

# THE REPORT OF THE SPECIAL BUDGET COMMITTEE ON THE FIRST AND QUARTERS BUDGETARY PERFORMANCE OF THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION AND THE ROAD MAP TO ELECTION 2020

## 1.0. INTRODUCTION

The Special Budget Committee met with the Electoral Commission on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 in Parliament and deliberated on the second quarter performance of the Electoral Commission and the roadmap to election 2020.

The delegation of the Electoral Commission was led by the Chairperson, Mrs. Jean Mensah who was supported by the two Deputy Commissioners and other officials of the Commission and reported as follows:

## 2.0 PRESENTATION BY THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

The Electoral Commission informed the Committee that the Commission is poised to deliver Free, Fair and Transparent elections notwithstanding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which has delayed the timely take-off of some of the activities of the Commission.

The Commission further explained that most of the activities of the Commission for the 2020 financial year relate to the conduct of the 2020 General Elections. The activities include:

- a. The procurement of modernised Biometric Voter Solutions
- b. Procurement of registration and exhibition materials
- c. Replacement of the Voter Register
- d. Exhibition of the Voter Register

- e. Nomination of Candidates
- f. Conduct of the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections
- g. Gazetting of the Election Results.

To implement this program, an amount of **GH¢1,334,257,568** is required. However, the Ministry of Finance, based on its ceilings allocated an amount of **GH¢1,063,157,629** to the Commission to finance its activities in 2020 resulting in a budget shortfall of **GH¢271,099,939**.

For the first half of 2020, the Chairperson informed the Committee that the Commission has undertaken a number of activities namely:

- a. Gazetted CI 126 for the conduct of the registration exercise
- b. Gazetted district Registration Centres
- c. Commenced the Construction of Data Centre which is about 70% complete.
- d. Commenced the construction of Disaster Recovery Centre
- e. Recruited 42,623 temporary staff and 201 permanent Staff
- f. Procured and dispatched to the regions, the under listed quantities of registration materials:
  - i. 20,000,000 Special Registration Form (Form A1)
  - ii. 20,000,000 Registration Forms (Form 1C)
  - iii. 20,000,000 Cold Laminates
  - iv. 128,000 Thumb Print Pads
  - v. Various Quantities of Stationary
  - vi. 33,030,000 Other registration Forms – Challenge Forms, Guarantee Forms, Irregularity at Registration Centre Forms
  - vii. 180,400 Directional Posters

- g. The Commission has also procured the following quantities of Biometric Voter Management Equipment :

SN	Item	Quantity Procured
	Biometric Voter Registration Kits	8,000
	Removable Media (Micro SD 32 GB)	75,000
	District Kit PC + Printer + Catridges	270
	Adjudication Station PC	20
	Adjudication Station	4
	Removable Media Duplicator	16
	Voter Verification Device	75,000
	HP 63XL Printer Cartridges for BVR	10,000 pairs

- h. Conducted 16 Regional Training of Trainers Workshop for Registration Officials
- i. The Commission is in the process of conducting 267 Training for Registration Officials at the District Level
- j. Conducted two (2) Inter Party Advisory Committee meetings.

The Commission explained that, in order to ensure value for money, the Commission adopted international and National Competitive Tendering processes for the procurement of registration, exhibition and election materials. A bulk purchasing strategy was also adopted for the procurement of all materials required for all electoral activities. This has also largely ensured that the Commission obtained value for money and procured materials at competitive prices.

### 3.0 BUDGET PERFORMANCE

The Chairperson informed the Committee that, as at 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2020, the Commission has received an amount of GH¢401,027,953.93 out of its 2020 budget allocation of GH¢1,063,157,629.00 representing 37.72% of its allocation. She explained that, the Ministry of Finance has already issued a warrant for an additional amount of GH¢361,315,920.85 which is yet to be released. Summary of the Budget performance as at 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020 is presented below:

Table 2: Electoral Commission Budget Performance as at 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2020

<b>Economic Classification</b>	<b>2020 Approved Budget (GH¢) (A)</b>	<b>Amount released as at 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 (GH¢) (B)</b>	<b>Amount Received as at 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 (GH¢)</b>	<b>Variance (A-B)</b>
Compensation	58,257,629	28,737,801.89	28,737,801.89	29,519,827.11
Goods and Services	512,893,954	320,782,189.30	199,363,327.40	192,111,764.70
CAPEX	492,006,046	352,321,716.96	172,926,824.64	139,684,329.04
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,063,157,629</b>	<b>701,841,708.15</b>	<b>401,027,953.99</b>	<b>361,315,920.85</b>

Source: Electoral Commission Presentation to the Special Budget Committee, June 2020

The Chairperson informed the Committee that the Commission commenced the process of procurement of Biometric Voter Solutions in 2019. Unfortunately, the Commission was unable to commit resources before the end of the 2019 financial year.

The Special Budget Committee in its report on the 2020 Estimates of the Electoral Commission requested the Ministry of Finance to ring-fence the sum of GH¢329 million to enable the Commission meet its commitments under the Biometric Voter Solution Management System. The Ministry of Finance, unfortunately has not yet honoured this request.

In order to meet its capital expenditure commitments, the Commission therefore requested the Ministry of Finance to reallocate an amount of GH¢200,000,000 from its Goods and Services Budget into CAPEX to enable the Commission meet its commitments under the Biometric Voter Solution Management System

#### **4.0. Challenges of the Commission**

The main challenges of the Commission for the period under review are:

- a. Delays in the implementation of planned activities due to the impact of COVID-19. The Chairperson explained to the Committee that the Commission planned to commence voter registration exercise in April but the impact of COVID-19 on public gathering and the supply chain has compelled the Commission to postpone commencement of the registration exercise to the 30th June, 2020.

- b. Funding Gap of GH¢329 million for planned activities for 2019/2020
- c. Late and delayed release of Funds
- d. Increase in the Commission's Budget because of the need to procure PPEs' and other safety protocol for both registration officials and other participants in the voter registration exercise and, possibly, in the voting exercise in respect of both presidential and general elections.
- e. The Ministry of Finance would have to make provision in the supplementary estimates to take care of this expenditure

The Commission assured the Committee that measures have been put in place to ensure the safety of staff and persons who will be participating in the up-coming registration exercise.

The Commission outlined a number of measures the Commission intends to put in place to engender confidence in the public about the safety at the registration centres. These include the provision of face mask, assistance of Community Health Workers in taking temperatures and observance of physical distancing protocols.

The Commission further explained that registration officials would be provided with PPEs including face shields and nose masks, veronica buckets and alcohol-based sanitizers at the entry and exit points of every registration centre. Registration officials would, additionally, be provided with alcohol-based wipes for the cleaning of the scanners and biometric devices after each use.

The Commission is also working with the Ghana Police Service to assist in the implementation of the protocols in addition to the provision of

security. She added that the Commission has put in place an elaborate education programme to guide citizens on the safety protocols at the registration centres. She assured the Committee that the registration process would be peaceful, orderly and safe for all participants.

#### 4.1. Detail Reschedule of Activities

The Committee noting the delays in the commencement of the programme of the Electoral Commission due to various reasons requested the Commission to provide it with the final schedule of its activities culminating in the December 2020 elections.

The Commission informed the Committee that the Commission has rescheduled its activities as follows:

**Table 3:** Rescheduled Activity programme of the Electoral Commission

SN	Activity	Timeline	No of Days
1	Registration of Voters	30 <sup>th</sup> June – 6 <sup>th</sup> August, 2020	38 Days
2	District Registration Review Committee	22 <sup>nd</sup> July – 10 <sup>th</sup> Augt, 2020	20 days
3	Exhibition of Voters Register	11 <sup>th</sup> Sept. – 18 <sup>th</sup> Sept., 2020	8 Days
4	Opening and Filing of Nominations	5 <sup>th</sup> Oct. – 9 <sup>th</sup> Oct., 2020	5 Days
5	Printing and Distribution of Final Voters Register	14 <sup>th</sup> Oct. – 22 <sup>nd</sup> Nov., 2020	
6	Transfer of Votes	Date yet to be determined	

The Commission informed the Committee that, they intend to present a new CI to amend the present provision of the law which requires persons intending to transfer their votes to have lived in the new community for a minimum of one year in the area they intend to transfer their votes. This was necessary in the particular case of students most of whom are currently at home and accordingly, may register in their various residential locations, but who may need to transfer their votes to schools to enable them to vote.

On the issue of Proxy voting, the Commission said the proxy voting would also be considered alongside the transfer though it may not require a change in legislation.

#### **4.2. Cost of Various Procurement Activities Undertaken by the Commission**

The Committee requested the Commission to provide it with the cost of the various procurement activities undertaken so far. The Chairperson of the Commission explained that under the previous vendor, an amount of US\$15 million was required for the refurbishment of the existing data centre. However, the Commission entered into a new agreement for the construction of a new Data Centre and Disaster Recovery Site at a total cost of US\$ \$ 7.3 million comprising US \$ 6.1 Million for the new Data Centre and US \$1.2 million for the Recovery Centre.

The Commission is in the process of engaging a contractor for maintenance and who has so far quoted an amount of US\$1.3 million as maintenance fee for three years as compared to a maintenance fee of US\$4.0 million per year for the 7-year period between 2012 and 2018 under the previous vendor. The Commission stated that this arrangement would save the Nation some US\$3.6 million each year on just the cost of maintenance alone.



The Commission also informed the Committee that it has procured software at the cost of US\$4.3 million with a maintenance fee of US\$629,000 per annum. This brings the total cost of the software, maintenance, training and technical support to US\$4.936 million.

The Chairperson informed the Committee that a total amount of US\$54,180,000 was spent on procurement of hardware. Additionally, an amount of US\$5,520,000 would be expended on training, maintenance and technical support. This bring the Total cost of hardware to US\$59,700,000.

Upon the request of the Committee, the Chairperson assured that the Commission would be prepared to avail information on the scope of work of the old Data Centre and the new Data Centre as well as the Disaster Recovery Centre being built now.

The Chairperson indicated that the Commission has engaged the services of Tallys for the supply of the hardware for which an advance payment of US\$28 million has been made. Persol Systems Limited and Neurotech Technologies are providing the Data Centre and the Software respectively.

The Commission informed the Committee that it has procured the new enhanced Biometric Registration kits at the cost of US\$3,423 per unit compared to US\$ 5,250 of the old Biometric Registration kit which has a lower capacity under the previous vendor.

Again, the Commission is procuring the new enhanced Biometric Verification Devices at a cost of US\$336 a piece compared to US\$917 per

piece under the previous vendor. The Commission assured the Committee that the new equipment are available for inspection.

#### **4.3. Limited Registration**

On the Number of persons the Commission has added to the electoral roll through the limited voter registration, the Commission informed the Committee that the Commission conducted limited registration in some selected districts in 2018 and this added about 47,000 persons to the voter register. However, the nationwide limited voter registration conducted in 2019 added some 1, 210,000 bringing the total of about 1, 257,000 new entrants to the voters roll.

#### **4.4. Procurement of PPEs**

On whether the Commission has procured PPEs the Chairperson responded in the affirmative. She informed the Committee that the Commission had to procure PPEs by viring from its budget allocation under office supplies and consumables as Covid-19 was not envisaged at the time of the budget.

#### **4.5. Use of NIA Data**

Responding to a question on what informed a shift in the Commission's earlier position presented to the Special Budget Committee on the use of at NIA data, the Chairperson informed the Committee that, at the time of the budget in November, 2019, the NIA had dealt with only Four Million citizens and that was the reason why the Commission at the time stated that it could not rely on the NIA. However, the Chairperson of the Commission stated that even in November the position of the

Commission was that if the NIA improved, they could rely on the cards issued by the NIA as a means of identification and proof of nationality.

In response to a question on the use of the data of the NIA, the Chairperson of the EC stated that the EC is not in a position to connect with the data base of the NIA.

On the measures the Commission has put in place to ensure that the cards presented for registration are genuine and authentic, and whether the Commission has any means of verifying the authenticity of the cards presented, the Commission explained that it would collaborate with the officials of the Passport Office and the NIA to train registration officials and political party representatives on all the physical features of the Ghana card and the Ghana Passport. The Commission was hopeful that the participation of political party officials would ensure that any person using a suspicious card would be challenged.

The Committee Members expressed the view that, visual examination alone of the cards may not be enough mechanism to ensure that fake cards are not presented for registration.

The Committee therefore urged the Electoral Commission to liaise with the National Identification Authority and the Passport Office to possibly provide a means of accessing their database to enable them instantly verify the authenticity of Ghana cards and Passports presented for voter registration by the use of technology.

#### **4.6. Procurement of Registration Materials**

On the possibility of shortage and security of materials and failure of equipment as well as distribution list, as happened in earlier voters registration and voting exercises the Commission assured the Committee that the registration forms have security features including serial numbers which would make extremely it difficult indeed, almost impossible to duplicate. The Commission also assured that has a distribution list for its electoral materials.

The Commission further explained that it does not anticipate shortages in the electoral materials. However, the printers are local printers and will be on standby to print more forms when the need arose. On measures put in place to minimise the adverse effect of equipment failure, the Commission explained that about 497 technicians shall be on standby to address challenges with the kits. It was further explained that repair of faulty registration equipment will now be done at two locations (Accra for the Southern Zone and Kumasi for the Northern zone) to ensure timely repairs of equipment.

Further, the Commission assured to provide spare kits which would be readily available as backup to replace faulty kits instead of repairing them to cause any stagnation in the registration process at any particular centre.

#### **4.7. Pilot Registration and Performance of Registration Kits**

On the challenges encountered during the pilot registration, the Commission informed the Committee that it used the newly acquired enhanced biometric Registration kits during the pilot registration. The Commission explained that the purpose of the pilot registration was to

test the performance of the registration kits in the field prior to the nationwide roll out. Addressing concerns about delays in the registration process, the Chairperson of the Commission explained that the registration kits were expected to register a maximum of 100 persons per day at peak performance. However during the pilot, an average of 83 persons were registered per day. She explained that the pilot registration was conducted for 8 hours each day from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

On the measure they have put in place to ensure that every person get registered at polling stations with large numbers, the Commission explained that the main registration is expected to last for 11 hours i.e from 7:00 am to 6:00pm, an average of 100 persons per day is expected. The Commission was of the view that the pilot registration exercise was very successful. The only challenge encountered was the failure of one registration kit.

#### **4.8. Full Complement of Machines**

On whether the Commission has the full complement of equipment for a nationwide roll out of the registration exercise, the Commission informed the Committee that, registration will be conducted in phases beginning with 6,750 registration centres.

The Committee was informed that the registration will be done in clusters with each district divided into five clusters and each phase covering 6,700 registration centres. On what program the Commission has put in place to ensure persons quarantined or locked-out outside the country due to the closure of the country's borders to enable them register, the Commission explained that the Commission will work with the GHS to register persons under quarantine. For persons stranded outside the

country, the Commission said Mop-ups would be done and they hoped those outside the country would have returned by then, to be covered.

On what the Commission intends to do to ensure the implementation of ROPAA, The Deputy Commission hinted that the Commission is working on a new CI which will be laid in Parliament. If it is passed, the Commission would act to implement the ROPAA.

#### **4.9. Financing The Commission**

The Chairperson explained that funding is the greatest challenge of the Commission. Sometimes the Commission is unable to access funds from the Controller after the issuance of a warrant from the Ministry of Finance.

#### **4.10. Procurement of Operational vehicles**

The Chairperson informed the Committee that the Commission has procured 6 haulage trucks for the new regions, 65 pick-up trucks to augment its fleet, provided all regional directors and deputies with new vehicles and some senior staff at the head office.

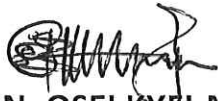
#### **5.0. CONCLUSION**

The Committee is generally satisfied with the level of preparedness of the Electoral Commission for the conduct of the voter registration exercise and the 2020 Presidential and General Elections. The Committee however noted that the Commission is operating with a very tight schedule and urged the Commission to strictly adhere to its roadmap to ensure a successful voter registration exercise. The Committee therefore strongly urges the Finance Minister to ensure the release of the outstanding **Gh¢329million** carried from 2019 to enable the Commission provide all

relevant equipment and devices for the successful conduct of the Election 2020.

It is important to state that the Minority Leader on behalf of the Minority Members on the Committee stated for the record that the official position of the NDC remains that the party is against any new wholesale registration exercise.

Duly Submitted.



**HON. OSEI KYEI-MENSAH-BONSU  
MAJORITY LEADER & CHAIRMAN**



**INUSAH MOHAMMED (MR.)  
CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

