



CONSOLIDATED REPORT

OF

THE FINANCE AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

ON

THE COMMITTEES' CONSIDERATION OF THE 2024 ESTIMATES

OF

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE
GAMBIA

NOVEMBER 2023

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Section 152 of the 1997 Constitution, the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs has tabled for consideration and approval by the National Assembly, the Estimates of Revenues, Recurrent and Development Expenditures for The Republic of The Gambia for the Fiscal Year, 2024 on Friday, 17th November 2023.

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 Accounts 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) prepared this consolidated report on the submission of various Committees for the consideration of the Plenary.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

In scrutinising the budget of MDAs, Committees were guided by the resolution adopted by the National Assembly during its pre-budget retreat i.e., to consider reducing the budget deficit of **D4.45** billion representing 2.55% of the Nominal GDP and savings made should not be reallocated to sectors. However, Committees were cautioned not to reduce budget lines that could have negative impact on the operations of Government.

1.3 FINDINGS

The Committees met with the various Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs) to defend their submissions as per the Estimates. MDAs highlighted resource gap in comparison with their mandates. Almost all budget entities cried over the limited monthly cash allocations which directly impacted their productivity.

However, considering the limited resource envelope, coupled with the D4.450 billion budget deficit, Committees could not make significant changes on the budget.

Based on the submissions from the various committees, FPAC resolves and recommends that the Assembly do consider and approve, the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Government for the Fiscal Year 2024 as amended and detailed below.

1.4 Finance and Public Account Committee (FPAC)

The Ministry of Finance during its tabling of the Estimates before FPAC indicated errors from the submission made to the National Assembly on some budget entities and implored on FPAC to take note of the revised submission. See appendix one for details.

01 Office of the President

There was no savings under the OP's budget. However, the Committee recommends reallocations to priority budget line as indicated on the attached addendum.

Equally, there was no savings under the OVP's budget. However, the Committee recommends reallocations to priority budget line as indicated on the attached addendum.

02 National Assembly

The Committee recommends a total reduction of D15,800,000 from the National Assembly's budget. Furthermore, the Committee recommends reallocations to priority budget lines as indicated on the attached addendum.

03 Judiciary

The Committee recommends a total reduction of **D74,300,000** from the Judiciary's submission. The Committee recommends some reallocations to priority budget lines as indicated in the attached addendum.

04 Independent Electoral Commission

The Committee recommends a total reduction of **D48,582,500** from the IEC's budget. Furthermore, the Committee recommends reallocations to priority budget lines as indicated on the attached addendum.

06 National Audit Office

The Committee recommends a total reduction of **D36,583,000** from the NAO's submission. Furthermore, the Committee recommends reallocations to priority budget lines as indicated on the attached addendum.

12 Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs

The Committee recommends a total reduction of **D58, 154,000** from the Ministry's budget. Furthermore, the Committee recommends reallocations to priority budget lines as indicated on the attached addendum.

14 Ombudsman

The Committee recommends a total reduction of **D1,470,000** from the Ombudsman's budget. Furthermore, the Committee recommends reallocations to priority budget lines as indicated on the attached addendum.

35 The Ministry of Public Service, Administrative Reforms & Policy Coordination

There was no savings under the Ministry's budget. However, the Committee recommends reallocations to priority budget as indicated on the attached addendum.

1.5 STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE AND SECURITY

07 Ministry of Defence

There was no savings under the Ministry's budget. However, the Committee recommends reallocations to priority budget as indicated on the attached addendum.

Recommendation:

1. The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Defence revise the rents and rates ceiling for GAF Officers to D150,000 maximum to cater for more officers.

08 Ministry of Interior

There was no savings under the Ministry's budget. However, the Committee recommends reallocations to priority budget as indicated on the attached addendum.

Recommendation:

1. The Committee recommends that D3,575,000 to be allocated to Arms and Ammunition from the amount that was saved from the Ministry's budget.

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

09 Ministry of Tourism and Culture

There was no reduction or reallocation on the Ministry's budget. However, the Committee recommends to approve the budget as submitted by the Ministry.

Recommendation

1. The Committee recommends to allocate some funds to the Ministry to procure vehicle and furniture for the propose new Deputy Permanent Secretary 2.

22 Ministry of Youth and Sports

There was no savings made under the Ministry's budget. However, the Committee recommends reallocations to priority budget lines as indicated on the attached addendum.

Recommendation:

1. The Committee recommends to reallocate D10,000,000 from the budget line of the Sporting Material, to Purchase Vehicles for the Hon. Ministry, Permanent Secretary and Deputy Permanent Secretary Technical.

1.7 STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

10 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Corporation and Gambians Abroad

The Committee recommends a total reduction of D4,092,000 from the Ministry's budget. However, the Committee further recommends reallocation to priority budget as indicated on the attached addendum.

1.8 STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

11 Ministry of Justice

There was no savings made under the Ministry's budget. However, the Committee recommends reallocation to priority budget line as indicated on the attached addendum.

33 National Human Rights Commission

There was no reductions or reallocation on the Commission's budget. However, the Committee recommends to approve the budget as submitted by the Commission.

Recommendation:

1. That in subsequent budget estimates, the submissions of the Commission should be maintained by the Ministry of Finance to support its operation.

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

16 Ministry of Lands & Regional Government

There was no savings made under the Ministry's budget. However, the Committee recommends reallocation to priority budget line as indicated on the attached addendum.

Recommendations:

The Committee further recommends the following:

1. That the remuneration of Traditional Chiefs be upgraded to suit their status so as to mitigate the challenges they are facing.
2. That the mobility constraints of Traditional Chiefs be looked into. Therefore, there is a need to provide each Chief a vehicle.
3. That the salary for the Batch Messengers of the Chiefs should be promulgate.

1.11 SELECT COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND NGO AFFAIRS

23 Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Wildlife

There was no savings under the Ministry's budget. However, the Committee recommends reallocations to priority budget lines as indicated on the attached addendum.

Recommendations:

The Committee further recommends the following:

1. That Government should review the Vehicle Policy that was adopted by the National Assembly and restrict the officials entitled to official vehicles to only the Minister and the Permanent Secretaries, all other officials should be provided with a loan facility to purchase their own vehicles to be deducted on monthly basis.
2. That the fuel allocation should be determined and made uniform for all Ministers and PSs.
3. That Government should come up with an Air ticketing policy for the procurement of air fares for MDAs.

25 Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources

There was no savings under the Ministry's budget. However, the Committee recommends reallocations to priority budget lines as indicated on the attached addendum.

29 Ministry of Petroleum and Energy

There was no reductions or reallocation on the Ministry's budget. The Committee recommends that the budget be approved as submitted.

1.12 SELECT COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

17 Ministry of Agriculture

There was no savings under the Ministry's budget. However, the Committee recommends reallocations to priority budget lines as indicated on the attached addendum.

1.13 SELECT COMMITTEE ON MONITORING OF GOVERNMENT PROJECTS

18 Ministry of Transport, Works and Infrastructure

There was no savings under the Ministry's budget. However, the Committee recommends reallocations to priority budget lines as indicated on the attached addendum.

Recommendation:

1. That all statutory agreements on the disbursement of Interim Payment Certificate should be honoured to avoid further financial penalties on Government.

1.14 SELECT COMMITTEE ON TRADE & REGIONAL INTEGRATION

19 Ministry of Trade, Regional Integration and Employment

The Committee recommends a total reduction of D669,493 from the Ministry's budget. However, the Committee recommends reallocations to priority budget lines as indicated on the attached addendum.

1.15 SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING & ICT

20 Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education

There was no savings on the Ministry's budget. However, the Committee recommends reallocations to priority budget lines as indicated on the attached addendum.

24 Ministry of Information

The Ministry did not appear before the Committee to defend its budget. Therefore, the Committee did not review its budget.

27 Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science & Technology

There was no savings on the Ministry's budget. However, the Committee recommends reallocations to priority budget lines as indicated on the attached addendum.

Recommendations:

1. Scholarships for Tertiary Education should be wholly handled by MoHERST and the budget line augmented to ensure arrears owed to the UTG, Gambia College and GTTI are settled.

2. The training budget line under all ministries should be consolidated under PMO so that they can manage the training of civil servants across all ministries.
3. The Education levy collected by GRA should be distributed between NAQAA and MOHERTS for the support of TVET which is expanding yearly.
4. There is a need to review the entire membership to international organizations by the Government and centralize where possible as ministries and other agencies each have a special budget line and these memberships must be defined and approved by an authority based on the value we get.
5. The research budget lines need to be centralized and managed by MoHERTS as research is under their purview. At present, it seems most ministries have a budget line call research but we can't tell what is being used for.

28 Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy

The Committee recommends that the Ministry's budget be approved as submitted.

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

21 Ministry of Health

There was no savings on the Ministry's budget. However, the Committee recommends reallocations to priority budget lines as indicated on the attached addendum.

Recommendations:

The Committee recommends the following:

1. That MoFEA create development budget line for the hospitals
2. That MoFEA provide funds for the operation of the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA)
3. That MoFEA should ensure that all the Councils under the Ministry of Health should receive their subvention as budgeted for in the Estimate

1.17 SELECT COMMITTEE ON GENDER, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL WELFARE

31 Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare

There was no savings on the Ministry's budget. However, the Committee recommends reallocations to priority budget lines as indicated on the attached addendum.

1.18 SUMMARY TABLE OF THE TOTAL SAVINGS

BUDGET ENTITY	SAVINGS	TOTAL SAVINGS
Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs	83,554,000	D485,050,993
Centralized Services	220,000,000	
The National Assembly	15,800,000	
The Judiciary	74,300,000	
National Audit Office	36,583,000	
Independent Electoral Commission	48,582,500	
The Ombudsman	1,470,000	
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Corporation and Gambians Abroad	4,092,000	
Ministry of Trade, Regional Integration and Employment	669,493	

1.19 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Following careful review of the budget submissions from the various Institutions, Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), and having carefully considered the various recommendations put forward by the various Committees; noting that the Government continue to operate with a deficit of D4.45 billion; and FPAC's commitment to reduce the budget deficit without adversely affecting the operations of MDAs, the Committee therefore recommends:

1. That MoFEA urgently implement a revenue review across government institutions particularly self-raised revenues by the MDAs to improve on the domestic revenue mobilization and furnish FPAC on its findings.

2. That NAO consider conducting a revenue audit across the MDAs.
3. That the National Assembly consider separating Finance as a standalone committee from the FPAC to focus on the budget and other related financial matter.
4. That MoFEA critically consider improving the revenue base particularly maximizing on the extractive industry and fisheries sectors.
5. That the total reductions made should be maintained towards reducing the deficit.
6. That Government should honour its contractual obligations with its institutions to avoid accumulating debts.
7. That going forward the Ministry of Finance must not change the submitted budget of the Independent Institutions as dictated by the Constitution.