

PARLIAMENT OF GHANA LIBRARY

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



**REPORT OF THE
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS**

ON THE

**2020 ANNUAL BUDGET ESTIMATES OF
THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS**

Acc No 955 G
Class No BF1 M02/20

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS ON THE 2020 ANNUAL BUDGET ESTIMATES OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Hon. Minister for Finance, Mr. Ken Ofori-Atta, presented the Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government for the 2020 Financial Year to Parliament on Wednesday, 13th November 2019, in accordance with Article 179 of the 1992 Constitution. Pursuant to Order 140(4) and 182 of the Standing Orders of the House, the Rt. Hon. Speaker referred the Annual Budget Estimates of the Ministry of Communications to the Committee on Communications for consideration and report.

The Committee subsequently met with the Hon. Minister for Communications, Mrs. Ursula Owusu-Ekuful and her team on Monday, 9th December 2019, and considered the referral. Officials of the Ministry of Finance were in attendance to offer clarifications. The Committee is grateful to the Hon. Minister and her team and officials from the Ministry of Finance for their cooperation.

2.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The Committee made reference to the following documents during the deliberations:

- i. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana.
- ii. The Standing Orders of Parliament.
- iii. The Programme Based Budget Estimates of the Ministry of Communications for year 2019.
- iv. The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2019 Financial Year.
- v. The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2020 Financial Year.

3.0 MISSION STATEMENT

The Ministry exists to facilitate the development of reliable and cost effective world-class communications infrastructure and services, driven by

appropriate technology innovations and accessible by all citizens to enhance the promotion of economic competitiveness in knowledge-based environment.

4.0 **POLICY OBJECTIVES**

The policy objectives of the Ministry are to:

- i. Improve Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure in rural areas.
- ii. Promote electronic transactions for public and private businesses.
- iii. Provide access to electronic public information and services.
- iv. Mitigate the impacts of climate variability and change.
- v. Ensure adequate digital capability to support production and use of ICT for development.

5.0 **IMPLEMENTING DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

The under-listed Agencies and Institutions are responsible for the execution of the policies and programmes of the Ministry:

1. Ghana Meteorological Agency.
2. Data Protection Commission.
3. Ghana-India Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT.
4. National Information Technology Agency.
5. Postal and Courier Services Regulatory Commission.
6. Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communications.
7. National Communications Authority.
8. Ghana Post Company Limited.

6.0 **PERFORMANCE FOR YEAR 2019**

6.1 To implement its programmes and activities for year 2019, the Ministry of Communications was allocated a total amount of **One Hundred and Forty-Seven Million, Two Hundred and Sixty-Eight Thousand, Six Hundred and Seven Ghana Cedis, (GH¢147,268,607.00)** comprising GH¢24,001,176.00 for compensation, GH¢7,841,486.00 for Goods and Services, and GH¢115,425,945.00 for Capital Expenditure (CAPEX).

Table 1 shows a summary of expenditure by Economic Classification as at October 2019.

Table 1

Summary of Financial Performance by Economic Classification as at October 2019

Item	2019 Budgetary allocation (GH¢)	Releases as at October 2019 (GH¢)	Actuals as at 31 st October 2019 (GH¢)	Variance as at 31 st October 2019 (GH¢)	Utilisation as % of budget
Compensation	24,001,176.00	13,926,996.14	13,542,087.72	10,459,088.28	56.42%
Goods and Services	7,841,486.00	7,629,127.62	6,106,841.47	1,734,644.68	77.88%
CAPEX	115,425,945.00	78,712,902.57	63,172,731.71	52,253,213.29	54.73%
Total	147,268,607.00	100,269,026.33	82,821,660.00	64,446,946.10	56.24%
		68.09%	82.60%		

Source: Ministry's Presentation on Year 2019 Performance

6.2 Table 1 shows that as at 31st October 2019, an amount of GH¢100,269,026.33 representing 68.09% of the total budgetary allocation has been released. A total amount of GH¢82,821,660.90 representing 82.60% out of the amount released had been expended as at October 2019. The Ministry also expended 56.42% of the amount released on Compensation, 77.88% on Goods and Services and 54.73% on Capital Expenditure (CAPEX). The Ministry explained that the huge variance for Compensation is due to the fact that the National Information Technology Agency (NITA) and the Ghana- India Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT (GI-KACE), are processing newly recruited staff unto their pay roll. The non-release of GoG funds for CAPEX also accounts for the huge variance. Table 2 shows a summary of the financial performance by sources of funding as at October 2019.

Table 2

Summary of Financial Performance by Sources of Funding as at October 2019

ITEM	2019 Budget (GH¢)	Releases at 31 st Oct. 2019(GH¢)	Actuals as at 31 st Oct., 2019 (GH¢)	Variance as at 31st Oct, 2019	Utilization as % of Budget
GoG	31,457,512.00	15,682,241.44	15,014,990.88	16,442,521.12	47.73
IGF	10,933,065.00	8,444,159.69	5,581,627.00	5,351,438.00	51.05
Donor	104,878,030.00	76,142,625.20	61,955,043.00	42,922,987.00	59.07
Total	147,268,607.00	100,269,026.33	82,821,660.88	64,446,946.12	56.24

Source: Ministry's Presentation on Year 2019 Performance

6.3 The Committee noted that as at October 2019, actual expenditure stood at GH¢82,821,660.90 leaving a variance of GH¢64,446,946.10. The Ministry in explaining the variance indicated that some Agencies could not generate enough funds internally as projected. The Ministry further explained that Development Partner (Donor) funds are paid to contractors based on deliverables. The Development Partner funded projects are awaiting performance certificates to effect payment.

6.4 Notwithstanding the financial challenges encountered, the Ministry in year 2019 achieved the following among others:

i. Completed the coverage verification test of Digital Terrestrial Television signals nationwide. The phased migration from analogue to digital is therefore expected to commence by the end of the year. The draft Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) Policy which was to guide migration from analogue to digital also received Cabinet's approval.

ii. In pursuit of its ICT development agenda, the Ministry created a conducive ecosystem for digital innovation and entrepreneurship through the Accra Digital Centre (ADC). The Centre provided incubation

and support for 150 start-ups, trained 3,000 youth in digital programmes, thus creating 200 ancillary jobs. In addition, ADC partnered Oracle to provide support services to 500 tech start-ups across seven regions.

- iii. As part of its mission of collaborating with relevant institutions and expanding the frontiers of electronics and ICT, the Ghana Indian Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT operationalised the three ISO certified research laboratories in collaboration with C-DAC India, for the development of e-governance software solutions for Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs). Two (2) research facilities have been established in Sunyani and Bolgatanga. The Center also developed a new operating system called Nyansapo Operating System (NOS) for schools. The NOS is an indigenous solution which enables parents monitor their children's performance in school via web or mobile apps. It also enables the Ghana Education Service and the Government obtain intelligence for planning and decision making.
- iv. To ensure affordable postal services and minimize consumer exploitation, the Postal and Courier Services Regulatory Commission (PCSRC) approved new rates during the year. The PCSRC also in collaboration with Motor Traffic and Transport Directorate (MTTD) of the Ghana Police Service, seized motorbikes belonging to illegal courier operators who contravened the Postal and Courier Services Regulations, 2013.
- v. In the year under review, the Ministry through GIFEC heightened its rural telephony programme and deployed 103 telephony sites in various communities to provide voice and data communication to 400 communities and over 200,000 people, thus opening up sections of the country which hitherto did not have access to any telephone network or data. In addition, GIFEC provided students living with disability in

selected tertiary institutions with assistive technology enabled devices and training to promote and enhance their digital skills.

7.0 BUDGETARY ALLOCATION FOR YEAR 2020

7.1 An amount of **One Hundred and Fifty-One Million, Eight Hundred and Forty Thousand, Four Hundred and Ninety-two Ghana Cedis (GH¢151,840,492.00.00)** has been allocated to the Ministry of Communications for its programmes and activities for the 2019 financial year. This comprises GH¢36,720,651.00 as GoG, GH¢77,888,694.00 as Donor funds and GH¢37,231,147.00 as IGF. Table 3 gives a breakdown of the allocation by both economic classification and sources of funding.

Table 3

Breakdown of 2020 Allocation by Economic Classification and Sources of Funding

Item	GoG	IGF	Donor	Total	%
Compensation	23,920,683.00	1,157,067.00	-	25,077,750.00	16.52
Good & Services	12,799,968.00	15,509,557.00	-	28,309,525.00	18.64
CAPEX	-	20,564,523.00	77,888,694	98,453,217.00	64.84
Total	36,720,651.00	37,231,147.00	77,888,694	151,840,492.00	100

Source: Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government for the 2020 Financial Year

7.2 The Committee noted that the Ministry's budgetary allocation increased from GH¢147,268,607.00 in the year 2019 to GH¢151,840,492.00 in year 2020, representing an increase of 3.10%. Table 4 shows a comparison between the 2019 and 2020 budgetary allocation to the Ministry of Communications.

Table 4

Comparison between 2019 and 2020 budgetary allocation to MoC

Item	2019 Budget	%	2020 Budget	%
GoG	31,457,512.00	21.36	36,720,651.00	24.18
IGF	10,933,065.00	7.42	37,231,147.00	24.52
Donor	104,878,030.00	71.22	77,888,694.00	51.30
Total	147,268,607.00		151,840,492.00	

Source: Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government for years 2019 and 2020

8.0 OUTLOOK FOR 2020

The Ministry in year 2020, intends to undertake various programmes and activities some of which are listed below:

- i. The Ministry, in accordance with the Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) Registration Regulations, 2011 (L.I. 2006) will undertake an exercise aimed at resolving the problem of fraudulent registration of SIM cards and the use of mobile devices to commit crimes or defraud citizens. The Ministry will provide a solution for the seamless verification of IDs for registration of SIMs. The solution would help integrate all the databases of Card Issuing Agencies for the seamless verification of IDs used for registration of SIMs. All citizens, residents and visitors would be required to re-register or register their SIM cards from 1st January 2020. All SIM cards not registered by June 2020 would be deactivated.
- ii. Through the Accra Digital Centre (ADC), the Ministry will continue to expand the initiative to facilitate the incubation and provision of support services to cover 1500 start-ups.

- iii. To enhance the capacity of the Data Protection Commission (DPC) to carry out registration and regulation of data controllers, the Commission will accredit five institutions to offer training to personnel interested in the Data Protection Supervisor's programme. The Commission will register at least 1,000 new Data controllers in 2020 and renew 95% of the expired licenses. The Commission also plans to receive at least 500 compliance reports from the Data controllers.

- vi. The Ghana Meteorological Agency (GMet) attained the certification of Quality Management System (QMS) ISO 9001, 2015. GMet would ensure the implementation of the QMS at Kotoka, Kumasi and Tamale Airports to attract many more airlines into the country and help position Ghana as the Regional Aviation Hub.

- iv. GMet will also install Automatic Weather Observatory System (AWOS) at Kumasi and Tamale Airports to comply with ICAO, WMO and automate more of its systems around the country.

- v. To ensure sanity and protect consumers in the courier services, the Postal and Courier Services Regulatory Commission (PCSRC) would continue to provide effective regulation to the courier sub-sector in all the regions. As a first step, the Commission will in 2020, establish regional offices in Kumasi, Tamale and Takoradi.

- vi. To further enhance its relevance in the Government's ICT digitization agenda, the National Information Technology Agency (NITA) will undertake the following initiatives:
 - a. Ensure accessibility and convenience of government services by leveraging ICT;
 - b. Reduce significantly, incidents of hacked government websites by migrating all government website to the Data Centre;
 - c. Increase fiber optic network infrastructure to generate more internet access to citizens and thereby enhance knowledge and participation in governance; and

d. Create seamless interaction and workflow amongst MMDAs.

9.0 **OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 **HEADQUARTERS**

9.1.1 The Committee was informed that in year 2019, the Ministry enhanced its mentorship programme and had female technology achievers and entrepreneurs mentor girls. The best girls were given the opportunity to work with women in technology for a week to see how they utilise technology in their daily work. The purpose of this programme was to generate excitement and have more girls pursue careers in ICT. As part of the programme, the girls, teachers and girl-child coordinators were all provided with laptops and the top ten schools given computer laboratories. The Ministry indicated its intention to extend this programme to as many of the participating schools as possible.

9.1.2 The Committee noted that in formalising the economy through technology and to achieve this, the Ministry responsible for spearheading this initiative ought to be resourced to effectively play its role. However, inadequate funding for the programmes and projects of the Ministry of Communications and its Agencies continues to be a challenge. It is important to note that none of the digital initiatives that are being implemented would work if the underlying infrastructure that deliver services to the people does not exist, or where it exists, it is intermittent, not paid for, or too expensive for the Agencies to utilise. Therefore, it is imperative that the Ministry of Finance averts its mind to the need for infrastructural development and prioritize the provision of resources for the Ministry of Communications.

9.1.3 The Committee was informed that the Ministry in 2020, will establish a Central Equipment Identity Register, to register all mobile devices in the country and reduce the influx of stolen and substandard mobile devices. Citizens would be encouraged to register their devices and SIMs at the same time. The implementation of the SIM re-registration programme, will provide seamless verification of IDs for registration of SIMs. This initiative is to address the deficiencies of the existing SIM card registration regime in Ghana

including the sale of pre-registered SIM cards and its use, fraudulent and improper registration of SIM cards and the use of mobile devices to defraud and commit crimes. The roll out of the National Identification Card Project would facilitate this process since it would be easy to verify the identity of those who seek to register their SIM cards.

9.1.4 The Committee was informed that the Ministry would implement the ECOWAS free roaming initiative by the beginning of next year to enhance regional integration and economic development. It is worth stating that Ghana has signed on to the relevant Protocols. There would therefore be no roaming tariffs upon implementation, and ECOWAS nationals visiting other ECOWAS countries would be charged local rates. It is worthy of note that the amount that would be lost to the State would be minimal.

9.1.5 The Ministry expressed serious concern about the level of capping of the IGF of its Agencies. Although the affected Agencies raised revenue, they did not have the required resources to operate with. This, to some extent, affected their ability to operate effectively. For example, the PCSRC despite having exceeded its IGF target, did not have funds to finance its operations. In other words, PCSRC simply could not function after the first half of the year due to the capping challenge. Again, GMet expended all its allocation for Goods and Services on utility bills – water, electricity, telephone and fuel. The Agency could therefore not undertake the rest of its activities, as a result of the challenge with capping.

9.2 **NATIONAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AGENCY (NITA)**

9.2.1 The National Information Technology Agency (NITA) has been provided an amount of GH¢10,019,447.00 for the performance of its activities for year 2020. Out of this amount, compensation constitutes GH¢3,819,591.00, Goods and Services GH¢4,440,696.00 and CAPEX GH¢1,759,160.00.

9.2.2 It came to the attention of the Committee that one of the key challenges facing NITA is the lack of sustainable funding for its operations. The increasing cost of network management as network expands, inadequate technical personnel

and lack of funds to meet the incremental cost of Network Consumables are all issues of concern to the Agency. This situation is compounded by the non-payment of services rendered by NITA to government agencies, thus depriving NITA of the needed revenues to purchase bandwidth to improve the quality of its services.

- 9.2.3 The Ministry is of the view that internet connectivity or data should be treated as a utility. All public sector agencies should therefore have a budget line for this activity as we increasingly digitise the economy. Alternatively, government should provide dedicated funding at source for operating and managing the e-governance network to deliver services to MDAs. It came to the attention of the Committee that NITA pays service providers for the capacity it delivers to government agencies and is currently indebted to several of these service providers. The Ministry indicated that although the Ministry of Finance has been directed to release funding to settle part of the indebtedness, it still remains unpaid.

The Committee is of the view that there should be a sustainable way to deal with this recurring issue. The absence of an L.I. to guide the operationalisation of the Electronic Transactions Act, 2008 (Act 772) to facilitate the regulatory functions of NITA, remains a challenge. This is essential for the Digital Ghana Agenda to succeed.

- 9.2.4 NITA has almost completed the construction of a Security Operation Centre (SOC) to provide continuous monitoring and improve government security capability by analyzing, preventing and responding to Cyber Security incidents through the aid of technology and well defined processes and procedures. Currently, the National Communications Authority has an SOC for the telecoms sector while the Bank of Ghana has an SOC for the financial services sector. The Ministry is in discussions with the utilities sector and all other agencies that would be designated as critical national information infrastructure to have their own sectorial SOCs. The Ministry is also in the process of procuring a national SOC that would oversee all these activities.

9.2.5 NITA faces a high attrition rate as a result of low remuneration. The Agency continues to lose its quality staff to other competitors. Currently, NITA has inadequate technical personnel to run its operations. NITA sought clearance in year 2019 to recruit 160 staff but was granted clearance to recruit only 50. The process for recruiting the 50 is completed and inputs submitted to the Controller and Accountant General's Department. The Agency indicated that it would require clearance to recruit the outstanding 110. Considering the technical nature of the work of NITA and its importance, the Committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance give urgent attention to NITA's request to recruit the remaining 110 persons to enhance its operations.

9.3 GHANA-INDIAN KOFI ANNAN CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

9.3.1 The Ghana- Indian Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence (GI-KACE) in ICT has been provided an amount of GH¢7,334,633.00 for its programmes and activities for year 2020. This is made up of a GoG component of GH¢5,354,633.00 and IGF of GH¢1,980,000.00. There was no allocation for CAPEX.

9.3.2 The Ministry through the GI-KACE, and with a grant from the Indian Government, has equipped and operationalised two more ISO certified Research Laboratories in the middle and northern belt, Sunyani and Bolgatanga respectively. The Committee was informed that the opening of the Sunyani and Bolgatanga Centres has created professional IT training opportunities for people in the middle and northern belt. The Committee noted that the Centre, within the first six months of operation, trained 86 people. The GI-KACE informed the Committee that, with 90% of IGF retained in 2017, it was able to co-fund the Centres in Sunyani and Bolgatanga.

9.3.3 The Centre has developed the first indigenous software known as Nyansapo Operating System (NOS). The Centre collaborated with its partners in India who provided technical support and technology transfer. This software which has been tested and piloted has three variations - one for education, office use and for enterprise use.

The Committee noted that government spends a lot of money to pay for proprietary licences for software used by high schools and MMDAs. The Committee was informed that the NOS is an open source operating system and adapted to our environment. The operating system has similar functionalities to the Microsoft office suite. The Centre is therefore offering the NOS as an alternative to Microsoft Office.

The Committee was informed that the Centre is currently in discussions with the Ministry of Education and the Private Senior Schools Association to have this software deployed in basic and high schools. This the Committee noted, has the potential to save government about US\$20 million in proprietary licences. Furthermore, the Centre is working to enhance the software to deploy as an e-office version which MMDAs could use instead of Microsoft windows and Office. Here again, it is anticipated that the NOS when deployed in MMDAs, could save government additional US\$20 million.

9.3.4 The Centre in collaboration with the National Smart Institute of India has completed feasibility studies aimed at digitising Agencies such as Ghana Broadcasting Corporation and the Birth and Death Registry. This would help deploy IT and e-governance solutions to improve ICT integration for the two Agencies.

9.3.5 The Centre is faced with the challenge of inadequate staff. Currently, the Centre has 82 staff, out of which 50% are NABCO trainees.

It came to the attention of the Committee that the Centre has spent resources to train some officers both locally and abroad. The Centre therefore stand the risk of losing the temporary staff trained as research officers if their appointments are not regularized. The Centre urgently needs financial clearance to recruit.

9.3.6 The Committee took note of the continuous absence of an Act to give legal effect to the existence of the Centre. The existence of an Act would enable the Centre have a legal basis for deeper collaboration and business linkages. At the moment, the Centre is unable to bid for projects under the World Bank

and other corporate organisations. The Committee therefore urges the Minister for Communications to expedite action to have a Bill giving legal effect to the Centre, laid before Parliament.

9.3.7 It came to light during deliberations that the Centre faces serious mobility challenges. The Centre does not have vehicles for its Directors. The Centres in Bolgatanga and Sunyani are dependent on trotro for their activities. This obviously does not augur well for the image of the Centre. The Committee recommends that the Ministry for Finance provide resources to enable the Centre deal with mobility issues and other challenges it is confronted with.

9.4 **DATA PROTECTION COMMISSION**

9.4.1 A sum of GH¢2,582,689.00 has been allocated to the Data Protection Commission for its programmes and activities for the fiscal year 2020. No allocation has been made for CAPEX and for compensation under GoG. The Commission depends entirely on its internally generated funds. The IGF allocation comprises GH¢847,089.00 as compensation, GH¢1,157,066.00 as Goods and Services and GH¢578,533.00 as CAPEX.

9.4.2 The Data Protection Commission as a regulator, has the mandate to ensure responsible and accountable processing of personal data of all living individuals, in compliance with the legal requirement. The Commission is to implement and monitor compliance with the provision of section 3 of the Data Protection Act, 2012 (Act 843). The Commission however is handicapped in effectively enforcing compliance due to the skills deficit within the Commission. Compounding this situation, is the lack of operational vehicles which hinder the Commission's work. Staff sometimes have to resort to the use of commercial vehicles which slows down progress and affects turnaround time on issues that need urgent attention. The Commission's Head office operates from a rented premises at a very high cost. It does not have offices outside Accra which hampers its operations in the sense that it is constrained in providing support to Data Controllers and Processors in the various regions.

- 9.4.3 It came to the attention of the Committee that the Commission is constrained by the lack of funds to advertise frequently and to promote its work in ways that would benefit the general populace. For instance, Individuals need to understand their rights and challenge the status quo, while institutions need to be more accountable. As a result of the general lack of awareness and understanding on data protection and its requirements, the Commission often cooperate with institutions rather than instituting punitive measures against them. The Commission therefore ought to be resourced to improve its ability to generate more revenue to undertake its operations.
- 9.4.4 The Committee was informed that the Commission hitherto depended on one source of revenue for its operations. Fortunately, the Commission has identified seven (7) additional channels to boost its revenue generation. The Committee noted with concern that even though these additional channels of revenue generation require legal backing to make it operational, the Fees and Charges (Miscellaneous Provisions) Instrument, 2019 (L.I 2386) only came into effect on 21st November, 2019. It is the hope of the Committee that this will enable the Commission improve on its revenue generation capacity in year 2020.
- 9.4.5 It came to light during deliberations that many countries in recent times have placed their Data Protection and the Right To Information (RTI) entities under one body. Countries such as the U.K, Argentina, Australia, Senegal, Burkina Faso, and Morocco all have the RTI and Data Protection entities under one body. So far, Ghana happens to be the only African country that has separated the two. RTI aligns with Data Protection in such a way that one cannot do without the other. Failure to align as a single entity may inadvertently result in the disclosure of personal data to the public. An institution cannot afford to release data, only to realize it is a mistake and subsequently withdraw. Once information is released, it may be published. Individuals could therefore challenge institutions (for disclosing personal information) and have a right to compensation which could take a toll on the public purse. Consequently, all organisations/institutions need to classify

their data or do a data mapping to know what they have and where it is stored, to be able to deliver it within the time lines in the Act.

The Committee observed the correlation between Data Protection and RTI and admits that a lot of expertise is required in this area. The Committee therefore recommends the need for a strong collaboration between the Ministry of Information and the Data Protection Commission in the implementation of the Right to Information Act, 2019 (Act 989).

9.4.6 The Committee observed that a Data Protection Practitioners Training was undertaken by the Commission with the objective to provide training and awareness of the Data Protection Act, 2012 (Act 843), the Data Protection principles, rights of the Data subject, and Cybersecurity implications, among others. Institutions that participated in the Certified Data Protection Supervisors training included, National Communications Authority, National Identification Authority, Ghana Civil Aviation Authority and Public Services Commission. The Committee noted that following the training, Certified Data Protection Supervisors are able to submit compliance reports in a timely manner, ensure their institutions renew their license when due, and monitor their obligations under the Data Protection Act.

9.4.7 The Commission has upgraded its Registration and Compliance Management system to automate the registration of Data Controllers to replace the existing pro-bono system. Following the upgrade, there is an integration of the different payment methods; data controllers are able to upload reports for both internal and external use; the Commission is able to effectively carry out compliance assessment for data controllers and Tax Identification Number (TIN) integration for easy identification of an organisation, among others.

9.5 **GHANA METEOROLOGICAL AGENCY**

9.5.1 A sum of GH¢35,805,305.00 has been provided for the services of the Ghana Meteorological Agency (GMet) for the 2020 financial year. An amount of

GHC10,102,685.00 will be funded from GoG, and GHC25,702,620 from IGF. There is no allocation for CAPEX.

- 9.5.2 GMet has a mission to provide efficient weather and climate information services for socio-economic development in Ghana. In line with this, GMet refurbished the Automatic Weather Observation System (AWOS) at the Kotoka International Airport. In the ensuing year, GMet intends to procure and install one AWOS each at the Kumasi and Tamale Airports to comply with International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) standards and protocols to an international status, and in line with the vision of making Ghana an aviation hub in the sub-region. The Committee observed that the installation of the AWOS is essential for GMet to gather and disseminate weather information critical to the aviation industry to avoid disasters. The Agency further seeks to automate its operations through the procurement of these equipment and to serve the Oil rigs as Ghana deploys fully into marine meteorology.
- 9.5.3 In year 2020, the Agency intends to continue to provide improved services for disaster risk reduction and recovery. It plans to achieve this by increasing the forecast skill of these services as well as their lead times. Currently, the Agency does two hours lead time to an even and targets to do four hours lead time of early warning for disaster risk reduction. The Committee was happy to note that, GMet has secured and installed 20 state-of-the-art automatic weather stations that would electronically collect and transmit accurate and timely meteorological data for forecast analysis. The Agency has also procured and installed a calibrating equipment for the standardisation of meteorological instruments for the purpose of correlating the readings of temperature, pressure, radiation and wind to conform to international standards. The Committee was informed that hitherto, the Agency had to go to either Nigeria or Kenya to calibrate its equipment.
- 9.5.4 It is heart-warming to note that GMet has attained certification of Quality Management System (QMS), ISO 9001, 2015. With this, the operations and management of the activities of GMet is certified to be equivalent to any standard of meteorological practice in the world. This will go a long way to

boost the confidence of GMet in its work and that of its partners. Ghana therefore stands to attract many more airlines into the country, and thus help position the country as a regional hub in the aviation industry.

The Committee was informed that, the Agency with the support of WMO and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), has initiated the process of putting together a national framework for climate services. This is a way to solicit feedback from stakeholders to enable it provide services that would meet their needs.

9.5.5 The Committee noted that the amendment of the Ghana Meteorological Agency Act, 2004 (Act 682), in year 2019 has enabled GMet increase its capacity to generate more revenue. The law now mandates Ghana Civil Aviation Authority and the Ghana Airport Company Limited to pay for aeronautical data provided by GMet. This would provide a stable and sustainable source of funding which GMet can leverage on to do more. The Agency for instance, is well-positioned to serve other sectors of the economy, notably the offshore oil fields, the fisheries and agriculture sectors and improve public weather service delivery. The Committee was informed that it has set up a unit purposely for marine and petroleum forecast to enable it focus on the marine and petroleum sector and provide tailor made services to these sectors.

9.5.6 GMet over the years, has lost many of its technical staff to resignation and retirement. The Committee was informed that the Agency received technical clearance from the Public Services Commission to recruit 38 people but is still awaiting financial clearance from Ministry of Finance to recruit. Upon approval, it hopes to tackle critical skills set that are needed in the area of engineering, IT and forecasting. The Agency in year 2020 also hopes to train its staff both locally and internationally to enhance their skills and competencies as recommended by the WMO.

9.5.7 GMet informed the Committee that the Agency has a number of obsolete equipment which needs to be replaced. The Agency has closed down a number of its rainfall stations and downgraded climatological and agro meteorological stations to rainfall stations. Even though the Agency's revenue generated

internally increased this year, it requires more funds to be able to acquire more equipment for effective operations. The Agency therefore expressed the desire to have a 100% retention of its IGF to enable it address the challenges which have lingered for many years. The Committee therefore recommends a 100% retention of IGF for consideration by the Minister for Finance.

9.6 **POSTAL AND COURIER SERVICES REGULATORY COMMISSION**

9.6.1 The Postal and Courier Services Regulatory Commission (PCSRC) has been provided an amount of GH¢2,358,371.00 for the performance of its functions in year 2020. This is made up of a GoG compensation of GH¢1,342,374.00, Goods and Services of GH¢223,997.00 and an IGF amount of GH¢792,000.00 for Goods and Services.

9.6.2 It came to the attention of the Committee that inadequate allocation to the Commission for year 2019 hindered the execution of some activities. Attention must be drawn to the fact that the Commission was provided a total amount of GH¢1,196,148.46 for year 2019, made up of Compensation of GH¢716,112.04, Goods and Services of GH¢158,366.52 and CAPEX of GH¢321,670.00. As at October 2019, releases for Compensation stood at GH¢316,000.00, Goods and Services GH¢76,541.00 and none for CAPEX. This brought the total releases to GH¢392,544.51.

The Commission attributed the variance in Compensation to the fact that it budgeted for allowances for its Board, however, the Ministry of Finance later directed the Commission to apply part of its allocation for Goods and Services to pay for the allowances. The variance is further attributed to the fact that the salaries of both the Executive Secretary and the Deputy Executive Secretary delayed while the Internal Auditor resigned earlier in the year. The Commission has not yet received clearance to recruit a new Internal Auditor.

9.6.3 The Committee was informed that the Commission's budget for IGF for 2019 was GH¢304,629.00. However, as at October 2019, the Commission had collected an amount of GH¢756,743.89. The Commission indicated that it relies heavily on funds generated internally to execute its activities, since the Commission does not receive adequate funds from GoG for Goods and

Services. Even though the Commission had exceeded its IGF for year 2019, by mid-year, the Commission did not have access to those funds due to the level of capping of the Commission's IGF. This to a large extent, stalled the work of the Commission. It came to the attention of the Committee that the Ministry of Communications made a request for the mid-year budget to free up about GH¢200,000.00, but the Ministry was not successful in getting the cap lifted.

9.6.4 The Commission, per the Postal and Courier Services Regulatory Act, 2003 (Act 649) is responsible for licensing and regulating the postal and courier industry in Ghana. The Commission however is confronted with the issue of inadequate staff making it difficult to operate nationally as required by its mandate. The Commission therefore needs to engage more staff in order to have representation in all the other regions.

The Committee further noted that the Commission is challenged with inadequate vehicles which hampers its operation. It currently has two (2) very old vehicles, thus thwarting its efforts to monitor postal and courier operators to ensure compliance. Notwithstanding this challenge, the Commission in collaboration with Accra Central MTTD impounded over 100 motorbikes belonging to illegal courier operators. The Committee was happy to note that these exercises have compelled the majority of the illegal operators to take the necessary steps to regularise their operations.

The Commission also embarked on intensive public education and also granted interviews to radio and T.V stations in a bid to create awareness of its existence. The Committee was informed that the Commission's website has been reconstructed and is fully functional. The website provides all the relevant information stakeholders require, to work with the Commission. Also, most relevant documents have been uploaded unto the website to serve the public and eliminate waste of resources in trying to access such documents. The Commission is also activating all the social media handles to enable real-time interaction with the public and receive constructive feedback to make work smoother for all stakeholders.

10.0 CONCLUSION

The important role of the Communications Sector in the Socio-economic development of the country cannot be underestimated. For every sector of the economy to advance, it must deploy the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

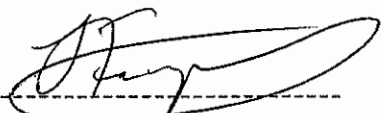
It is worthy of mention that the communications sector alone contributes several billions of cedis annually to GDP. The World Bank Fact Sheets show a clear correlation between GDP growth rate and technological advancement of a developing nation. It is therefore imperative for the Ministry of Communications to be resourced in terms of adequate budgetary allocations to improve growth of the economy.

The Committee hereby recommends that the House approves the sum of **One Hundred and Fifty-one Million, Eight Hundred and Forty Thousand, Four Hundred and Ninety-Two Ghana Cedis, (GH¢151,840,492.00)** for the services of the Ministry of Communications for the year ending 31st December, 2020.

Respectfully submitted.



FREDERICK OPARE-ANSAH (HON)
(CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON
COMMUNICATIONS)



PARLIAMENT OF GHANA LIBRARY

JANET FRIMPONG
(CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE)