

PROFILE OF GHANA

Location Ghana, the closest landmark to the centre of the world, is located on the west coast of Africa, about 750 km north of the equator on the Gulf of Guinea, between the latitudes of 4-11.5° north and longitude 3.11° West and 1.11° East. Tema, the industrial city, which is adjunct to Accra, the capital city of Ghana, is on the Greenwich Meridian (zero line of longitude). Ghana is bounded on the north by Burkina Faso, on the west by La Cote D'Ivoire, on the east by Togo and on the south by the Gulf of Guinea.

Historical Background Ghana, formerly called the Gold Coast, became independent from British colonial rule on March 6, 1957. It was the first black African colony to achieve independence. The period between the 15th and 19th centuries witnessed a power struggle for the country amongst European nations for fortunes in gold and ivory, following the advent of the Portuguese who discovered gold in 1471 and built Elmina castle in 1482. The other Europeans were the Dutch, Swedes, Danes, Prussians and the British. The battle for control and supremacy over the land culminated in the building of many forts and castles which were used not only as trading posts but also as dungeons for the infamous slave trade. It is significant to note that out of the about forty-three (43) forts and castles in West Africa, thirty - three (33) are in Ghana alone. Out of these about twenty five (25) are in good condition, including Elmina and Cape Coast Castles and Fort St Jago, all three of which are recognised by UNESCO as World Heritage Monuments.

The country has therefore held and continue to hold out a lot of attractions notably:-

- rich mineral resources such as gold, diamonds, manganese, limestone, bauxite, iron ore as well as various clays and granite deposits. **In 1999, Ghana produced 2,620,096 million ounces of gold and 684,033.4 carats of diamonds (Ghana is the second largest producer of gold in Africa).**
- extensive forests which are arguably the best managed in West Africa (with 252 permanent forest reserves in the rain forest zone alone. In total about 11% of Ghana is defined as forest.). Out of a total land area of 23 million hectares, 13 million hectares (57%) is suitable for agricultural production, and 5.3 million hectares (39%) of this is under cultivation. **(Ghana is the second largest producer of cocoa in the world. It is also the third largest producer of timber and the second largest exporter of wood and wood products in Africa);**
- rich marine fishing resources (tuna and game fishing);
- beautiful landscape, inviting sunshine, pristine beaches, exotic wildlife and exciting national parks and game reserves;
- a rich culture and tradition and a world acclaimed warmth and hospitality of its people.

Land The country has a total land area of 238,537 km² (92,100 sq. miles) and stretches 672 km north-south and 536 km east-west. . The coastal area consists of plains and numerous lagoons near the estuaries of rivers. The land is relatively flat and the altitude is generally below 500m, with more than half of the country below 200m. The Volta River basin dominates the country's river system and includes

the 8,480km² Lake Volta (the largest artificial lake in the world), formed behind the Akosombo hydro-electric dam. In the north, vegetation is predominantly savanna, while the south has rain forest interspersed with savanna.

Climate

Ghana has a tropical climate. The temperature is generally 21-32°C (70-90°F). There are two rainy seasons, from March to July and from September to October, separated by a short cool dry season in August and a relatively long dry season in the south from mid-October to March. Annual rainfall in the south averages 2,030 mm but varies greatly throughout the country, with the heaviest rainfall in the south western part.

Population

The population of Ghana is estimated at about 18.4 million and grows at 2.5% annually. Most of the population is concentrated in the southern part of the country with the highest density occurring in urban and cocoa producing areas.

The population data by Region, Sex and Capital (administrative towns) are as follows:

REGION	POPULATION	MALE	FEMALE	CAPITAL
Western	1,842,878	925,708	917,170	Takoradi
Central	1,580,047	753,053	826,994	Cape Coast
Greater Accra	2,909,643	1,433,093	1,476,550	Accra
Volta	1,612,299	775,257	837,042	Ho
Eastern	2,108,852	1,034,922	1,073,930	Koforidua
Ashanti	3,187,601	1,556,587	1,631,014	Kumasi
Brong Ahafo	1,824,822	913,035	911,787	Sunyani
Northern	1,854,994	921,138	933,856	Tamale
Upper East	917,251	437,245	480,006	Bolgatanga
Upper West	573,860	274,981	298,879	Wa
TOTAL	18,412,247	9,025,019	9,387,228	

Source: Ghana Statistical Service, 2000 Census (Provisional figures)

Religion

The population of Ghana comprises Christians, Traditional Religions and Muslims. While Christianity is the dominant religion, Islam and Traditional religions are also very well represented. Above all, there is complete freedom of religion in Ghana.

Education

Ghana's policy of liberalisation has been extended to private sector participation in education. The country's literacy rate is about 50% (Urban 63%: Rural 39.9%; Source: Statistical Services 1997). The educational system provides for a nine-year Compulsory Universal Basic Education, which is followed by a middle-level of 3-year Secondary/Technical/Commercial, and Vocational education. The tertiary level consists of Teacher Training Colleges, Diploma and Degree Awarding institutions. There are also specialised management; technical and vocational institutions responsible for human resource development which ensure an immediate availability of skilled and trainable labour force as well as technical and managerial personnel. In addition, there are special international schools which follow the curricula of some foreign examination syllabuses.

Below are the number of institutions by level and type

NO. OF INSTITUTIONS			
Level Of Education	Public	Private	Private & Public

	1994/95	1998/99	1994/95	1998/99	1994/95	1998/99
Primary Schools	11,218	11,563	916	1,552	12,134	13,115
Junior Secondary Schools	5,241	5,884	218	510	5,459	6,394
Senior Secondary Schools	452	464	51	48	503	512
Technical Institutes	21	21	40	40	61	61
Teacher Training Colleges	38	38	-	-	38	38
Polytechnics	6	8	-	-	6	8
Universities	5	5	-	2	5	7
TOTAL	16,983	17,983	1,225	2,152	18,208	20,135

Source: (Ministry of Education 1999)

Health Ghana has a good health delivery service. All regional and district capitals as well as most towns have hospitals, polyclinics or clinics. The two (2) teaching hospitals in Accra and Kumasi have facilities for treating special cases. Additionally, a number of religious organisations and private medical practitioners operate hospitals and clinics all over the country. Herbal medicine and psychic healing are also generally practised.

HEALTH INSTITUTIONS IN GHANA

	MINISTRY OF HEALTH (MOH) INSTITUTIONS							QUASI-GOVERNMENT INSTITUTION				MISSION INSTITUTIONS		PRIVATE SECTOR				TOTAL NO. OF INSTITUTIONS BY TYPE			
	Reg Hos	Dist. Hos.	Ctr/ Post	MCH Ctr	Lep/ Psy	Other (CIC)	Total MOH	Univ Hosp	Mil. Hosp	Pol/ Pris/ Hos/ Clinics	Others, eg. Mines	Hosp	Clinics	PPAG	GRMA	Hosp	Clinic	Hos. (ABEH IJLP)	Health Ctrs	Clinic	Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
REGION																					
Ashanti Region	1	12	67	24	0	3	107	1	1	1	3	12	42	2	82	40	93	71	67	246	384
Brong Ahafo Region	1	5	86	13	0	12	117	0	1	1	2	9	11	3	45	9	12	26	86	98	210
Central Region	1	6	36	16	1	19	79	1	0	1	1	3	8	5	27	5	27	18	36	103	157
Eastern Region	1	7	36	110	2	15	171	1	1	0	1	4	17	9	35	6	11	21	36	198	255
Greater Accra Region	1	3	18	20	2	3	47	1	1	2	5	2	2	3	85	35	124	47	18	242	307
Northern Region	1	5	64	18	0	6	94	0	0	0	0	2	17	2	6	0	1	10	64	50	124
Upper East Region	1	3	18	4	0	37	63	0	0	0	0	1	8	0	3	1	13	7	18	65	90
Upper West Region	1	2	42	2	0	0	47	0	0	0	0	2	16	0	5	1	3	6	42	26	74
Volta Region	1	10	124	93	1	1	230	0	1	1	0	6	5	3	19	8	11	27	124	132	283
Western Region	1	10	59	14	0	10	94	0	1	1	8	4	15	4	42	11	23	29	59	116	204
TOTAL	10	63	550	314	6	106	1054	4	6	7	20	45	141	31	349	116	318	262	550	1276	2088

SOURCE: (MINISTRY OF HEALTH, RCH, 1999)

Note: Hospitals are facilities that provide out-patient and in-patient services; health centres are facilities providing mainly out-patient and preventive services; and clinics provide only one or two types of services

Leisure The country boasts of very good golf courses, safe and unspoilt beaches with world class hotels and restaurants. Most cities have many active 'Keep Fit Clubs' which have members from different countries. There are also facilities for game fishing (mauling).

Government Ghana has a multiparty parliamentary democracy based on a constitution which guarantees the separation of powers between the executive, legislature and the judiciary. The presidency

has a four-year term and an incumbent can serve for a maximum of two terms. Also, a decentralised central government administration has been fostered at local government level where there are 10 Regional Co-ordinating Councils, 110 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies which serve to involve grassroots participation in the formulation and implementation of government policies and the general development of their areas of jurisdiction.

Media

There is a vibrant free press in the country.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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