

# GHANA

## Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA)



Country Population: 26,658,823  
 Population growth rate: 2.4%  
 Urban population: 53%  
 Urbanisation rate: 3.6%  
 Population GAMA: 4.3 million – expected to double in 20 years  
 GNI per capita (PPP): USD 3,910  
 GDP growth rate: 4.2% – GAMA supports about 62% of national GDP  
 Urban poverty: 10.6% (of urban population)

\*World Bank Data

### Governance

**Strong public institutions.** By regional standards, Ghana has strong public institutions and a high level of government efficiency. Although one of Africa's stable parliamentary democracies, at the local government level the District Chief Executive is appointed by the Head of State, negating the principle of subsidiarity underpinning the devolution process.

**A clear national urban strategy and action plan.** Both are in place, but financial and organisational constraints across national and district spheres impede implementation.

**Inadequate number and quality of staff.** For example, Tema (a Metropolitan District Assembly within GAMA) has only 158 municipal staff and 4 planners per 100,000 residents. Across GAMA only half of municipal staff are adequately trained for the technical work required.

**Unpredictable fiscal transfers.** Cities in Ghana depend on fiscal transfers from the national government (51% of the budget in Tema) that are highly unpredictable in terms of timing and amount, making planning difficult.

**Little cross-boundary planning.** GAMA's 13 district assemblies suffer from a lack of city-wide strategic planning, which is particularly detrimental since the key challenges facing the area transcend district boundaries.

**Ineffective land administration.** The system is unable to consolidate, plan and service land at the rate required by city growth, and what little land is made available for development typically falls outside formal town planning and is often speculative in nature.

### Economy

**Ghana has a high potential for economic growth.** In 2013, it was the fourth-most attractive foreign direct investment (FDI) destination in Africa; between 2007 and 2013, FDI projects in Ghana increased at a compound annual growth rate of more than 50% – the fastest in Africa.

**Inequalities reduced in GAMA** between 2005-2013 and poverty declined from 12% to 3.5% below the national poverty line.

**Employment in GAMA** accounts for 28% of the country's total employment, and 32% of urban employment. Unemployment rates among youth aged 15-24 are about six times higher in Accra than in rural areas.

**A growing service sector.** The combined urbanisation and economic growth processes have not led to a strong manufacturing sector, but rather a sharp increase in the service sector, with over 80% of the workforce engaged in the informal economy.

50%  
Annual growth rate of more than 50% – the fastest in Africa

6X  
Unemployment rates among youth aged 15-24 are about six times higher in Accra than in rural areas

80%  
Over 80% of the workforce engaged in the informal economy

## Citizenship

**Public participation in city planning.** Although Ghana has a legal framework for citizen participation, there is little public participation in city planning, partly since planning mechanisms report and respond to national rather than local-level priorities. Citizens have little trust in local-level public institutions; compared to national level agencies, local governments are the least trusted by citizens (58%).

**Gender disparities.** Citizen participation and representation at the local level is also characterised by persisting gender disparities. On average, only 38% of voters in local elections are women and only 11% of elected local assembly members are women. The poor representation of women constitutes a serious challenge, fueled by cultural restrictions still hindering women's participation in local governance.

## Services

**Inadequate provision of all public services.** While 51% of the population have direct water access, only 25% of residents in Accra have access to water supply on a 24-hour basis. In GAMA, 33% of solid waste is not collected and 47% of slum dwellers have no access to waste collection. Currently USD 150 million is being invested into the improvement of water and sanitation facilities and services, particularly targeting the poor, but this is profoundly inadequate given backlogs and future growth projections.

**Power outages.** Ghana also suffers from significant power generation deficits, transmission and distribution losses, and poor revenue collection - leading to supply instability and severe outages, adversely impacting economic growth.

**Limited public transport.** There is a high dependency on private vehicles on a limited, low quality road network, leading to massive congestion and waste of productive time - which in turn impacts on economic growth.

**Unchecked urban sprawl.** The lack of effective planning and servicing results in an increasingly sprawling urban form that in turn makes future servicing more expensive and less efficient.

## Environment

**Increased recognition of climate change nationally.** At the policy level, climate change has been incorporated into the current national development plan, GSGDA II and the 40-year national development plan.

**Environmental issues in GAMA** are affected by population density, a poor public service infrastructure, and its location at the mouth of the Odaw River. Some 52% of liquid waste is disposed into drains, which empty into the ocean via streams and lagoons. Accra's major environmental risk is flooding, due mainly to the low-lying coastal landscapes, lagoons and poor infrastructure. In November 2013, Agbogbloshie, a former wetland and now a dumping ground outside Accra, was named one of the world's ten worst polluted places. The dumpsite is the second largest e-waste processing area in West Africa. An estimated 40,000 people are affected by the pollution and consequently exposed to serious health hazards. All local assemblies are requested to undertake a Vulnerability Assessment for cities to identify and prioritise urgent measures.

## POOR SANITATION AND CHOLERA



Inadequate access to sanitation facilities and improved water

in Accra's informal settlements has led to several devastating outbreaks of cholera.

Between June 2014 and February 2015, 20,500 cholera cases were recorded in GAMA, resulting in 121 fatalities. After flooding in June 2015, 25 new cases of cholera and one death were recorded within a single week.

## FLOODS AND SLUMS AT RISK



Flooding in Accra is a perennial issue that has often been addressed in an ad hoc manner.

In June 2015, flooding in Accra claimed over 250 lives, decimating property and livelihoods. With one of the biggest informal settlements located on a riverbank, the flooding also resulted in a massive eviction. Over 10,000 people were made homeless, further complicating and undermining livelihoods and survival.

The two issues of floods and evictions are closely linked and will require serious attention to ensure the future resilience and prosperity of the city.

## Recommendations for growth and resilience

- **Strengthen institutional arrangements and human resources** to enable effective cross-district (metropolitan) planning and management.
- **Enhance the capacity of the land administration system** to make planned land available for consolidation at the rate required by city growth.
- **Support the development of the formal economy** by reducing the time and cost of doing business and by recognising and supporting the importance and potential of the informal economy.
- **Strengthen and institutionalise citizen participation** in urban governance and planning; actively promote and support women to be elected local assembly members.
- **Plan expansion of cities** and leverage investment into basic services to ensure both a baseline of environmental health, a growing economy, and a more efficient, less sprawling urban form.
- **Recognise and restore the ecological integrity** of the city's natural assets to ensure greater eco-services dividends and better protection against a changing climate.