

CONSOLIDATED REPORT

OF THE

FINANCE AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

ON THE ESTIMATES OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE 2023

OF THE

GOVERNMENT OF THE GAMBIA

23RD NOVEMBER 2023

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs tabled the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the 2023 fiscal year before the National Assembly on Monday, 14th November 2022 for its consideration and approval in accordance with Section 152 of the 1997 Constitution.

Standing Orders 81 (1), 84 (1) and (2) mandate Committees of the National Assembly to scrutinise and make recommendations on the Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure. The findings of the various Committees should be submitted to the Finance and Public Account Committee (FPAC) to lay a consolidated report together with a motion for debate.

It is against this background, that the Finance and Public Accounts Committee (FPAC) engaged relevant institutions under its purview to scrutinise their respective Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the fiscal year 2023. In the same vein, other Standing and Select Committees also engaged Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) within their remit and submitted findings and recommendations to FPAC which form part of this consolidated report.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

In scrutinising the various budget agencies, FPAC considered reducing the budget deficit of D4 billion. The allocations for MDAs were either maintained as presented in the estimates or reduced and reallocated as and when necessary to relevant sectors of the economy.

1.3 FINDINGS

The Finance and Public Accounts Committee met with officials from the following institutions:

- a) Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs
- b) Independent Electoral Commission
- c) Ombudsman
- d) National Assembly Service
- e) Offices of the President and Vice President

- f) National Audit Office
- g) The Judiciary
- h) Ministry of Public Policy and Civil Service Reforms

Considering the limited resource envelope, coupled with the D4 billion budget deficit, the Committee hereby resolves and recommends to the Assembly for its consideration and approval, the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Government for the fiscal year 2023 to be amended as detailed below.

1.4 Finance and Public Account Committee (FPAC)

01 Office of the President

The Committee recommends a total sum of D22,953,091 to be adjusted to the Office of the President to cater for the Satellite institutions and budget items that are deemed inadequate. Furthermore, the Committee recommends the following for both OP and OVP:

- i. Vehicle policy be looked into to ensure financial prudence
- ii. MoFEA to create a budget line for Security Sector Reform (SSR) and 5 million be allocated to it
- iii. MoFEA to create a budget line for VVIP Lounge at the Airport and 500,000 be allocated to it
- iv. MoFEA to create a budget line for Drug and Dressings for State Guard's Battalion and 1 million be allocated to it
- v. MoFEA to create a budget line for Training and Exercise for State Guard's Battalion and 500,000
- vi. MoFEA to allocate 6 million to the purchase of 2 troop carriers for the State Guard's Battalion
- vii. MoFEA to commit D20 million to the maintenance of the VP's Residence as per the approved budget in 2022
- viii. Ministries of Regional Gov't & Lands and Justice to allocate land for Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA) for the Construction of Office and Lab
- ix. OVP to consider moving Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA) to Ministry of Health

02 National Assembly

The Committee recommends a total reduction of D56,729,895 from the National Assembly's budget.

03 Judiciary

The Committee recommends a total reduction of D37,500,000 was effected on the Construction budget line (3111203) of the Judiciary's submission.

04 Independent Electoral Commission

The Committee recommends a total deduction of D16,117,585 from Independent Electoral Commission.

06 National Audit Office

The Committee recommends a total deduction of D49,904,247 was effected from the overall submission made by NAO.

12 Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs

The Committee recommends a total reduction of D26,100,000 from the MoFEA budget.

14 Ombudsman

The Committee recommends an additional allocation of D500,000 to the Ombudsman's budget.

35 Ministry of Public Policy and Civil Service Reform

The Committee recommends for total reduction of D108,000 from the Ministry's budget.

1.5 STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE AND SECURITY

07 Ministry of Defence

There was no reduction in the budget. However, the Committee recommends the following increments:

1. The overall budget of MoD be increased to a tune of D59,229,741
2. That MoFEA restore the budget line - Support to Veterans and allocate D1 million dalasi
3. That MoFEA restore the Operating Cost budget line and allocate D150,000 and Supervision budget line D700,000
4. That MoFEA create a new budget line for the purchase of Patrol Craft for NAVY and allocate D11,025,000

08 Ministry of Interior

There was no reduction in the budget. However, the Committee recommends the following increments:

1. The overall budget of MoI be increased to a tune of D123,200,000 for the Ministry.
2. That MoFEA allocate D20 million to buy a fire tender for the Fire Service

1.6 SELECT COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, ARTS, CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORTS

09 Ministry of Tourism and Culture

After consultations with the Ministry and satellite institutions, the necessary adjustments were made by the Committee with a savings of GMD230,000.00. The Committee further recommends for the savings to be moved to the Ministry of Youth and Sports under the subvention to the Gambia Songhai Initiative.

22 Ministry of Youth and Sports

The Committee recommends that D230,000.00 saved from the Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture be committed to the Ministry of Youth and Sports under Budget line 2218107 - Agricultural Inputs under the development budget (Gambia Songhai initiative Project).

The Committee further recommends for an additional D3,500,000.00 for the Gambia Songhai Initiative Project (GSI) under the budget lines 3112108 Agricultural Equipment and Machinery.

1.7 STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

10 Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Committee recommends no cuts on the budget. However, it proposes for the following reallocation within budget lines:

1. That is the total balance of savings D11, 300,000 and be allocated to the operational cost of the Embassies of Sweden, Germany and Japan.
2. That the three new Embassies proposed (Sweden, Germany and Japan) be maintained.
3. That an amount of D15,000,000 be allocated as Operating Cost for each Embassy under Other Charges.

1.8 STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

11 Ministry of Justice

The Committee recommends increasing the following budget lines that were under budgeted.

1. 2211101 – Travel Expenses (under General expenses) - D1,500,000 is the amount budgeted for 2023, and due to the number of international engagements the Ministry undertakes annually.
2. 2217101 – (Consultancy) D25,000 estimated for 2023 be augmented to support the drafting and review of bills.

3. 2621101 - (Contributions to international org) D400,000 estimated for 2023. Ministry requested for increase to enable it pay its statutory subscriptions.
4. 2219102 - The Committee recommends increasing the training budget line.
5. Under the development budget, 3111203 - Construction of Office building to be increased from D2,000,000 to D5,000,000 for the construction of an Office complex in Basse.

33 National Human Rights Commission

The Committee recommends the augmentation of the budget of the Human Rights Commission to the sum of D7,123,900 to enable the Commission to continue its services on the protection and promotion of human rights. Furthermore, the Committee recommends MoFEA to create a new budget line for gratuities as per the submission of the Commission.

1.9 PUBLIC ENTERPRISES COMMITTEE

The Committee recommends the following:

I. Endorsement of performance contracts between the government and State Owned Enterprises (SoEs).

II. Henceforth, government subsidies to SoEs should be based on the dividends paid.

III. Government should establish a dividend payment policy that indicates a standard threshold for the payment of dividends by SoEs from their profits.

IV. A general study should be conducted by S on the financial and operational performance of SoEs with a view to understanding their challenges and provide remedies to ensure their viability.

1.10 SELECT COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL GOVERNMENT, LANDS, OMBUDSMAN AND IEC

16 Ministry of Lands & Regional Government

The Committee recommends a total sum of D6,075,000 be augmented on the Ministry's budget and be allocated to specific budget lines as per the addendum to this report.

1.11 SELECT COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND NGO AFFAIRS

23 Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Wildlife

The Committee made a saving of D1,925,000.00 from some budget lines under the Ministry's Recurrent Budget. However, D850,000.000 was reallocated to some budget lines under the same recurrent budget. A balance of D1,075,000 and a saving of D3,400,000.00 from the Ministry's Development Budget was also made.

On the said savings, the Committee recommends that amounts be added to the D65,000,000.00 under the budget line 2622101 under Strategy Policy and Management -MECCNAR (Contribution to International Organization -Capital). Thus augmented to D69,475,000.

The Committee also agreed with the recommendation made by the Ministry that the budget line 2511101 Non-Fin Public Corp. OC of D6,000,000 be reallocated to 2511102 Subvention to Non-financial Public Corporation to cater for National Environment Agency's Personal Emoluments for the 2023 fiscal year to avoid shortage.

25 Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources

1. The Committee recommends allocations to be made for the Construction of the Office Complex for the Department of Fisheries.
2. Additionally, the Committee recommends for an additional allocation of D2,000,000 for the creation of Fishponds and Water Breeding facilities (3111302) Operating Costs (2221124) which was zero, be raised to D500,000
3. The Committee observed that despite lapses in the implementation of Fishing and Fisheries regulations, the conditions of fish landing sites in the coast and the interior is hugely deteriorating. Thus, an immediate maintenance of all fish-landing sites across the country is needed.

29 Ministry of Petroleum and Energy

The Committee recommends that a total deductions of D1,150,000 be reallocated to budget line 2218111 - Land Compensation under General Administration (Development Budget) to cater for the Ministry's compensation package to the affected communities during the expansion of the rural electrification projects.

Additionally, the Ministry of Finance should create a new programme called Petroleum Directorate on the Estimate.

1.12 SELECT COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

17 Ministry of Agriculture

The Committee resolves on the following recommendations:

- That the FPAC, from its savings, allocates an extra D150 million under a Special Account to finance programmes under the following budget lines of the Ministry of Agriculture;

- i. Rehabilitation of Regional Offices**
- ii. Agricultural equipment and machinery**
- iii. Maintenance of buildings and facilities**
- iv. Livestock production and productivity**
- v. Agricultural inputs**
- vi. Surveillance and Disease control**
- vii. Land and Irrigation Development**
- viii. Agricultural Value Chain Development**
- ix. Research and Development**
- x. Support to animal breeding, genetic improvement and development**

Furthermore, the Committee recommends that an extra D25 million be allocated to the five sub-vented institutions under the Ministry.

1.13 SELECT COMMITTEE ON MONITORING OF GOVERNMENT PROJECTS

18 Ministry of Transport, Works and Infrastructure

The Committee resolves on the following recommendations:

1. With most of the projects signed by the Government and funded locally to be completed in 2023, a reduction in the budget lines of these projects would result in breach of contract by government and could incur more expenditure thereof. These projects are reflected in the addendum.
2. The Committee further observed that compensation packages for the construction of certain roads have still not been settled. It is therefore strongly recommended that the compensation for the Kombo Coastal Road Project, Land Compensation and Brikama Darsilami-Dimbaya Roads be settled. The Committee therefore recommends the reallocation of further D20,000,000 to settle these compensation packages.
3. With the reduction of the fuel levy (Road Fund) from D3 to D1 per litre, the Committee resolved that this budget line should be raised to supplement the road maintenance budget of NRA to continue to maintain the road network and to build new roads within the communities.

1.14 SELECT COMMITTEE ON TRADE & REGIONAL INTEGRATION

19 Ministry of Trade, Regional Integration and Employment

The Committee recommends the following budget lines be reinstated:

1. Rent D1,000,000
2. International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Membership Fees D650,000
3. A sum of D10,000,000 be allocated for the Construction for a Lab for the Standards Bureau.
4. The Ministry of Trade in collaboration with Ministry of Lands to allocate a land to house the satellite institutions.

1.15 SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING & ICT

20 Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education

The Committee recommends that the budget of the Ministry to be approved as submitted.

24 Ministry of Information

The Committee recommends the following:

1. 1.5 million to be deducted from maintenance of building, 1 million from consultancy and 1 million from ICT infrastructure making a total deduction of 3.5 million.
2. We have agreed to add the 3.5 million reduction to the Access to Information (ATI) 2511101. The committee recommended that a sum of 3.5 million be added for the purchase of two saloon cars for the commissioner of ATI and executive director. The parliament has passed the ATI bill in 2021 and the president has signed it into law and the operations needs to start immediately.
3. The committee recommends that two (2) million to be added to the training budget under general administration so that all information officers across all government institutions are trained on the ATI.
4. The committee recommended additional vehicles for the department be procured.
5. The Committee recommends that all regional information offices across the country needs to be revived.

27 Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science & Technology

The Committee recommends the following:

1. That the Ministry's budget be increased to D141,000,000 to cater for the sub-vented institutions under its purview as per the addendum attached.
2. That the open scholarship amount be centralised instead of putting it in the ministry's vote which make their budget look big.
3. The Ministries of Lands and Justice should be engaged to allocate land for the Ministry in order to put an end to the payment of rents which is very expensive

28 Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy

1. The Committee recommends D22,000,000 to be added on the Operating Cost
2. Under specialised training, D4,000,000 was recommended to be added on D500,000 making a total of D4,500,000
3. The budget line item for GICTA is recommended to be restored from D6,000,000 to D12,000,000
4. Digital Gambia Limited to be augmented from D6,000,000 to D15,000,000

5. The Committee also recommends that D5,000,000 to be added on vehicle making it D8,500,000
6. The committee was made to understand that on the manpower budget some of the existing staff are not included while they are still working with the institution. 10 positions have been omitted and the recommendation from the committee was for the Ministry of Finance to revisit and do the necessary correction

1.16 SELECT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, DISASTER, REFUGEES, & HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

21 Ministry of Health

1. On sub-vented institutions budget line, the Committee made the following observations:

211706 ---- MEDICINE CONTROL AGENCY

There is no budget line created for the MCA PE for 2023 amounting to D**13, 667,147**

211708 ----- BUNDUNG MATERNAL AND CHILD HOSPITAL

There is no budget line created for the Bundung Maternal and Child Hospital PE for 2023 amounting to D**72,831,275**

211715 ---- COUNTRY COORDINATING MECHANISM AND COUNCILS

The Committee in consultation with the Ministry of Health recommends that CCM be separated from the four (4) Councils and a breakdown of allocation to be highlighted as follows.

Country Coordinating Mechanism	800,000
Pharmacy Council	800,000
Medical and Dental Council	800,000
Nurses and Midwives Council	800,000

Public and Environmental Health Council	800,000
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4. It is observed that the amount of **D36 million** has been factored in the 2023 Budget for **National Health Insurance**. This amount compared to the ideal budget submission of **NHIA** is inadequate. A total annual budget of **D914,686,708.52** has been estimated based on the allocation formula developed.
5. In order to implement the testing requirement for all imported medicine into the country including Government procured Medicines, the Committee highlighted the need to capture the cost of testing of the Ministry procured medicines in the 2023 budget. This is necessary although the issue cropped up recently because of the AKI outbreak leading to the reinforcement of quality control measures. It is noted that the average testing fee per item ranges between USD 900 (for regulatory authorities) to USD 2000 (commercial rate). The National Medicines list contain about 450 items which by estimation attracts a testing fee of USD 120,000 (D54 Million)
6. That the following budget lines be adjusted from the savings made from the Ministry's budget.

210101 -- General Administration

- ❖ 2221111 ----- Fees and Handling Charge
- ❖ 2511106 ----- National Insurance Subsidy

211102 -- Traditional Medicine Development

- ❖ 2216109 ----- Advertisement and Publications

1.17 SELECT COMMITTEE ON GENDER, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL WELFARE

31 Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare

The Committee recommends that D5,000,000 be added to the Ministry of Gender to be redistributed to the following Budget lines.

1. Social Protection

2821102 the estimate is D500,000 the Committee added 1.5 million making it D2,000,000.

2821105 the estimate is 105,000 the Committee recommends adding 750,000 making it to 855,000.

2. Child Protection

2221101 the original estimate is D700,000, the Committee recommends adding D500,000 making it D1,200,000.

2821105 the original estimate is D100,000 the Committee recommends adding D750,000 making it D850,000.

3. Disability and Rehabilitation Services

2218109 the original allocation was zero therefore, the Committee recommends adding D1,000,000.

4. Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

2821105 the original estimate is D105,000, the Committee recommends for an addition of D500,000.

1.18 CONCLUSIONS & FPAC'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Following careful review of the budget submission from the various Ministries, Departments and Agencies and having carefully studied the various recommendations and observations put forward by the various Committees; noting that the Government continues to operate with a deficit of D4 billion; and FPAC's commitment to take all necessary measures to reduce the budget deficit without detriment to the functionality of government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, the Committee resolves to recommend the following:

- i. That Government considers coming up with a new vehicle policy and Internal Audit should come up with control measures.
- ii. MoFEA urgently implement a revenue audit across government institutions and furnish FPAC on its findings to improve on the domestic revenue mobilization.
- iii. MoFEA to critically consider improving on their revenue base particularly maximizing on the extractive industry and fisheries sectors.
- iv. The budget deficit should be reduced regardless of any recommendation for increment.
- v. That the recommendations of various Committees be considered for endorsement where feasible.
- vi. That MDAs should move to Cash Powers instead of the normal NAWEC billing system
- vii. The government should consider investing in renewable energy to curtail the exponential rises in cost of electricity across MDAs

