

REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE
ON THE FEES AND CHARGES
(MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL,
2009

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Fees and Charges (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, 2009 was presented and *read the first time* in the House on Friday 11th December, 2009 and subsequently *referred* to the Finance Committee for consideration and report in accordance with the Constitution and Standing Orders of the House.

In considering the Bill, the Committee met with the Deputy Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, Hon. Seth Terkper, Heads of the relevant institutions, Director of the Non-Tax Revenue Unit (NTRU) and other officials of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and hereby submits this report.

2.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The Committee referred to and/or was guided by the following enactments in its consideration of the Bill

- The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana
- Financial Administration Act, 2003 (Act 654)
- The Standing Orders of the Parliament of Ghana

3.0 PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of the Bill is to provide for the regulation of fees and charges under various enactments and to provide for related matters.

4.0 CONTENTS OF THE BILL

The Bill contains a total of two (2) clauses and a schedule.

Clause 1 amends various enactments by listing various revenue items and substituting new fees and charges for existing fees and charges through the Schedule to the Bill.

Under *clause 2* of the Bill, the authority to determine the fees and charges in the various enactments is being transferred to the Minister responsible for Finance and Economic Planning. This clause further gives power to the Minister responsible for Finance and Economic Planning to amend the Schedule to the Bill by Legislative Instrument.

The SCHEDULE provides for the enactments that are being amended, the revenue items affected, the existing fees and charges applicable and the new (proposed) fees and charges.

5.0 OBSERVATIONS

The Committee observed that most of the fees and charges have not been reviewed for more than ten years.

In view of the rising level of the *cost of collection*, there is the need to revise the fees and charges to bring them in line with current economic trends.

Officials of the **Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA)** informed the Committee that some of the forms they currently issue to clients for **GH¢1.00** actually cost them **GH¢2.00** to print and hence the need to review the charges.

The Committee urged the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority to take appropriate steps to flush out middlemen (also known as 'Goro Boys') from their premises so that clients would deal directly with the Authority to ensure optimum collection of revenue and prevent situations where clients are issued with fake DVLA documents even though they have taken pains to visit the premises of the Authority.

Some Members were of the opinion that the increase in the fee for "*particular identification number*" from **GH¢1,000.00** to **GH¢3,000.00** could have the potential of discouraging clients from accessing that option and cause the DVLA to end up losing revenue in that enterprise.

The Committee was further informed that currently, the **Road Fund** is able to finance only 50% of the required road maintenance work. Increases in the rates of road and bridge tolls would therefore help to meet the rising cost of road maintenance in the country.

As to what accounts for the differences in the fees being charged by the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** in the country's missions in different countries, the Committee was informed that these fees are usually influenced by country-specific factors and the need for reciprocity and conformity with what other missions in those specific countries are doing.

The Committee requested the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to consider issuing *Diplomatic Passports* to Members of Parliament to facilitate their travels instead of the current *Service Passports* which are also used by staff and officials of MDAs.

Officials from the **Nurses and Midwives Council** informed the Committee that it has become necessary to issue temporary licenses to newly qualified nurses and midwives to authenticate and provide proof of their qualification pending the issuance of their actual certificate after one year.

Again, to help ensure the quality of health training institutions, *Professional Accreditation of health training schools* would henceforth cost two thousand, five hundred Ghana Cedis (**GH¢2,500.00**)

Officials from the **Food and Drugs Board (FDB)** informed the Committee that currently, Government grants the Board only **GH¢2,000.00** per quarter for its operations. In view of the rising cost of laboratories and chemicals needed for the operations of the Board, the fees and charges levied on clients would have to be increased.

The Committee noted that the registration fees charged by the **Criminal Investigations Department (CID)** for *shot guns* have been pegged at **GH¢10.00** for initial registration and **GH¢5.00** for renewal. This is aimed at encouraging rural folks to register their shot guns most of which are used for hunting expeditions.

Officials from the **Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS)** explained to the Committee that it has become necessary to increase the fees that it charges on hospitals, teaching/research institutions, clubs/discos, restaurants, petroleum/gas filling stations, manufacturing plants, churches, parks and stadia etc so as to be able to cover the cost of travel, inspection and certification for fire safety compliance.

It was noted that the fees charged by the **Births and Deaths Registry** are generally low because it is deemed a *social service* which should not cost much to access. The Committee was informed that the new levels of the fees are just to enable the Registry meet the cost of printing value papers and other incidentals. Registration of births under twelve (12) months is still free.

Members advised the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning to endeavour to review the fees and charges annually

as part of the budget process so as to avoid steep jumps after a long period.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The Committee's examination of the Bill found that its passage would help increase the level of Non-Tax Revenue through higher Internally Generated Funds (IGFs) of the beneficiary MDAs.

The Committee recommends to the House, in the light of the above observations, to **pass** the **Fees and Charges (Miscellaneous provisions) Bill, 2009**.

Respectfully submitted.



**HON. JAMES KLUTSE AVEDZI
CHAIRMAN**



**PEACE A. FIAWOYIFE (MS)
CLERK**

14TH DECEMBER, 2009

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