



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

**REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON
COMMUNICATIONS**

ON THE

**2008 ANNUAL BUDGET ESTIMATES OF
THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND
NATIONAL ORIENTATION**

11TH DECEMBER 2007

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Annual Estimates of the Ministry of Information (MOI) were referred to the Select Committee on Communications for consideration and report in accordance with Order 140 (4) and 182 of the Standing Orders of the House. This followed the presentation of the Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government for 2008 to the House by the Hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, Mr. Kwadwo Baah-Wiredu (MP) in accordance with Article 179 of the Constitution and Order 140 (1) of the Standing Orders of the House.

In considering the referral, the Committee met on 3rd December 2007 to examine the Estimates. The Sector Minister, Mrs. Oboshie Sai Cofie accompanied by his Deputy Hon. Frank Agyekum led the team from the Ministry of Information and National Orientation and its agencies. Officials from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MOFEP) were also present.

The Committee is grateful to the Hon. Minister and her Deputy and all the officials for their kind assistance.

2.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- i. Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992.
- ii. The Standing Orders of the Parliament of Ghana.
- iii. The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2008 Financial Year.
- iv. Report of the Select Committee on Communications on the Annual Estimates of the Ministry of Information for 2007.

3.0 MISSION STATEMENT AND MEDIUM TERM OBJECTIVES

The Ministry of Information exists to ensure an effective two-way communication flow between government and its publics, through the development, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and activities towards socio-economic development.

In pursuit of this mission, the Ministry has five main objectives under its medium term plan:

- a. To strengthen institutional capacity for effective policy formulation and execution.
- b. To ensure free flow of public relevant information in pursuance of the policy of open government.
- c. To effectively and efficiently monitor and evaluate public responses to government policies, programmes and activities and provide timeous feedback to government.
- d. To provide human resource development programmes to facilitate increased efficiency in the media.
- e. To project the image of the country in collaboration with other government agencies, to attract foreign investment in consonance with government policy of promoting a Golden Age of Business.
- f. To facilitate the strengthening of patriotic attitudes for increased productivity in collaboration with publics of government.

4.0 AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS UNDER THE MINISTRY

The Ministry has responsibility for the following agencies and institutions.

- a. Information Services Department (ISD)
- b. Ghana News Agency (GNA)
- c. Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC)
- d. National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI)

5.0 PERFORMANCE IN 2007

A sum of ₵370,459,000,000 was approved by this Honourable House for the operations of the Ministry in 2007. The Ministry was able to carry out the following activities, among others:

- The Ministry in collaboration with other MDAs established a joint committee to facilitate the mainstreaming of Strategic Communication (Development Communication) in all their activities.
- The 2007 People's Assembly was organized at Sunyani during which a cross section of Ghanaians interacted with His Excellency, the President and his Ministers. This further demonstrated the tenets of good governance through accountability, transparency and

participatory democracy. Regional and District People's Assemblies were also organized throughout the country.

- Publicity and Education campaigns were undertaken on the 2007 Budget Statement, re-denomination of the cedi, the Avian Flu, the Domestic Violence Law, the National Health Insurance Scheme, the New Education Reform programme, the Capitation Grant Scheme and the celebration of Ghana @ 50.
- The Ministry has started the vernacularization of its programmes.
- Periodic Media interactions dubbed "media walk" were held with major media houses known as "Media Walk" to discuss a variety of government activities for clarification to enhance positive information dissemination by the media.
- The National Orientation concept was launched on Wednesday, 22nd August 2007 by the Ministry to bring about attitudinal change in Ghanaians by inculcating in them a sense of nationalism, unity, increased productivity and respect for national assets.
- Ministry of Communication, 42 Community Information Centres (CICs) were established. Two of these centres at Dodowa and Saltpond in the Dangbe West and Mfantseman West Districts respectively were successfully inaugurated.
- Regional and District Information Officers were also trained in ICT while some Journalists were also trained in e-Journalism.

6.0 OUTLOOK FOR 2008

6.1 Programmes

The Ministry has programmed to execute the following activities among others in 2008:

- A new Government Public Relations Unit would be established to involve all Government Spokespersons who would embark on vigorous regional tours, media interaction, radio and television talk shows.

- There will be intensive outreach programmes on the five National Orientation pillars through the electronic and print media. These will include TV and Radio talk shows, Drama, Handbills, Bill Boards, Cartoon Strips, Posters, Souvenirs and others.
- Six regional Peoples' Assemblies will be organized in regions which have not hosted the event since its inception.
- Weekly-meet-the-press and Peoples' Assembly will be translated into local languages.
- The Film, Photo and the Exhibition Units, the CICs and the District Information Officers will be refurbished.
- Three foreign Information Desks will be opened in three strategic regions to promote Ghana and attract Foreign Investment into Ghana.
- Special Developmental project magazines and calendars will be produced.
- Work will start on the modern office block of the Ministry at Kanda, where the photos exhibition section of ISD is situated.
- In view of the fact that new District Assemblies are to be created in 2008, the Ministry will procure 27 extra Cinema Vans and engage one hundred and twenty-seven personnel for the new District Information Offices made up of the following:

- 27 Assistant Information Officers
- 27 Journalists
- 27 Senior Information Assistants
- 27 Assistant Cinema Commentators
- 27 Secretaries
- 27 Mobil Cinema Operators

Administration

The Committee noted that the cost of maintaining and running ISD's fleet of operational vehicles of about 224, made up of 146 new cinema vans, 54 old cinema vans and 9 new pick-ups for the Regional Information Offices would affect Budget for 2008. However, there has not been a corresponding increase in the Administration vote of the Department to take care of the running cost and maintenance of the vehicles.

Service

The Committee was informed that to enhance the Department's operations in the regions and communities 74 District Information Offices would be opened throughout the country. Pursuant to its objective of projecting the image of the country abroad, three (3) new foreign Information Offices would be opened which would affect the total budget of the Agency in 2008. However the Agency would not be able to meet these obligations due to the short fall in its PE. The Committee would like to urge MOFEP to endeavour to meet this shortfall.

7.3 Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC)

The Ghana Broadcasting Corporation has been allocated an amount of eleven million, eight hundred and fifty two thousand eight hundred and twenty two Ghana cedis (**GH¢11,852,822.00**) for its operations in 2008. This includes an IGF component of GH¢8,575,190 projected to be collected and retained by the Corporation. The Committee expressed concern about the significant reduction in the Agency's IGF projection in its 2008 budget compared to 2007 which amounted to GH¢18,185,600. The Committee in reference to the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (Retention of Funds) Act, 2007, Act 735, noted that GBC was not permitted by law to retain its IGF and therefore urged the Ministry of Finance to regularise its retention in that regard.

TV Licence Fees

The Committee was informed that in view of the fact that ICT was the current trend of business in the sector, GBC among others would computerise its operations to meet its obligation. The Agency said this would have impact on the Elections and CAN 2008 since all

the Headquarters and regional stations would be linked together for easy flow of information. The Committee shared GBC's opinion that a new proposal for more realistic rates be charged to enable them accomplish their objectives and subsequently wean itself from Government Subvention.

The Committee was informed that MoFEP had met all justifiable obligations to GBC in respect of its outstanding subvention arrears of ₵13,000,000,000 covering 2002 – 2005 upon due confirmation by the Auditor-General. This was after a Committee sitting and consideration of the Ministry of Information and National Orientation's 2007 Budget Estimates in December 2006.

7.4 Ghana News Agency (GNA)

The Ghana News Agency (GNA) is a service organisation established with a mission to contribute to the political, social and economic development of Ghana through data gathering, processing and dissemination of relevant and valuable high quality news and information. The Department has been allocated GH₵1,393,056.00 for its operations in 2008.

A comparison of the 2008 Budget Projection of GH₵1,850,518.00 with its approved Ceiling of GH₵1,349,424.00 showed a decrease of GH₵501,094.00. According to the Department, the shortfall as indicated will affect their operations for 2008. The Committee was informed that this will also affect the Agency's objective to project the country's image in collaboration with other government agencies to attract foreign investment in consonance with government policy of promoting the Golden Age of Business. It will also affect the Departments intention to employ additional 10 drivers for its newly acquired vehicles which would increase its PE. The Committee noted that the total approved budget over the years had taken a downward trend which creates difficulties in the general administration as well as the operations of the Agency. The Committee would like to urge MOFEP to endeavour to meet this shortfall as the need arise.

Personnel Emoluments

The Committee was informed that GNA had acquired ten (10) vehicles for effective service delivery and expressed gratitude to the Select Committee for its efforts in the acquisition of

the vehicles. In view of this acquisition, GNA requires clearance from MOFEB to enable it employ the services of Ten (10) driver mechanics.

The Agency expressed serious concern about the paltry amount of GH¢1.50 pesewas which is currently being paid as allowance to stringers per story. The Committee shares the Agency's sentiments and recommends that the amount be revised upwards to enable the Agency pay realistic allowances to Stringers who form an essential link in information dissemination. This would motivate and encourage such stringers who normally gather their information from the remote areas for the Agency.

7.5 National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI)

The National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI) was established by SMCD 151 in 1978 to offer Professional Diploma Programmes in film and television production. Since 1999, however, the Institute has assumed a tertiary character and has now upgraded its Diploma programmes to a four-year Bachelor of Fine Art Degree in affiliation with the University of Ghana. The sum of **GH¢4,019,974.00** was allocated to the Agency.

Service Activities

The Committee was informed that the retention of highly qualified lecturers in the institute had been a great challenge as a result of lack of proper remuneration. The Agency would be compelled to drop or reduce its activities including staff training programmes, workshops and seminars due to the decrease in its proposed budget.

Investment Activity

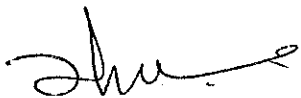
The Committee noted that construction work on the Studio Complex II at the Institute's site, had still not received Governments attention for the past ten (10) years. The Committee was informed that the Structural rehabilitation works when completed, would among others provide additional classrooms and students computer laboratories. However, the approved ceiling of GH¢275,000.00 for 2008 will compel NAFTI to re-prioritise its investment activities and forego its activity on the studio complex. Envisaged work on the studio complex shall therefore be stalled. Meanwhile, the Committee noted that the status of NAFTI as a tertiary

institution is still unresolved. An early resolution will qualify NAFTI to be a beneficiary of GETFUND. However, the Committee appeals to the Ministry of Information and Ministry of Education Science and Sports to make arrangements to ensure that NAFTI becomes a beneficiary of the GETFUND to support its investment activities.

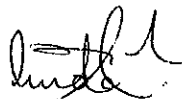
8.0 CONCLUSION

After a careful consideration of the justifications provided for the budget estimates, the Committee recommends that this Honourable House approves the sum of **forty seven million nine hundred and forty one thousand, six hundred and two cedis (¢47,941,602.00)** for the services of the Ministry of Information for the 2008 financial year.

Respectfully submitted.



Hon. Kojo Armah (MP)
Chairman



Linda Gyekye Boadu
Assist. Clerk

11th December 2007