

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

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**REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE  
ON COMMUNICATIONS**

*ON THE*

**ANNUAL ESTIMATES OF THE  
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION**

*FOR*  
**2004**

*5<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2004*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Annual Estimates of the Ministry of Information (MOI) were referred to the Select Committee on Communications on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2004 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 to the House on the same day by the Hon. Minister of Finance, Mr. Yaw Osafo-Maafa (MP) in accordance with Article 179 of the Constitution and Order 140 (1) of the Standing Orders of the House.

1.2 The Committee held two sittings to examine the referral. The Hon. Minister of Information, Nana Akomea accompanied by officials of the Ministry and its agencies attended the sittings. The sittings were also attended by officials of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MOFEP).

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

## **2.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

- i. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana.
- ii. The Standing Orders of the Parliament of Ghana.
- iii. Message on the State of the Nation by H.E. the President to Parliament (22<sup>nd</sup> January 2004).
- iv. The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2004 Financial Year.

- v. Report of the Select Committee on Communications on the Annual Estimates of the Ministry of Information and Presidential Affairs for 2003

### **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 the following objectives under its medium term plan:

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

#### **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. Ghana Publishing Corporation (GPC)
- e. Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ)
- f. National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI)

The Ghana Publishing Corporation is non-subvented. As such, it does not draw funds from the Consolidated Fund for its operations.

#### **5.0 PERFORMANCE IN 2003**

A sum of ₵87,258,000,000 was approved by this Honourable House for the operations of the Ministry in 2003. Out of this ₵83,500,000,000 was actually released to the Ministry. However, the Ministry also accessed an additional amount of ₵8,570,000,000 from HIPC Relief and donor sources to supplement its budgetary provision. Therefore, altogether the Ministry was provided with about ₵92,073 billion. With this amount, the Ministry carried out the following activities, among others:

- Regular weekly interactions with the media on Tuesdays by Sector Ministers and Thursday Press Conferences by the Hon. Minister for Information to throw light on current issues.
- Production of various audio-visual documentaries by the ISD for public education and outreach programmes.
- Acquisition of various equipment including four new Cinema Vans for the ISD.
- Sensitization programmes on the Right-to-Information Bill.

- Award of contract for the modernization of GBC's transmission networks.
- Implementation of a Development Communication Enhancement Programme to increase the flow of information on Government policies and programmes.
- Enhancement of the Ghana Government website [www.ghana.gov.gh](http://www.ghana.gov.gh) with more links to various MDAs.

The Ministry emphasized that, in spite of the shortfall in the release of its approved annual estimates, the release of funds in 2003 from the Treasury was very regular.

## **6.0 OUTLOOK FOR 2004**

This year, the Ministry will execute the following activities;

- Mainstreaming of Development Communication (Devcom) in all programmes and projects of MDAs will be pursued to promote the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS).
- Public sensitization on the GPRS programme and its achievements in collaboration with NDPC and other MDAs.
- Strengthening ISD's operations in the regions, districts and communities under the Devcom Programme to enhance outreach programmes in 2004.
- Weekly Meet-the-Press for Ministers.
- Regional Ministerial briefing sessions with the media and Photo Exhibitions on regional development and PSI Projects.
- Regional Verification Tours for media executives in conjunction with the GJA.

- Establishment of Information Desks at all Ghana Missions abroad without ISD offices.
- Facilitate the passage of the Right-to-Information Bill.

## 7.0 ANNUAL ESTIMATES FOR 2004

The Ministry has been allocated a sum of **Eighty-three billion, five hundred and three million cedis (¢83,503,000,000)** for its administration and development expenses in 2004. A breakdown of this by agency and item of expenditure is as in Table 1 below.

MDA	Personnel Emoluments	Administration	Service	Investment	TOTAL
Headquarters	511,624,028	3,382,000,000	7,285,200,000	1,350,000,000	<b>12,528,824,024</b>
ISD	11,808,097,419	3,700,000,000	3,866,200,000	900,000,000	<b>20,274,297,433</b>
GNA	5,267,311,744	2,000,000,000	1,816,200,000	750,000,000	<b>9,833,511,744</b>
GIJ	1,992,906,822	800,000,000	531,200,000	800,000,000	<b>4,124,106,822</b>
NAFTI	4,006,731,433	1,150,000,000	1,501,200,000	700,000,000	<b>7,357,931,433</b>
GBC	29,384,328,540	-	-	-	<b>29,384,328,540</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52,971,000,000</b>	<b>11,032,000,000</b>	<b>15,000,000,000</b>	<b>4,500,000,000</b>	<b>83,503,000,000</b>

- Table 1 – Budget Allocations by MDA and Item of Expenditure

It is notable that 76.6% of the total estimates of the Ministry is for overhead costs (P. E. plus Administration). Even though, this is an improvement on last year's 82.2% for the same overheads, more needs to be done by the Ministry to shift more resources into its service and developmental activities so that its role in the public policy process would be more meaningful.

## **8.0 OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **8.1 Ministry's Headquarters**

The Committee observed that in view of the current policy direction of the Ministry, its requirement for investment activities, particularly, is quite high. Indeed, the Ministry after a careful re-prioritization of its needs, requires an additional provision of ₦11,025,190,000 for the acquisition of motor vehicles (including cinema vans) and equipment for ISD and GNA.

It is the Committee's view that these are critical requirements of the Ministry that would enable it achieve its expected outputs for the year. The Committee therefore strongly recommends that the MOFEP should endeavour to consider the request during the year possibly from the HIPC Relief.

The Committee also observed that the provision for personnel emoluments generally fell short of the requirements of the various agencies. Even though, officials of MOFEP explained that the provision was based on the actual expenditure incurred in 2003 plus some top up, the Committee recommends that the MOFEP should meet with the various agencies to resolve the discrepancies.

### **8.2 Information Services Department (ISD)**

The Information Services Department is government's major public relations organization. The Department has been provided with the sum of **twenty billion, two hundred and seventy-four million, and two hundred and ninety-seven thousand, four hundred and thirty three cedis (₦20,274,297,433)** for its operations this year.

Among others, the Committee noted a shortfall of ₵1,600,000,000 in the provision for the ISD that will directly affect the Administration of its overseas offices in London and Washington D.C. It is the view of the Committee that the policy of attracting external investment in the economy makes a strong case for resourcing these offices adequately.

The Committee also observed that ISD has rented out some or parts of properties to private commercial enterprises at very low rent. Even so, some of the sitting tenants have outstanding rent. This year, for instance, ISD projects to collect rent amounting to ₵59,000,000. The Committee recommends to the ISD to revise its rent to prevailing market levels. The Department should also endeavour to collect all outstanding rents owed by its tenants.

### **8.3 Ghana News Agency (GNA)**

The Ghana News Agency contributes to the political, social and economic development of the nation through data-gathering, processing and dissemination of relevant news. The Agency has been provided with the sum of **nine billion, eight hundred and thirty-three million, five hundred and eleven thousand, seven hundred and forty-four cedis (₵9,833,511,744).**

The Committee observed that apart from motor vehicle requirements, that has been mentioned above (paragraph 1 of 8.1), GNA requires ₵200,000,000 to fund its service activities.

The Committee further noted that GNA is still in the process of restructuring to gradually wean it from government subvention. In this



regard; discussions are continuing under the Public Sector Reform Programme on how to proceed with its re-engineering programme. For the time being, however, it is important that the Agency is provided with reasonable resources to enable it stay afloat.

The Committee also noted that as is the case of the ISD, GNA has also rented some or parts of its properties to private organizations at rent that are below prevailing market levels. The Committee advises that immediate steps should be taken to revise and collect appropriate rent so that the taxpayer does not continue to subsidize the operations of private enterprises.

#### **8.4 Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC)**

The Ghana Broadcasting Corporation has been provided with an amount of **twenty-nine billion, three hundred and eighty-four million, three hundred and twenty-eight thousand, five hundred and forty cedis (¢29,384,328,540)**. The provision is meant for only personnel emoluments. The Committee observed that the provision falls short of GBC's request of **thirty eight billion cedis (¢38,000,000,000)**. After some discussions, however, officials of MOFEP assured the Committee that if GBC is able to prove that the ¢9,000,000,000 shortfall is actually needed for salaries, appropriate steps would be taken to top up the provision in the course of the year.

Some members of the Committee expressed the view that GBC was not generating enough from its internal sources and urged management to work harder to completely wean the Corporation off government subvention.

The Committee observed that the satellite transmission project has commenced with the arrival of equipment for installation in the country. Approval has also been granted for the studio rehabilitation project. The Committee urges the Ministry to ensure that adequate funds are made available for an uninterrupted execution of the contract.

#### **8.5 Ghana Institute Of Journalism (GIJ)**

The Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ) has been provided with an amount of **four billion, one hundred and twenty-four million, one hundred and six thousand, eight hundred and twenty-two cedis (¢4,124,106,822).**

The Committee noted that the turnover of staff, especially the academic staff, is high as a result of the relatively poor conditions of service. The present salary structure has also made it difficult for the Institute to recruit the minimum number of lecturers with the requisite qualifications for its degree programmes. Furthermore, the Committee observed that the non-release of funds for the completion of the ground floor of the Institute's classroom block at its new site is a major concern.

Whilst arrangements are underway to transfer the Institute to the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports to enable it benefit from the GET Fund, among other reasons, the Committee recommends that it must be reasonably funded in the current financial year.

#### **8.6 National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI)**

The mission of NAFTI is to produce film and television professionals to promote socio-economic development. The Institute proposed an estimate

of ₵9,627,081,798 but a sum of **seven billion, three hundred and fifty-seven million, nine hundred and thirty-one thousand four hundred and thirty-three cedis (₵7,357,931,433)** has been allocated.

The Committee found that NAFTI's major concern is over the acquisition of the building housing its Studio 1 and the construction of a pantry for the Student's Hostel. The Committee noted that the building housing the Institute's Studio 1 is owned by a private person who has agreed to sell it to the Institute at the cost of ₵1,800,000,000. The construction of the pantry is also estimated at ₵400,000,000.

In the view of the Committee, whilst the construction of the pantry can be funded from the Institute's investment provision of ₵700,000,000, it is imperative and urgent that a special arrangement is made for the acquisition of the property to forestall a possible ejection of the Institute from the premises.

More importantly, the Committee recommends that Government should endeavour to improve the general conditions of service and infrastructure of both the GIJ and NAFTI to render their legal status as tertiary institutions more meaningful.

#### **8.7 Ghana Publishing Corporation (GPC)**

The Assembly Press in Accra is the only remaining press of the GPC. The Committee noted that it is non-subsidized and in the process of transformation into a limited liability company to render it more competitive.

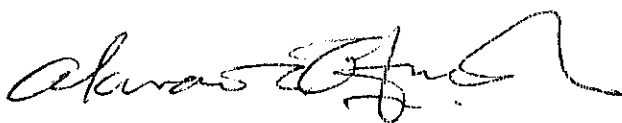
To enhance the fortunes of the Corporation during the transformation period, the Committee appeals to organizations in both the public and private sector to endeavour to patronize its services in publishing, printing and distribution of educational and information materials.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the Committee shares the view that the use of Development Communication policy to promote an interactive and decentralized communication, using modern processes and technology to change attitudes and encourage local ownership of government programmes constitute the crust of the Ministry's operational strategy.

After a careful consideration of the justifications provided, the Committee recommends that this Honorable House approve the sum of **eighty-three billion, five hundred and three million cedis (¢83,503,000,000)** for the administration and development expenses of the Ministry of Information for the 2004 financial year.

Respectfully submitted.



**Mr. Akwasi AFRIFA (MP)**

**Chairman**



**Frederick K. NUTSUGAH**

**Clerk to the Committee**

5<sup>th</sup> March 2004