NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY AND NATIONAL MEDIA COMMISSION

Joint Statement

NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY (NCA) AND NATIONAL MEDIA COMMISSION (NMC) COLLABORATE TO ENSURE SAFER AIRWAVES FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

For Immediate Release

Accra, September 12, 2023: The National Communications Authority (NCA) and the National Media Commission (NMC) have reiterated their commitment to strengthen their collaboration in a bid to bring sanity to Ghana's airwaves. The two institutions have as a result reconstituted the NCA and NMC Standing Committee to among others, collaborate in the dispensation of regulatory functions over the electronic media, including new media and media for mass communication, and to take initiatives in problem-solving, growth and stability in the communications industry.

Background

The National Communications Authority (NCA) on Tuesday, 15th June, 2021, signed a Memorandum of Cooperation on the regulation of Electronic Communications Content with the National Media Commission (NMC) and other stakeholders under the auspices of the Ministry of Information and agreed to by interested parties through a Stakeholders' Consultative Meeting held in April 2021. The Memorandum of Cooperation sought to tackle egregious media content and ensure that electronic communications content complies with the basic legal and ethical standards within the overall constitutional guarantee of free expression.

The current collaboration between the NMC and NCA is a follow-up to similar efforts between the two institutions during the 2012 elections and the subsequent Election Petition hearing in 2013 as well as during the 2016 elections.

The collaboration between the NMC and NCA will strengthen the regulatory environment in Ghana, as the two bodies jointly take steps in protecting the public from unwholesome, harmful or offensive media contents that have characterised the nation's media landscape in recent times. This will mean where the public interest is paramount, measured but decisive regulatory actions will be taken to ensure that the media adhere strictly to all guidelines of the NMC and remain in compliance with NCA's legislation governing the broadcasting industry.

Through the cooperation and consolidation of their respective regulatory functions, the two bodies will ensure that media content is wholesomely appropriate for consumption by the audience and in line with national laws and regulations. The NCA has upgraded its Broadcasting Monitoring Centre to ensure that contents in the Ghanaian media is safe, ethical, and of high standards. This will help to address emerging challenges such as inflammatory speech, and unprofessional conduct. The NCA/NMC collaboration will go a long way in promoting responsible journalism and safeguarding the interests of the public.

Protocol for Addressing egregious media content on Electronic Media Platforms

As part of the collaborative efforts, the Commission and the Authority have therefore outlined the following protocols to tackle such content on electronic media platforms:

1. Reports of egregious or offensive media content may be made by any person to the NMC through a call to the toll-free number ***0800-419-666.***
2. The NMC in compliance with Section 10 of the NMC Act, will collaborate with the NCA, the National Intelligence Bureau, the Bank of Ghana and other relevant State Agencies to determine whether or not the content complained of is offensive to:
    a. National security, public order and public morality in accordance with Article 164 of the 1992 Constitution.
    b. The NMC's Programmes Content Regulations and Guidelines.
    c. The GJA Code of Ethics
3. The NMC and NCA shall collaborate by using the Broadcasting Monitoring Centre of the NCA in generating evidence for the purposes of the NMC's determination.
4. Content found in breach of the guidelines aforementioned in paragraph 2 will be referred by the NMC to the NCA for appropriate action.
5. The NCA shall apply the necessary sanctions including the possible suspension of broadcast authorisations in accordance with Section 775 of the Electronic Communications Act.

Accordingly, media content producers are strongly advised to desist from the promotion of money doubling, sexual content at non-watershed hours, content offensive to national security interest and content in breach of the above guidelines.

Conclusion

The collaboration between the NMC and NCA is a significant step towards ensuring that the Ghanaian media industry is safe, responsible, and responsive to the needs of the public and to remind all media stakeholders of their responsibilities in the dispensation of their roles for the public good. It is expected that the cooperation between the two bodies will enhance the regulatory oversight of the media, communications and broadcast industry and contribute to the development of a vibrant and professional media sector in Ghana. The general public is encouraged to direct any concerns it may have to the NCA or the NMC.

SIGNED.....

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Issued by the National Communications Authority and the National Media Commission.
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Editor's Note

About NCA

The National Communications Authority, (NCA), was established by an Act of Parliament, Act 524 in December 1996, which has been repealed and replaced by the National Communications Authority Act, 2008 (Act 769). The Authority is the statutory body mandated to license and to regulate electronic communication activities and services in the country.

About NMC

The National Media Commission, (NMC), set up on July 7, 1993 by an Act of Parliament, (National Media Commission Act 1993, Act 449) in pursuit of the provisions of Chapter 12 of the 1992 Constitution is enjoined among others, to take all appropriate measures to ensure the establishment and maintenance of the highest journalistic standards in the mass media, including the investigation, mediation and settlement of complaints made against or by the press or other mass media.