capacity from the National Communication Backbone Company.The Ministry will continue to pursue the formal establishment of Internet Governance Registry and will develop policy guidelines for the migration from IPV4 to IPV6. This is to create speedy and secure Internet service provision. In addition to this the Ministry, through KACE will use the Internet registry to provide training for MDAs, Internet Service Providers (ISPs), Regulatory Bodies and e-Government subscribers. The laboratory will also support the West African community with the provision of both physical and online access to IPv6 testing and migration planning facility. Furthermore, the facility will provide resources for researchers and student researchers in the field of IPv6 and the next generation Internet.

3.2 Construction of Data Centre

The National Data Centre is being constructed to serve as secure infrastructure for hosting and managing e-governance applications for different departments of government and deliver services quickly and effectively. The project, which is next door to KACE, is expected to be completed by June 2013.

3.3 Data Protection Commission

The Data Protection Act, 2012, Act 843provides for the establishment of the Data Protection Commission to protect the privacy of the individual and personal data by regulating the processing of personal information and also to obtain, hold, use or disclose personal information. The Commission is required to build confidence for Ghana's ICT deployment and its application for electronic governance and cyber-security management. In this regard, the Commission will this year begin a public education exercise to create awareness about the Data Protection Commission.

3.4 Construction of Innovation Centre

The Ministry will also pursue the Government policy to expand infrastructure to promote access to ICT. In this regard, the Ministry in 2013 will monitor the early completion of the ten e-innovation centres so as to facilitate the application of ICT learning and research.

3.5 Development of Technology Park

The Ministry of Communications is keen on encouraging Private Public Partnerships (PPPs) for the ICT Park Project and will ensure that sections of the Park will be released to ICT related entities in the Private Sector.

3.6 National Digital Broadcasting Migration

The Ministry will pursue the digital broadcasting migration programme. The national timetable for the completion of the analogue to digital broadcasting migration is December 2014; this means that we must commence the implementation as soon as possible to meet the dead line.

The MoC will embark on a nationwide publicity and communication campaign to educate the general public on the switchover to digital broadcasting to prevent panic buying of digital television sets. The Ministry will also intensify collaboration with the Ghana Standards Authority (GSA) and the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) of the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology to ensure that they are resourced and mandated to conduct receiver compliance testing for Free-to-Air Digital TV receivers after analogue switch-off to conform to the national standards.

3.7 ICT Skills and Human Resource Development

The Ministry will continue to pursue the policy of providing the needed support to make every citizen ICT literate. In this regard, the private sector is also being encouraged to develop core ICT skills in a regulated and accredited manner.

3.8 Legal framework

In order to foster investor confidence in the Ghanaian economy and also address issues relating to the increasing cyber-crimes in the country, the Ministry will prepare the necessary legal framework to govern the ICT industry.

3.9 Fibre Optic Broadband Backbone infrastructure on the Eastern Corridor

In line with the Government's commitment for accelerated development, access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has been identified as a necessity to advance this agenda. In this regard, the Ministry through the National Information Technology Agency (NITA) in collaboration with DANIDA, is facilitating the development of the Ho-Bawku stretch of the fibre optic infrastructure.

3.10 The vulnerable and excluded in ICT

The Ministry will promote the celebration of "Girls in ICT" programme as part of the activities marking the annual commemoration of the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day.

3.11 Child Online Protection (COP).

The Government of Ghana recognizes the important role the Internet is playing in the provision of quality education for children by enriching the curriculum and helping to bridge the digital divide between the served and un-served areas.

3.12 Distribution of laptops to Tertiary Institutions

In line with Government's commitment to promote an all-inclusive information and knowledge-based society to the benefit of the citizenry, this Ministry intends to distribute four hundred thousand laptops to tertiary institutions nationwide within the next four years. The beneficiaries of this initiative include the tertiary institutions, their students and lecturers.

3.13 The e-Ghana Project

The e-Ghana Project supported by the World Bank which is being implemented as an integral part of the Ministry will continue to use its Monitoring and Evaluation Unit to assist in project management, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the automation of revenue agencies through a PPP arrangement to help generate adequate revenue for government. In addition, the Project will ensure that the

- System installation of e-Immigration reaches an advanced stage of completion;
- System designs for e-Parliament, e-justice, e-procurement to be initiated;
- E-Services are up and running in eleven selected agencies;
- E-payment for selected government services is operational.

In all its discussions it was clear that the Ministry has delineated four thematic areas which it believes will enhance performance in the sector – **Putting People First, A Strong and Resilient Economy, Expanding Infrastructure and Transparent and Accountable Governance**. It is the sector's position that this focus can best be facilitated through the deployment and utilization of ICT as an enabler and driver of its entire agenda. Accordingly, the policies and programmes of the MoC have been structured in such a way that they will rapidly help to promote the advancing of Better Ghana and sub-Region.

3.0 ALLOCATIONS FOR 2013

For its 2013 activities, the Ministry has been allocated a total amount of **Fifty-Six Million, Nine Hundred and Sixty-Eight thousand, Three hundred and thirteen (GHC 56,968,313)**. This is made up of GHC 9,998,894.00 from GOG, GHC 898,880.00 from Internally Generated Funds, and GHC 46,070,539 from donor funds.

Table 1 – <u>2013 BUDGET ALLOCATION AND SOURCES OF FUNDING</u>

AGENCY /DEPT.	COMPENSATION OF EMPLOYEES	GOODS AND SERVICES	ASSETS	GOG TOTAL	IGF	DONOR	TOTAL
MOC HQ	499,990.00	399,527.00	2,346,086.00	3,245,603.00	4,494.00	0	3,268,135.00
KACE	871,002.00	127,361.00	323,467.00	1,321,830.00	92,585.00	0	1,749,135.00

GHANA METEO	3,474,741.00	100,357.00	647,333.00	4,222,431.00	152,630.00	0	4,922,009.00
POSTAL & COURIER SERVICES	137,311.00	60,226.00	92,419.00	289,956.00	43,146.00	0	488,839.00
NITA	234,792.00	80,933.00	514,280.00	830,005.00	606,025.00	0	3,600,805.00
INTERNAL AUDIT UNIT	23,060.00	6,009.00	60,000.00	89,069.00		0	89,069.00
TOTAL	5,240,896	774,413	3,983,585	9,998,894	898,880	46,070,539	56,968,313

5.0 OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Budgetary Allocations and Releases

The Committee observed that though the Ministry had requested an amount of GHC 3,973,400.00 for the compensation of employees in 2012, the amount of 8,118,696.00 was released by the MoFEP and all of it was used.

The Minister attributed this inflation of the compensation figures to the Single Spine Salary Structure. He informed Members that staff of the Ministry had finally been migrated onto the SSSS and, apart from the new salaries they received, were also paid all their arrears from 2009. Since the arrears have been settled, it is not expected that such a figure will be repeated this year.

5.2 Internally Generated Funds (IGF)

The Committee observed that the Communications sector had generated a lot of funds for the state, with the revenue from the clamp down on illegal termination alone amounting to about eighty-nine million Dollars ($89,000,000) The Ghana Broadcasting Corporation has also not been allocated any GoG funds, which means that it is now basically self-sufficient with its internally generated funds.

5.2.1 Meteorological Services

In the light of generating enough funds internally to ensure independence and less reliance on GoG allocations, the Committee noted that GMetcould make a lot of money from the services it renders to various entities, especially the Aviation sector.The Agency used IGF in the amount of GHC 689,649.00but the Committee observed that backed by dynamic legislation, the GMet was in the position to make much more which will wean it of its dependence There is however an urgent need to review and amend the Ghana Meteorological Agency Act, 2004, Act 682, so as to strengthen the Agency and, more importantly, compel of its key stakeholders and clients, like the Ghana Airport Company Limited to fulfill their financial obligations once the Agency has rendered them the vital services needed to ensure their smooth operations

5.2.2 Ghana-India Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT

The Committee observed, yet again, the immense potential of the Centre of Excellence to generate IGF having made more than GHC 541,227.00 during 2012. The Committee however noted that the Center is not allowed to use any of the funds for its operations except if items on which it is to be spent are income generating functions. Otherwise all its IGF goes to the Consolidated Fund.The Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT, Ghana's first advanced information technology institute was established in

2003 and has been engaged in capacity building to bridge the ICT human resource gap between academia, government and industry. This state-of-the-art facility provides a dynamic environment for market-oriented training of ICT professionals and also for developing the capacity to apply research and innovative technologies for socio-economic development within West Africa and beyond.

The Committee therefore recommends that as a matter of urgency, the Ministry must lay before Parliament and facilitate the passage of the **Ghana-India Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in Information and Communication Technology Bill** to guide the legal status of KACE.

5.3   Postal and Courier Service Regulatory Commission (PCSRC):

The Committee also observed that theMoC, in pursuance of its postal sector reforms and the objective to create a more liberalized and competitive postal and courier service environment, promoted the establishment of the Postal and Courier Services Regulatory Commission under the PCSRC Act 2003, Act 649, with the responsibility to license and regulate the operations of postal and courier services in Ghana. The passage by Parliament of the Postal and Courier Sector Regulations will therefore strengthen the Commission in making the industry more dynamic, effective and competitive especially in this era of technology application in postal service delivery.

In essence, the Committee is of the view that the Communications sector is doing well and improving by leaps and bounds in this Age of Information. It is however vital that the requisite laws and regulations are put in place to ensure dynamism and optimal performance by all Departments and Agencies. It is for this reason that the Committee recommends that the MoC must, as soon as possible, lay the necessary Bills and Regulations before Parliament so as to ensure the smooth running and sustainable growth of the Sector.

6.0   CONCLUSION

In the light of the foregoing, the Committee recommends that the House approve the total sum of **GH¢56,968,313** made up of **GH¢9,998,894** from GoG, **GH¢898,880** from Internally Generated Funds, and **GH¢46,070,539** from Donors, for the implementation of the Strategies and Policies of the Ministry of Communications for the 2013 Financial Year.

HON. HEROD COBBINA
CHAIRMAN

SHEBA NANA AFRIYIE OSEI
CLERK