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The Big Push: **The Biggest Story in** **the Mahama Government**

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National Anthem

God bless our homeland Ghana,
And make our nation great and strong,
Bold to defend for ever,
The cause of Freedom and of Right.
Fill our hearts with true humility
Make us cherish fearless honesty,
And help us to resist oppressor's rule
With all our will and might for evermore.

Hail to thy name, O Ghana,
To thee we make our solemn vow:
Steadfast to build together
A nation strong in Unity;
With our gifts of mind and strength of arm,
Whether night or day, in mist or storm,
In every need what'er the call may be,
To serve thee, Ghana, now and evermore.

Raise high the flag of Ghana
And one with Africa advance;
Black star of hope and honour,
To all who thirst for liberty;
Where the banner of Ghana freely flies,
May the way of freedom truly lie
Arise, arise, O sons of Ghanaland,
And under God march on for evermore.

National Pledge

I promise on my honour to be faithful and
loyal to Ghana my Motherland.
I pledge myself to the service of Ghana,
with all my strength and with all my heart.
I promise to hold in high esteem our
heritage, won for us through the blood and
toil of our fathers; and I pledge myself in all
things to uphold and defend the good name
of Ghana.
So help me God.

The Big Push: The Biggest Story in the Mahama Government

By: Bala Ali



IN his 2026 State of the Nation (SONA) Address, President John Dramani Mahama said, “the whole of Ghana is under construction.” Many would have called it political rhetoric or usual hyperbolic expressions of a typical politician, but that is not the case. Across the country, from Wa to Aflao, from Sunyani to Ho, graders are scraping earth, bridges are rising over rivers, and stalled roads are finally moving.

The engine behind is “The Big Push” — Mahama’s \$10 billion flagship infrastructure programme launched in September 2025. For a government elected on a “reset” agenda, roads have become the most visible, most debated, and potentially most consequential part of its first term. In Ghana, roads are not just about

asphalt. They determine whether a cocoa farmer gets value, whether a sick child reaches a clinic on time, and whether a truck from Burkina Faso spends six hours or 16 hours to reach Tema Port.

President Mahama calls it the “Big Push” in the classic development sense because it is a coordinated surge of investment designed to break Ghana out of a cycle of underdevelopment and create a virtuous cycle of growth, jobs, and private investment.

According to the Finance Minister, Dr Cassiel Ato Forson, GHS13.8 billion from the 2025 budget has been sunk into the “Big Push” initiative. This money is allocated for roads, with at least two billion USD injected annually. This

represents about one per cent of the country's GDP. Over 40 roads are expected to be constructed, reconstructed and upgraded under this initiative. So far, the government has approved the commencement of 32 of these roads.

To ensure the effective implementation of the "Big Push" programme, the president has rolled out a policy shift: "pay-as-you-work." Under this policy, the government owes no Big Push contractor. According to the President, certificates are paid immediately to keep work moving. This has resulted in his government clearing nearly ten billion cedis owed to contractors by the previous government as of the end of 2025.

The initiative is indeed a big push because the roads involved are strategic drivers of the country's economy. One may call them economic lifelines. For instance, the first sod-cuttings targeted international and inter-regional corridors. A typical example of such roads is the reconstruction of the 195km Wenchi-Sawla-Wa Road, which connects Bono East, Savannah, and Upper West Regions. This road is designed as a new international route to Burkina Faso and Mali.

To promote trade with neighbouring West African countries, a 99km Ho-Denu Road is also being reconstructed to link Ghana to Togo through Aflao and connects to Nigeria along the West African coastal trade route. A host of roads are also being constructed, reconstructed or upgraded across the sixteen regions to ensure a fair distribution of the national cake.

Post-harvest losses form part of the major problems in the agricultural sector, a phenomenon that adversely affects farmers, consumers and the nation as a whole. To address this, the "Big Push" also targets roads in key food-producing areas. Examples of these roads include the Techiman Nkonsia-Wenchi road, Sunyani Outer Ring Road, Kumasi Outer Ring Road, Eastern Quadrant, and the rehabilitation of Kasoa-Winneba Road. The Western North Region is not left out, as long-delayed cocoa roads that are "crucial arteries for moving cocoa, timber, food products, and

people" are now under accelerated completion.

The socio-economic importance of the "Big Push" initiative makes it the biggest story of this administration. The construction of these roads will reduce the cost of doing business. This stems from the fact that poor roads inflate transport costs. For instance, the Greater Kumasi By-Pass and Ofankor-Nsawam dualisation will keep goods moving on the country's busiest trade route. Similarly, the Dodowa-Afienya-Dawhenya road will reduce travel time along Accra's eastern growth belt.

The initiative also seeks to create jobs and build the capacities of local contractors as the project is designed to target Ghanaian contractors. About 490,000 jobs will be created in the built environment. Local suppliers of cement, bitumen, aggregates and haulage will experience a demand spike, which will in turn skyrocket their income.

Moreover, the initiative intends to promote agriculture and ensure food security. To this extent, feeder roads within the Big Push constituencies are being constructed to connect farms and markets. This is the case in the Oti Region, where projects specifically target access to trade, agriculture, healthcare, and education services. Better roads will play an instrumental role in reducing post-harvest losses as farmers can easily get their produce to the markets.

Access to social services also makes the Big Push a big story. With these roads, citizens can easily access schools, hospitals and other places such as markets. Many a time, the sick are pronounced dead upon reaching the hospitals because the ambulances are unable to reach on time due to the bad nature of the roads. Better roads mean ambulances get to hospitals faster; children get to school reliably on time and markets stay stocked.

The scope of the Big Push and its place in promoting the standard of living of the Ghanaian taxpayer makes it the biggest story of the John Mahama government. The citizens will reap the full benefits of their taxes if the initiative is implemented as planned.

Nationalistic Radical Approach: The Last Resort in Ghana's War Against Illegal Mining

By: Bala Ali



As the country continues to lose its forest reserves with its water bodies becoming toxic due to illegal mining, the government can no longer approach the fight against this illegality with half-measures. A tougher, unapologetically Ghana-first strategy may be the only way to redeem the rivers and the land from the activities of these illegal miners.

Due to illegal mining, the Pra River that used to run clear enough to see one's feet now looks like a diluted chocolate, thick with silt, mercury and the waste of hundreds of illegal mining pits that scar its banks. What is more sickening is the fact that cocoa farms in the Western, Eastern and the Ashanti Regions have been swallowed by craters.

Illegal mining, locally called *galamsey* has become Ghana's most visible environmental crisis. Successive governments have launched task forces, burnt excavators, deployed soldiers, and banned mining in forest reserves. Yet the pits multiply. The reason is simple: half-measures do not work against a network that thrives on collusion, poverty, and weak enforcement.

If Ghana is serious about saving its land and water, it must consider a nationalistic radical approach. Not for its own sake, but because every other option has been tried and found wanting.

The Cost of Inaction

The cost of illegal mining to the nation is numerous. It not only destroys the environment

and poses a threat to public health, but it also costs the country huge sums of money that could have been channelled into development projects like roads, schools, hospitals, etc.

Ghana loses an estimated 2.5% of its GDP annually to illegal mining through environmental degradation, lost agricultural output, and healthcare costs. The Ghana Water Company spends millions treating water polluted by mercury and cyanide. In 2023, the company warned that if pollution continued at the current rate, Ghana would import water within a decade.

The human cost is steeper. Farmers displaced from ancestral lands become laborers on their own farms for foreign financiers. Children drop out of school to wash ore in rivers. In communities like Prestea and Dunkwa, mercury exposure has led to rising cases of skin diseases, miscarriages, and neurological disorders.

This is not just an environmental problem. It is a sovereignty problem. When foreign financiers, equipment, and labour operate with impunity in Ghanaian forests, they undermine the state's control over its territory and resources.

The government's approach has largely been reactive and depoliticized. Operation Vanguard, Operation Halt, and the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Illegal Mining all had short-term success. Excavators were seized, camps dismantled, and arrests made.

Why Conventional Methods Have Failed

Certain factors have undermined the fight against this avaricious-inspired crime. Number one of these factors is political protection and corruption. Multiple reports, including the 2021 exposé by Prof. Frimpong-Boateng, point to high-level interference that shields illegal operators. When miners know they can buy their way out, deterrence collapses.

An equally notable factor that undermines the fight against galamsey is the economic push factor. For a 22-year-old in a cocoa village with no jobs, a job paying GH¢200 a day on a

galamsey site is not a crime. It is survival. Without alternative livelihoods, crackdowns only displace the problem for a few months.

The fight against this life-threatening illegality is either poorly coordinated or not coordinated at all. The Minerals Commission, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Forestry Commission and the police all have mandates to deal with this menace but coordination is weak. Illegal miners move from one district to another faster than the bureaucracy can respond.

A radical approach does not mean lawlessness. It means Ghana putting its territorial integrity and ecological survival above convenience, diplomatic caution, and short-term political cost. Four pillars define it:

Nationalistic Radical Approach

Ghana must treat gold and land as strategic national assets, like oil and bauxite. That means banning all foreign involvement in small-scale mining without exception, as the law already states, and enforcing it with criminal penalties for directors, financiers, and equipment suppliers. It also means reviewing mining leases in forest reserves and revoking those that violate environmental conditions, regardless of investor nationality.

Militarised but accountable enforcement is required to deal with this perpetuated problem. Task forces need legal backing to operate without political interference. A dedicated, vetted Environmental Security Unit under the Ghana Armed Forces, with its own court, could prosecute cases within 30 days. Speed matters. Justice delayed in galamsey cases is justice denied to rivers and communities.

Radical enforcement without alternatives creates resentment. The state must scale up programs like the National Alternative Employment and Livelihood Programme, but link it to land restoration. Pay exminers to plant trees, rehabilitate pits, and farm. Make restoration a paid job with dignity.

The public should be mobilised and educated to

view the fight against galamsey as a collective civic duty. Illegal mining persists because it is seen as someone else's problem. A national campaign that frames clean rivers and forests as patriotic duty can shift norms. Schools, churches, and traditional authorities must be empowered to report and reject galamsey in their areas. In Rwanda, community-led anti-corruption drives worked because citizens own the process.

The Argument for Radicalism

Critics will call this approach extreme. They will cite investment risk, human rights, and diplomatic friction. But the alternative is worse. Ghana cannot claim to be a lower-middle-income country with aspirations of industrialisation while it cannot protect its own water sources.

Radicalism here means speed, consistency, and a refusal to accept that “this is how things are done.” Singapore cleaned up its rivers in a

decade by being ruthless about enforcement and public discipline. Rwanda rebuilt its institutions after the genocide by demanding accountability from the top down. Ghana's challenge is smaller, but it requires the same political will.

Conclusion

Ghana has exhausted the soft options. Dialogues, moratoriums, and selective crackdowns have not changed the trajectory. The rivers are dirtier, the forests smaller, and the stakes higher.

A nationalistic radical approach is not about xenophobia or brute force. It is about a state deciding that its land, water resources, and people are worth defending without apology. If Ghana does not take that decision now, the cost of recovery will be measured not in cedis, but in a country that can no longer feed, water, or govern itself.



Selection of schools under CSSPS, Candidates preferred choice, BECE results and middle men

By: Adwoa Koramah Anokye-Gyimah



Every year, a quiet anxiety grips hundreds of thousands of Ghanaian families on issues relating to BECE results and school placement into SHS. It descends not during the Basic Education Certificate Examination itself, but in the weeks that follow, when the Computerised School Selection and Placement System, widely known as the CSSPS, delivers its verdict on where a child will spend the next three years of their life. For many families, the placement slip that emerges from the CSSPS portal is either a dream fulfilled or a heartbreak. And in the shadow of that anxiety, a dangerous and illegal trade has taken root.

CSSPS: A System Created for Order and Fairness

The CSSPS was introduced by the Ghana Education Service to bring fairness and

transparency to the placement of BECE candidates into Senior High Schools across the country. The system was designed to replace the older, largely manual systems that were often accused of bias, corruption and favouritism. Under the CSSPS, placement is based on a combination of objective criteria. These typically include a candidate's BECE performance, the cut-off requirements of various schools, and the candidate's selected school preferences.

The core promise of the CSSPS is simple; your scores and your choices determine your school placement. This means that, the system should match candidates to available school spaces using rules that can be applied consistently. This approach aims to reduce manipulation by individuals who previously might have claimed they could "secure" admission through



CSSPS

Computerised Schools Selection And Placement System

connections or payments.

Under the CSSPS framework, candidates are required to select schools in categories. Category A schools are the most competitive and prestigious institutions, while Category B and C schools provide broader placement options. In a significant reform ahead of the 2026 BECE, the Director-General of the Ghana Education Service, Professor Ernest Kofi Davis, announced that candidates would now be permitted to select eight schools in total, up from seven in the previous year. Crucially, they must now pick two Category A schools, one boarding and one day school within their district or vicinity. This is a planned effort to solve the ongoing problem of too many students applying to top institutions, which has often disrupted the placement process.

The CSSPS was created to remove bias and reduce human interference. But the process, now digitised, still operates in a human environment where anxiety, misunderstanding, and the desire for shortcuts can create opportunities for exploitation.

For CSSPS to work effectively, stakeholders such as candidates, parents, school administrators, and the general public must understand how it operates, what it can and cannot do, and which rumours are misleading.

Candidate preferred choice: Where aspirations meet reality

Candidates are generally invited to select preferred schools during the placement process. These choices reflect aspirations of these young pupils or where they wish to find themselves in their next academic journey. A school may represent academic excellence, reputation, or a strong extra curricular environment. Many parents also influence choices based on past experience, advice from friends, or assumptions about how “competitive” a school is.

But preference does not automatically mean placement. The gap between preference and reality herein lies the central tension of the CSSPS, the chasm between what candidates want and what the system can deliver. Therefore, a candidate with an impressive BECE aggregate has no guarantee of placement at their first-choice schools, even if they are academically deserving. This is because the algorithm must balance raw scores, programme demand, aggregate and residential preference considerations simultaneously.

This is where confusion begins. Some candidates interpret CSSPS as a system where preferences should always override results. Others interpret it as a system where results are the only factor, ignoring that school selection is

still preference-driven. Both views are incomplete to the extent that the CSSPS placement algorithm neither overrides preferences in favour of raw scores, nor treats results in isolation from candidate choice. It weighs both simultaneously, alongside school capacity and programme demand to produce a placement that reflects merit within the boundaries of what candidates have selected.

GES has been under pressure to correct this widely circulated misconception that, fixed cut off points determine who qualifies for a particular school choice. The service has officially debunked tables circulating on social media purporting to show that only candidates with certain aggregates can access first-choice schools. The GES insists, placement is not a simple hierarchy of scores, it is a multi-variable computation. Yet this complexity, however well intentioned, breeds confusion, and confusion breeds opportunity for those willing to exploit it.

The correct understanding is that CSSPS uses a decision logic, and preferences guide the ranking of schools, while BECE performance and capacity determine whether those preferences can be satisfied.

BECE Results: The academic gatekeeper

BECE results remain the academic gatekeeper to senior high school placement. The results provide an objective measure of student performance and are used in determining eligibility for different schools.

Because BECE results are crucial, they also shape how cut-offs operate. A candidate with strong academic performance is more likely to be placed in highly competitive schools if those schools still have vacancies within the placement rules. A candidate with lower academic performance may be placed into less competitive schools, depending on the cutoffs and the number of vacancies available.

However, BECE results do not tell the entire story about school quality or student success after placement. Yet, within the placement

system, results are the most measurable indicator available at the time. That is why public communication matters, parents must understand that CSSPS is not “guesswork,” and it is not based on personal influence.

The challenge is that BECE results are sometimes debated publicly, and any debate can create openings for rumours. If people believe results can be “negotiated,” then middlemen find it easier to convince families to pay.

The Middlemen Problem: When Transparency Meets Human Greed

In the corridors of district education offices, on WhatsApp groups, and through whispered referrals at school gates, a shadowy industry operates in plain sight. Self-styled placement agents (middlemen) who claim the ability to secure preferred school placements for a fee have become persistent during placement season. Their pitch is irresistible to a desperate parent: confident, reassuring, and tailored precisely to the fear of a child being placed far from home or in a school they consider beneath their aspirations. The most dangerous part of this problem is that it thrives on hope and confusion.

The fees demanded by these middlemen vary from a few thousand to even more than ten thousand cedis. Their methods range from exploiting genuine loopholes in the system to outright fraud, fabricating placement documents, intercepting placement data, or simply collecting money and disappearing. The victims are almost always families from lower-income backgrounds who can least afford to lose the money and are most vulnerable to the social pressure of securing a child's future.

The Ghana Education Service has been unequivocal on this matter. Prof. Ernest Kofi Davis, the Director of GES at a 2025 press briefing, declared that school placement is free, totally free and not for sale. He warned that anyone selling placement services is engaged in an illegal business with no connection whatsoever to the Ministry of Education or GES. District and Regional Education Offices

have been designated as Placement Resolution Centres, making it unnecessary for any family to pay anyone to resolve placement challenges. Yet the warnings, repeated year after year, have not halted the trade.

The persistence of these middlemen is not merely a story of greed but a story of systemic gaps that fraudsters have learned and taken advantage of. When the system places a child in a school hundreds of kilometres away from their family with no hostel facilities, or when a child with strong grades finds themselves in a school he/she considers a mismatch for his/her abilities, parents understandably reach for any solution available. The perception that the CSSPS is opaque, that connections matter, and that the system can be navigated by those with the right contacts, is the oxygen that keeps the middleman trade alive.

GES has taken steps to reduce the surface area for exploitation by the creation of a pre placement verification window. This was introduced in 2025 and allowed candidates to review and correct their submitted details before final placement commenced. Errors in gender entries, school codes, and programme codes, which had previously created unnecessary challenges and provided middlemen with pretexts to offer their services, were significantly reduced. The 2026 reforms, including the expanded eight-school selection and the mandatory inclusion of a day school in the candidate's district, are further attempts to close the gaps.

The Role of Government and Stakeholders: If the goal is to fully protect candidates and reduce exploitation, all stakeholders must take proactive steps.

Public Education Before and During Placement: Government and education agencies should run clear, consistent public campaigns explaining how CSSPS works, how preferences interact with results, and why

placements cannot be “bought.”

Transparent Feedback Channels: Families should have easy access to official lines for complaints, verification, and correction of errors. When support is accessible, the space for middlemen shrinks.

Stronger Enforcement Against Fraud: Any individual caught selling false placement opportunities, impersonating officials, or demanding money for unverified “upgrades” should be prosecuted.

School and Community Accountability: Headmasters, guidance coordinators, and community leaders must be engaged to discourage informal payments and guide families to official processes.

Guidance on Preference Strategy: Candidates should be advised on how to choose schools realistically. A well-informed preference list reduces the risk of disappointment and the temptation to seek unlawful interventions.

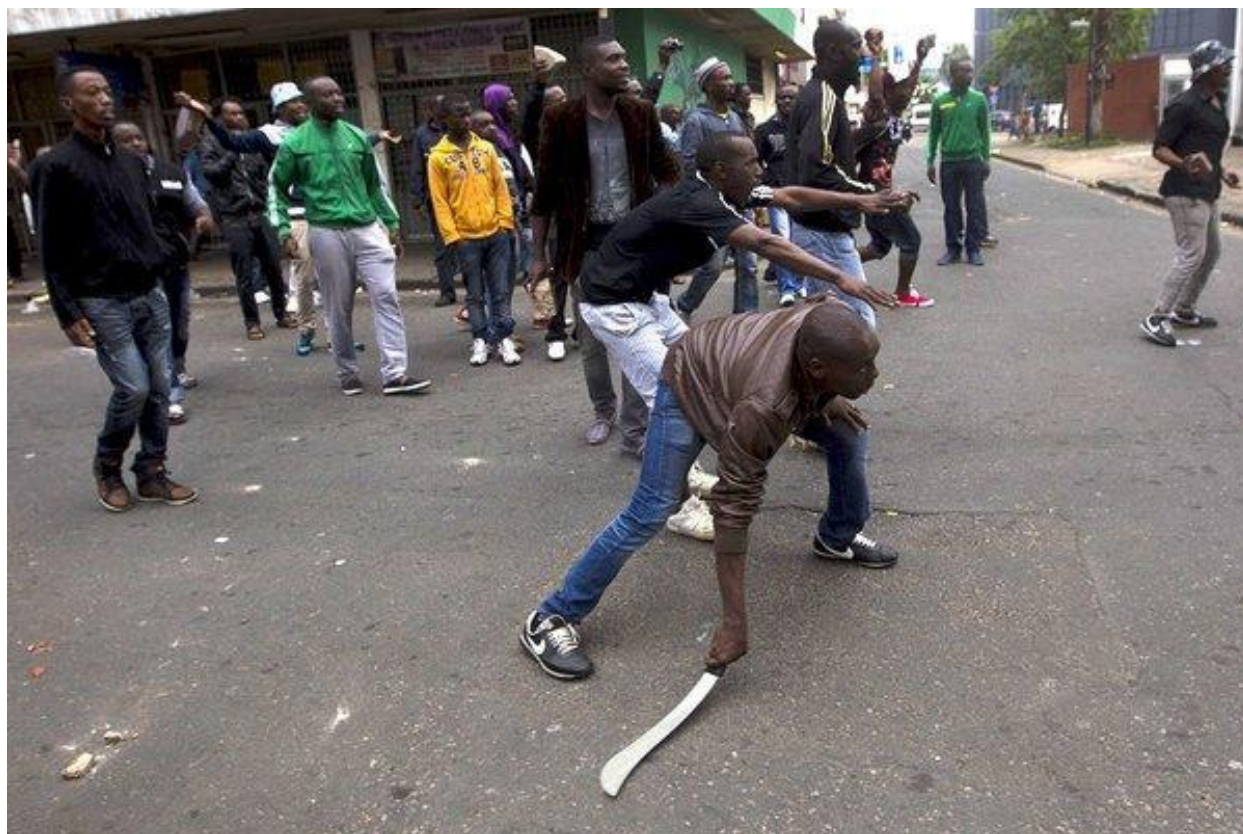
Conclusion

CSSPS represents a modern attempt to make school selection fairer and less vulnerable to manipulation. Candidate preferences and BECE results are meant to be the main drivers of placement. But a system is only as trusted as its outcomes feel to those it serves. The emergence of middlemen shows that installing a system is not enough; trust must also be protected.

When families understand the rules, when official support is accessible, and when fraud is punished, CSSPS can fulfil its promise. Ghana's future leaders deserve a process that is transparent, predictable, and free from exploitation. The placement season should be a moment of achievement and hope, not a battlefield where middlemen profit from uncertainty.

Xenophobia Attacks in South Africa and Other Parts of Africa: The Bane of African Unity

By: Adwoa Koramah Anokye-Gyimah



Africa, a continent rich in diversity, culture and history, has long aspired to unity and solidarity among its nations. From Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's call for a united Africa to the formation of the African Union, Africans have envisioned a continent where nations collaborate for mutual prosperity and development. However, this vision is continuously undermined by recurring xenophobic attacks, particularly in South Africa and other parts of the continent. These attacks not only inflict immediate harm on innocent individuals but also represent a pressing challenge to the dream of African unity.

Xenophobia, the fear or hatred of foreigners, is not a new phenomenon globally. Yet, in Africa, where colonial boundaries often forced diverse

ethnic groups into arbitrary nation states, it takes on a particularly complex and painful dimension. Many African countries host refugees and migrants fleeing conflict, economic hardship, or political instability from neighbouring states. Ideally, African solidarity should foster protection and integration, but instead, hostile attitudes and violent attacks often prevail.

In recent years, South Africa has been at the epicentre of xenophobic violence, with repeated attacks targeting foreign nationals particularly Black Africans. Migrants from countries such as Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Ghana and Malawi have been targeted through looting, intimidation, displacement and in some cases, murder.

The most recent wave of xenophobic attacks erupted in April 2026, with anti-migrant groups such as Operation Dudula leading attacks on foreign nationals in Johannesburg, Pretoria and other cities. Shops, properties and assets owned by migrants were looted and individuals assaulted and injured.

Foreign nationals have also faced discrimination, being forced to produce identification documents at schools, hospitals and business premises.

A newer citizen-led group called the March and March Movement, emerging in areas like Durban and spreading to Johannesburg have called for the removal of foreign nationals from South Africa. This group has also pressured the government to crack down on illegal migration.

The actions of these groups have resulted in a widespread harassment, job losses and violence against migrants, sparking severe diplomatic tensions and leading neighboring countries like Ghana to organize voluntary repatriation flights for their citizens. This evokes painful memories of the apartheid era, reminding the world that xenophobia in South Africa is not an aberration: it is a pattern.

Although xenophobia attack is often associated with South Africa, anti-migrant hostility festers across the continent in many other forms. West African traders face discrimination in East African commercial centres. Ethiopian and Somali-owned businesses are periodically targeted in other African cities. In Côte d'Ivoire, the politically weaponised concept of ivoirité was used for years to exclude northerners and migrants from citizenship and land rights, encouraging prolonged civil conflict.

In Libya, Sub-Saharan African migrants are subjected to detention, forced labour, and violence which has drawn repeated condemnation from international human rights bodies. Such developments undermine Pan-Africanism and weaken Africa's collective progress.

South Africa's case is particularly painful because many African countries sacrificed

greatly during the anti-apartheid struggle. Countries like Nigeria, Zambia, Tanzania and Ghana supported South Africa's fight for freedom financially and diplomatically. Thousands of South Africans found refuge in the neighbouring African states during apartheid regime. It is therefore deeply ironic that fellow Africans are now being attacked in the very country they once helped liberate.

Several factors contribute to the persistence of xenophobia attack in South Africa and beyond. One primary driver is economic challenges. High unemployment rates, poverty and inequality create an environment where locals perceive immigrants as rivals for scarce jobs, housing, and resources. Many South Africans believe that migrants are responsible for taking jobs and social benefits. This perception, whether accurate or exaggerated, fuels resentment and scapegoating.

Politicians and anti-immigrant groups have been accused of exploiting these frustrations for political gain, portraying migrants as the source of crime and economic hardship. This manipulation deepens divisions and legitimizes hostility towards foreigners.

However, blaming migrants for economic problems ignores more important issues like corruption, poor governance, inequality and weak economic policies which are the root causes of hardship. Evidence shows that foreign nationals contribute significantly to the economy by creating businesses, providing services and paying taxes. Xenophobia therefore becomes a scapegoating mechanism that diverts attention from real governance failures. After attacking immigrants and looting their shops, how many jobs have been created?

The humanitarian impact of xenophobic violence is immense and devastating. It leads to humanitarian crises such as loss of lives, businesses and destruction of property. Victims are often left traumatized and stranded without state support. In 2008, for instance, xenophobic violence in South Africa left more than 60 people dead and over 100,000 displaced.

The consequences of Xenophobia extend far beyond the immediate humanitarian toll. It damages diplomatic relations between African countries. In the past, attacks in South Africa triggered tensions with Nigeria and other African nations. Some countries even considered retaliatory measures against South African businesses operating within their borders. Such tensions undermine regional cooperation and integration efforts.

The African Union's Agenda 2063, for example, envisions a peaceful, integrated, and prosperous Africa. Xenophobic attacks threaten this vision by breeding mistrust among member states and citizens who should be allies. Neighbouring countries whose nationals are targeted may respond with diplomatic protests, affecting bilateral relations.

Economically, xenophobia stifles the free movement of people and goods, which is essential for continental growth. Migrants contribute to host economies through labour, entrepreneurship and cultural enrichment. When they are driven away or marginalized, both the migrants' home countries and host nations suffer losses.

Also, xenophobia attacks contradict Africa's cultural and historical identity. Africans have long embraced communal living and solidarity. During liberation struggles, African countries relied heavily on one another for support. Xenophobic attacks therefore represent a betrayal of shared African values.

Moreover, destroying businesses owned by migrants or linked to foreigners undermines economic growth. The continent is often portrayed internationally through a lens of conflict, insecurity and instability. Recurrent xenophobic violence feeds into these negative stereotypes, which discourages investment, tourism and international partnerships.

Africa is currently pursuing ambitious initiatives such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which seeks to boost intra-African trade and movement. But economic integration cannot flourish where Africans fear violence in neighbouring countries.

Addressing this issue demands collective action, informed policies, and a commitment to the ideals that underpin the African dream. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has repeatedly condemned xenophobic



attacks and called on governments to protect migrants and uphold human rights. Civil society groups and human rights organizations have also urged African leaders to act decisively against hate speech and violence. But condemnation alone cannot solve the problem.

Governments must address unemployment and inequality, which often fuel resentment against migrants. Economic reforms, youth empowerment and stronger social protection systems can reduce the desperation that extremists exploit. Security agencies must also prosecute perpetrators of xenophobic violence swiftly and fairly to end the culture and pattern of attacks.

Education is key to long-term change that can help fight the change against xenophobic attacks. African governments must invest more in education and public awareness campaigns that promote tolerance and Pan-African values. Young Africans need to understand the history of African solidarity and the dangers of division. Curriculums that promote African history, cultural diversity, and human rights can foster empathy and respect among young people. Intercultural dialogue initiatives that bring together locals and migrants can break down barriers and build community trust.

Also, Political leaders must stop using anti-migrant rhetoric for electoral advantage. Political leaders have a responsibility to promote messages of unity and tolerance. They must unequivocally condemn xenophobic attacks and hold perpetrators accountable.

Civil society organizations, religious groups, and the media play vital roles in shaping public attitudes and can help counter misinformation and fear. Regional bodies like the African Union must strengthen mechanisms to prevent and

respond to xenophobic violence. This includes monitoring incidents, facilitating dialogue among member states, and supporting programs that promote integration and social cohesion.

The struggle against xenophobia attack is ultimately a struggle for the soul of Africa. The continent's strength lies in its diversity and the shared aspirations of its people. Overcoming xenophobia is essential to unlocking the full potential of African unity and development. The media must also avoid sensational reporting that stereotypes migrants and can inflame tensions. Instead, journalists should highlight the positive contributions migrants make to African societies and encourage balanced public discussions.

Also, Africa cannot achieve genuine unity while Africans are hunted, harassed or discriminated against in fellow African countries. The vision of a borderless and prosperous continent depends on mutual respect, tolerance and shared humanity. African nations can draw inspiration from successful examples of integration and cooperation within the continent and beyond. By embracing the values of solidarity, respect, and justice, Africa can transform from a patchwork of divided states into a powerful, harmonious community.

Xenophobic attacks in South Africa and other parts of Africa represent a serious obstacle to the continent's unity and progress. If Africans continue to see one another as enemies rather than partners, the dream of continental integration will remain elusive. But if governments, citizens and institutions commit themselves to justice, inclusion and solidarity, Africa can overcome this challenge and move closer to the unity envisioned by its founding fathers.

One Click, One Visa- Ghana's Digital Gateway to Tourism and Investment

By: Joyce Adwoa Animia Ocran



For years, the journey out of the shores of Ghana began not at the airport, but in the often crowded waiting rooms of Embassies and High Commissions. Travelers faced the hurdle of physical paperwork, courier fees, and the anxious wait for a stamped passport to return by mail. That era is fading away through the introduction of an electronic visa system, a shift that replaces embassy queues with a digital interface accessible from any smartphone or computer.

This transition represents a change in how the nation interacts with the world, positioning it as a modern destination ready for the fast-paced demands of global travel.

The electronic visa, or e-visa, streamlines the

entry process by allowing visitors to apply, pay, and receive authorization online. By removing the requirement to visit a consulate, the government has effectively dismantled one of the most persistent barriers that previously impeded entry into the country.

This digital transformation comes at a time when competition for international visitors is fierce. Neighboring nations and global hubs are all vying for the same pool of tourists and investors. Ghana's decision to modernize its borders is a direct response to the evolving expectations of the modern traveler who values speed and convenience above all else.

Tourism officials view this change as a primary driver for the next phase of the "Black star

experience”, following the success story of "Beyond the Return" initiative which saw a surge in arrivals from the African diaspora into the country.

High visa fees and complex application processes often deterred casual travelers or those making last-minute decisions. With the e-visa, a family in Maryland or a solo traveler in Berlin can finalize their travel plans within minutes. This ease of access is expected to increase arrival numbers, particularly during the festive December period when the capital city of Accra becomes a global cultural epicenter.

The economic implications extend far beyond the hospitality sector. While hotels, tour operators, and artisans stand to benefit from increased foot traffic, the business community sees a different kind of value.

Investors looking for opportunities in Ghana’s emerging technology, agriculture, and manufacturing sectors require agility. The ability to secure travel clearance quickly allows executives to respond to market needs, attend board meetings, or conduct site visits without the month-long lead time previously required. This accessibility paints the nation as an open, business-friendly environment that respects the time and resources of international partners.

Data security and border integrity remain at the forefront of this digital shift. The new system integrates advanced biometric checks and real-time verification protocols. This ensures that while the front end is user-friendly, the back end provides immigration officers with more accurate information than traditional paper methods.

Digital records allow for better tracking of visitor trends, enabling the government to tailor its marketing strategies based on actual data. Resulting into an understanding of which regions are showing the most interest allowing for targeted campaigns that maximize the impact of every cedi spent.

The success of the e-visa policy depends on the robustness of the underlying technology. Maintaining a seamless user experience is essential to ensure that the digital gateway remains an invitation rather than a frustration. Reliable servers, clear communication, and efficient support systems are the pillars that will support this new architecture.

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the nations that thrive are those that embrace transparency and efficiency. Ghana’s shift to a digital visa system is a clear signal that the country is not just waiting for the future but is actively building the infrastructure to host it.

Looking ahead, the policy serves as a blueprint for wider regional integration. As a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Ghana’s modernization could inspire similar upgrades across the continent. A more accessible Africa is a more prosperous Africa.

By taking this step, Ghana reinforces its role as a leader in continental tourism and a beacon for those seeking a gateway to West African markets. The "One Click, One Visa" approach is more than a technical upgrade. It is a promise of hospitality, a commitment to growth, and a digital handshake to the rest of the world.

What the UN General Assembly Resolution on the Transatlantic Slave Trade Means for Ghana and Africa

By: Joyce Adwoa Animia Ocran



THE United Nations General Assembly Hall in New York erupted in applause on March 25, 2026, following a vote that reshaped the global discourse on historical justice. Spearheaded by Ghana and backed by the African Union and the Caribbean states, “Resolution A/80/250” formally designated the transatlantic trade in enslaved Africans and subsequent racialized chattel slavery as the gravest crime against humanity. The ballot concluded with 123 nations voting in favor, 52 abstaining, and three voting against the resolution.

For Ghana, a nation whose coastline is still dotted with the castles that once held captive

millions of human beings, the victory carries immense weight. President John Dramani Mahama introduced the motion to transform remembrance into institutional accountability by framing the four hundred-year industry of human extraction not merely as a historical tragedy but as a systemic crime with ongoing economic consequences.

The resolution elevates the push for African reparatory justice to the highest level of international diplomacy.

The immediate value of the resolution lies in its explicit language regarding reparations. It establishes that addressing historical wrongs

through formal apologies, the restitution of looted cultural artifacts, and financial compensation represents a concrete path toward healing.

For generations, conversations about reparations remained sidelined as domestic issues or symbolic gestures. However, the resolution grounds the debate within a structured international framework, validating decades of advocacy across the continent and the African diaspora.

The resolution uncovers deep geopolitical fractures between the Global South and wealthy Western nations. The three opposing votes came from the United States, Israel, and Argentina. Meanwhile, the United Kingdom and all twenty-seven European Union member states abstained. Opposing delegations argued that labeling one historical atrocity as the gravest crime minimizes other genocides.

Western diplomats also asserted that modern international law cannot apply retrospectively to actions that were legal under the laws of the states participating in the trade centuries ago. The United States delegation characterized the resolution as a politicized attempt to redistribute modern resources based on distant history.

African leaders viewed these objections as a refusal to acknowledge how the slave trade actively engineered modern global inequalities. UN officials noted that the forced removal of millions of young, able-bodied people created a hollowing-out effect that stifled West African development for centuries.

While European empires built generational wealth, banking systems, and industrial infrastructure from the fruits of enslaved labor, African societies faced demographic collapse and instability.

The declaration provides a legal and moral foundation for Africa to demand structural reforms in global governance. United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres noted that true reparatory justice must include respecting African ownership of natural resources and dismantling systemic barriers in the global

financial architecture.

The resolution reinforces the African Union plan to establish an African-based Global Reparations Fund in partnership with the Caribbean Community. This proposed fund aims to address the lingering structural injustices of colonialism and slavery by financing education, healthcare, and economic development across the continent.

Though General Assembly resolutions are non-binding and lack direct enforcement mechanisms, their political utility is substantial. They reflect an evolving international consensus and shift the burden of proof onto nations that resist accountability.

In 2001, during the World Conference against Racism in Durban, Western delegations walked out to avoid language that defined slavery as a crime against humanity. Today, the same countries are isolated in a global forum where a clear majority opposes silent submission.

The consensus achieved in New York strengthens Ghana's position as the intellectual and spiritual gateway for the global African diaspora. Building on its Year of Return initiatives, Accra has successfully transformed local heritage tourism into a coordinated international legal strategy. The challenge now transitions from the halls of the United Nations to national capitals, where African states must leverage this resolution to negotiate binding bilateral agreements.

The vote signals that the consequences of the transatlantic slave trade are no longer treated as closed chapters of history.

For Africa, the resolution is an authoritative acknowledgment that modern global poverty and underdevelopment are tied to a deliberate historical industry of human exploitation.

With the successful passage of this resolution, African diplomacy has established that international peace cannot exist without historical truth, and truth requires a commitment to structural repair.

Coding the Future: Why Phase Two of the One Million Coders Programme Matters for Ghana's Digital Economy

By: Edem Ernestina Agblevor

GHANA is undergoing a major digital transformation, moving away from traditional economic form of growth toward a technology-driven future with greater opportunities and growth. At the center of this change is the One Million Coders Programme (OMCP), a flagship training initiative led by the Ministry of Communications, Digital Technology, and Innovations.

Introduced as a key part of the national “Reset Ghana Agenda,” the OMCP programme aims to help the country move from being mainly a consumer of technology to becoming a creator and global leader in digital innovation. The project has now entered its next important phase of development.

The launch for registrations for Phase Two marks an important step in strengthening Ghana’s digital transformation. While the pilot and early stages showed the country’s strong interest in technology—attracting more than 90,000 applications within the first 48 hours—Phase Two is designed to turn that interest into long-term economic growth and resilience.

This stage is significant because it moves beyond basic digital literacy and focuses on building an AI-ready workforce, promoting inclusive economic opportunities, and positioning Ghana as a leading technology and outsourcing hub in West Africa.

The Phase Two emphasis is on advanced digital and technical skills because previous programmes mainly focused on basic coding concepts and foundational web development, but this new phase is aimed at developing stronger, industry-relevant competencies that prepare participants for the future of work in the



global digital economy.

Through the modern architecture rolled out nationwide, participants can choose specialised tracks ranging across Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced skill lines. The curriculum for Phase Two targeting advanced training domains includes: Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning: Crafting algorithmic models locally to address agricultural yields, logistical bottlenecks, and financial tracking.

Data Science and Analytics: Processing regional infrastructure data to assist municipal and corporate decision-making frameworks.

Cybersecurity & Cloud Computing: Preserving digital sovereignty and building fortified defences for public sector systems.

Full-Stack Software Engineering: Developing local applications, from frontend (In technology and software development, frontend refers to

the part of a website, app, or software that users can see and interact with directly.) Data Protection Compliance: Training certified data officers to ensure lawful handling within Ghana's legal frameworks.

By tying these curricula directly to the newly launched National AI Strategy, Phase Two moves past general tech tutoring. It actively shapes the targeted intellect required to run modern automated corporate structures, ensuring Ghanaian youth are globally competitive remote assets and self-sustaining tech entrepreneurs.

Radically expanding Digital Inclusion and Equity persistent challenge within emerging tech ecosystems is unequal development; technical skills frequently pool inside primary cities while rural regions, women, and marginalised groups face digital exclusion.

Phase Two systematically targets this imbalance through explicit structural design, turning the initiative into a true national movement. By leveraging a flexible, hybrid learning model combining expansive virtual instructor-led training with strategically situated physical classrooms, the initiative breaks geographic barriers.

To ensure true democratisation, Phase Two preserves 50,000 dedicated training seats strictly for persons with disabilities (PWDs), backed by targeted accessibility accommodations built directly into the One Million Coders Portal.

This strong focus helps close the digital gap for the many young people who are currently outside the traditional education or employment systems. By providing free technology education, the programme creates opportunities for social and economic advancement.

The Phase Two of the programme is also closely linked to the broader US\$3 billion Digital Jobs Initiative, serving as the key human capital driver behind the investment programme. The phase will support the establishment of physical

centres for cybersecurity training and advanced artificial intelligence (AI) research, while also integrating digital literacy and programming into technical and educational institutions.

The success of Phase Two is already gaining strong support from major international companies. One example is MTN Ghana, which has committed US\$2 million to the initiative as part of its long-term goals for youth empowerment and digital inclusion.

Furthermore, partnerships with corporate organisations are supporting the development of a US\$25 million ICT Centre that will function as a hub for skills training, technology development, innovation, and collaborative workspaces.

By combining infrastructure investment from global telecom companies, software support from leading technology firms, and hardware initiatives aimed at promoting affordable local device production, Phase Two is creating a strong and connected digital ecosystem for Ghana's future.

This hybrid structure insulates the project from fiscal volatility and guarantees that students train on tools relevant to market employers. The Verdict: Ghana's Digital Dawn Phase Two of the One Million Coders Programme represents the transition of an ambitious national policy into a concrete, scalable economic engine.

The programme goes beyond creating basic digital awareness by developing advanced technical skills such as machine learning, data engineering, and cybersecurity architecture—skills that are increasingly needed in today's global economy.

This is through free, high-quality technology training, expanded access for rural communities, and a strong connection to a multi-billion-dollar job creation strategy, Ghana is actively shaping the future of its technology sector.

Undoubtedly, the Phase Two serves as a major

step in turning the country's youthful population into a strong economic force, positioning Ghana as a leading innovator in Africa's growing digital economy.

Consequently to participate in the Phase Two Programme, eligible citizens can apply for free through the official One Million Coders registration portal. Applicants are required to enter their details exactly as they appear on their Ghana Card, choose their preferred course track, and select their current skill level before beginning the programme.

In my opinion, Phase Two of the One Million Coders Programme represents a major step

toward building a stronger digital economy in Ghana through equipping young people with advanced technology skills. The initiative is preparing the workforce for future global opportunities.

The programme also promotes digital inclusion by expanding access to free, high-quality training across the country. Through partnerships, infrastructure investment, and job creation strategies, Ghana is laying the foundation for long-term innovation and economic growth. Eventually, Phase Two positions Ghana as a rising leader in Africa's digital transformation.

Speak or Stand Aside: How Africa Must Respond to Escalating Security Threats Across the Continent

By: Edem Ernestina Agblevor



AFRICA is facing a complicated and dangerous security crisis. From the fragmented regions of the Sahel to the unstable areas of the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and certain parts of Africa, the continent is struggling with a damaging combination of issues.

The unconstitutional governmental changes, the rise of violent extremist organisations, and insurgencies fueled by resource conflicts are challenging the limits of regional stability. For many years, the continent has relied heavily on foreign interventions, external funding, and non-African peacekeeping forces to address its security weaknesses.

Currently, as global focus shifts and foreign troops withdraw, one can say Africa has reached a pivotal moment in its history, where it must either unite and assertively take charge of

its peace building efforts or risk being sidelined.

Meanwhile, the security challenges facing the continent are no longer isolated border disputes; they are deeply inter-connected networks of instability that cross national frontiers.

Three major operational challenges characterise the crisis:

The Sahelian Collapse: Violent extremist organisations are expanding their influence beyond traditional borders, moving southward from Mali and Burkina Faso towards the coastal states of West Africa.

Complex Mineral Insurgencies: Armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are exploiting governance gaps, turning precious mineral supply chains into funding sources for ongoing conflict.

The Horn of Africa Deadlock: Complicated maritime security issues, localised disputes, and tensions between states threaten to disrupt some of the world's most critical international trade routes.

Moreover, compounding these conflicts is a worrying resurgence of military coups. These political overthrows have disrupted regional blocs, leaving organisations like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) struggling to maintain democratic norms and collective security agreements.

Nevertheless, the reconstructing of the African Union (AU) Peace Fund for years, the concept of "African solutions to African problems" has been a widely used political catch phrase, yet it often lacked the necessary financial and operational support.

The AU peacekeeping missions have typically depended on external funding from partners such as the European Union and the United Nations to cover troop expenses and acquire logistical supplies. This reliance has granted external entities notable control over the direction, duration, and strategies of African stabilisation efforts.

Addressing this vulnerability necessitates an urgent expansion of the AU Peace Fund. Instead of waiting for foreign contributions, member nations must meet their obligatory financial responsibilities to establish a self-sufficient defence budget for the continent.

This financial initiative is further supported by UN Security Council Resolution 2719, which creates a framework allowing AU-led peace support missions to access UN-assessed contributions for up to 75% of their funding.

To take advantage of this unprecedented opportunity, Africa must completely cover the remaining 25%. Achieving this financial autonomy enables African commanders to fully control mission tactics, permitting them to deploy forces swiftly without needing foreign consent.

To improve Africa's continental defence system, the African Standby Force (ASF) must fix three main operational gaps:

Transport and Logistics Gap: African armies rely too much on foreign cargo planes to move troops and heavy equipment hence the need to build regional supply hubs across the continent, starting with the main depot in Cameroon.

Information and Intelligence Gap: Countries keep military secrets to themselves, which stops effective cross-border operations. This requires the creation of secure, shared computer networks to track terrorist movements across borders.

Special Forces Training Gap: Standard foot soldiers are struggling to defeat fast-moving, hit and-run rebel groups. To change this situation specialized joint commando unit needs to be created and trained specifically to fight terrorist warfare.

The rise of violent extremism and support for military coups often stems from systemic governance failures, deep-rooted corruption, and economic exclusion. When the state fails to provide basic services, security, and jobs for its youth, insurgent groups easily step in to fill the void.

True continental security requires a dual approach that matches military action with developmental governance. Governments must invest heavily in marginalised border regions where extremist groups recruit.

This means building roads, opening schools, securing clean water, and creating real economic opportunities for the continent's large youth population. Furthermore, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) must be given the political power to penalise bad governance, early constitutional manipulations, and corruption before they deteriorate into full-scale civil conflicts.

A Decisive Moment for the Continent Africa's security environment has outgrown the outdated peace architectures of the past. Relying on foreign military bases and external

interventions has often complicated local conflicts rather than resolving them.

Africa faces a clear choice to protect itself from growing dangers through the following options:

Work together: African countries can combine their resources and logistics, fix the African Standby Force, and pay for their own peace missions.

Give up control: African countries can do nothing but let foreign governments control

Africa's security. True freedom is not a gift. African leaders must show courage, share the responsibility, and take action together to protect their continent.

I believe that the need for Africa to respond to escalating security threats across the Continent is a call to action for African leaders. It demands that they either take charge of their own security or step out of the way for others to control them. The onus rests on their shoulders to decide which road to take.

Is Ghana's Fuel Tax Cut a Sustainable Economic Solution or a Postponed Problem?

By: Faustina Naa Ayele Johnson



For many Ghanaians, fuel prices are more than numbers displayed at filling stations. They determine transport fares, food prices, business costs and, ultimately, the cost of living. So whenever the government announces a reduction in fuel-related taxes or levies, the public naturally welcomes it with relief and optimism.

But behind the temporary comfort lies a bigger national question: Is Ghana's fuel tax reduction a sustainable economic solution, or merely a postponement of deeper structural problems?

Recent debates surrounding Ghana's Energy Sector Levy adjustments and fuel pricing policies have re-ignited the debate among

policy makers concerns over how successive governments have managed energy debts, inflation and public pressure. While some policy makers argue that lowering fuel taxes eases hardship and stimulates economic activity, economists however caution that such interventions often provide only short-term political and social relief without addressing the root causes of Ghana's recurring energy and fiscal challenges.

Fuel taxes have historically been a major source of government revenue in Ghana. Levies on petroleum products help finance road infrastructure, stabilise the energy sector and support debt repayment obligations. However, governments frequently face pressure to

reduce or suspend these taxes whenever fuel prices rise sharply on the international market due to global crude oil fluctuations or exchange rate instability.

In 2025, the government introduced and later reviewed aspects of the Energy Sector Shortfall and Debt Repayment Levy, including a GH¢1 per litre fuel levy intended to tackle mounting energy sector debt estimated at over US\$3.7 billion. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) backed the measure, describing it as essential for Ghana's fiscal recovery and energy sector stability under the Extended Credit Facility programme.

Government officials argued that the levy would help close persistent financing gaps in the power sector, where Ghana reportedly records monthly deficits of nearly GH¢2 billion. Yet critics questioned why ordinary citizens should continue bearing the burden of inefficiencies, debt accumulation and poor financial management within the energy sector.

This debate highlights a recurring pattern in Ghana's economic management: when public dissatisfaction over rising fuel prices intensifies, governments often intervene with tax adjustments or temporary relief measures. While these actions may calm tensions in the short term, they rarely solve the underlying problems driving fuel price instability.

One major factor to high fuel cost is Ghana's heavy dependence on imported refined petroleum products. Since global crude oil prices are determined internationally, Ghana has limited control over price fluctuations. Additionally, the depreciation of the cedi against major foreign currencies significantly increases import costs. Even when international oil prices fall, a weak cedi can erase potential gains at the pumps.

For example, although the cedi strengthened considerably in parts of 2025 and early 2026, public debate continued over whether fuel prices truly reflected the currency gains. Some citizens argued that tax increases and levies absorbed the benefits consumers expected to



enjoy from the stronger currency.

By mid 2026, however, fuel prices in Ghana had begun rising again despite earlier expectations that the stronger cedi would deliver longer-lasting relief at the pumps. Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) cited renewed increases in global crude oil prices, rising shipping costs and adjustments in petroleum sector margins as key reasons for the upward price movement. As of the second pricing window of April 2026, petrol prices at some major pumps were selling between GH¢15 and GH¢16 per litre, while diesel prices remained slightly higher in several parts of the country.

The government has also maintained portions of the Energy Sector Shortfall and Debt Repayment Levy introduced in 2025, although officials indicated that some pricing adjustments were being reviewed to cushion consumers from excessive increases. This means that while temporary interventions and tax reviews have provided periodic relief, the broader fuel levy framework remains largely in effect in 2026 as authorities continue with efforts to address Ghana's energy sector debt and IMF-backed fiscal recovery targets.

These recent developments reinforce concerns among analysts that fuel tax cuts alone may not offer a permanent solution to Ghana's fuel pricing challenges. Although the stronger cedi helped moderate some import pressures earlier in the year, global oil market volatility and Ghana's dependence on imported refined petroleum products continue to expose

consumers to recurring price increases. The situation has strengthened calls for deeper structural reforms rather than repeated short-term tax interventions.

The economic consequences of fuel tax cuts are also complex. Lower fuel taxes can temporarily reduce transport and production costs, potentially slow inflation and ease pressure on households. Businesses, especially transport operators and small enterprises, often benefit from such reliefs.

However, reducing fuel taxes also limits government revenue at a time when Ghana continues to face significant debt obligations and fiscal constraints. Ghana remains under an IMF supported economic recovery programme that emphasises domestic revenue mobilisation and fiscal discipline.

This creates a difficult balancing act for policy makers. On one hand, citizens demand immediate relief from the high cost of living. On the other hand, the government needs revenue to fund public services, repay debts and stabilise critical sectors like the energy sector.

Economists warn that relying solely on fuel tax reductions can become economically unsustainable if broader structural reforms are ignored. Countries that successfully stabilise fuel prices over the long term often combine short-term relief measures with deeper investments in local refining capacity, renewable energy, efficient public transport systems and stronger currency management.

Ghana's continued dependence on imported fuel exposes the country to external shocks beyond government control. The Tema Oil Refinery (TOR), once expected to reduce reliance on imported refined products, has struggled for years with operational and financial difficulties. Until Ghana strengthens domestic refining and energy production capacity, fuel price volatility is likely to persist regardless of temporary tax cuts.

There is also the issue of transparency and accountability. Public trust often weakens when citizens are unclear about how fuel levies are utilised. Some civil society groups and citizens have called for transparency on how energy sector levies are spent and whether they genuinely contribute to solving Ghana's persistent power and debt crises.

Globally, governments face similar dilemmas. In countries such as Nigeria and Kenya, fuel subsidies and tax reductions have periodically eased public pressure but later created large fiscal burdens that became difficult to sustain. Nigeria's long-standing fuel subsidy regime, for instance, cost billions of dollars annually before major reforms were introduced. Many economists argue that politically popular fuel relief measures can quickly become financially unsustainable without strong economic buffers.

For Ghana, the long-term solution may not lie on repeatedly cutting fuel taxes, but in addressing the structural weaknesses behind fuel price instability. This includes improving local production capacity, strengthening the cedi through export growth, diversifying energy sources and enforcing fiscal discipline within the energy sector.

Fuel tax cuts may provide temporary breathing space for consumers and businesses, especially during periods of economic hardship. But without broader reforms, they risk becoming another short-lived intervention that postpones rather than resolves Ghana's economic challenges.

As Ghana continues its economic recovery journey, policy makers must decide whether fuel tax policies will remain reactive responses to public pressure or become part of a comprehensive long-term strategy aimed at achieving sustainable energy and economic stability.

The answer may determine not only fuel prices, but the broader direction of Ghana's economic future.

Assessing the Long-Term Impact of Morocco's Fertiliser Support on Ghana's Food Security

By: Faustina Naa Ayele Johnson

FOOD security remains one of Ghana's most pressing national concerns as rising global food prices, climate volatility, and high agricultural input costs continue to affect local production. In recent years, Morocco has emerged as a strategic agricultural partner to Ghana through Fertiliser donations, technical cooperation, and proposed investments in Fertiliser production.

While these interventions provide immediate relief to farmers and support government agricultural programs, questions remain about whether Morocco's Fertiliser support can sustainably strengthen Ghana's long-term food security.

In April 2026, Ghana received 2,000 metric tonnes of Fertiliser from the Kingdom of Morocco under Ghana's "Feed Ghana" initiative, marking the second major Fertiliser donation from the North African country within a year. The donation, facilitated through Morocco's Fertiliser giant OCP Africa, was aimed at boosting agricultural productivity and improving food supply nationwide. While heartwarming, this represents less than one percent of Ghana's annual Fertiliser consumption of approximately 400,000–500,000 tonnes, highlighting the limits of donation-dependent strategies.

The partnership between Ghana and Morocco is not new. Since 2018, both countries have worked together on plans to develop Ghana's Fertiliser value chain through agreements involving OCP Group and Ghana's Ministry of Food and Agriculture. Discussions have also included the construction of a large Fertiliser manufacturing plant in Ghana, expected to reduce dependence on imported Fertiliser and stabilise supply for local farmers. As of June 2026, however, the proposed plant has not yet broken ground, with disagreements over



financing and location cited by industry sources.

For Ghana, the importance of Fertiliser support cannot be overstated. Fertiliser remains one of the key determinants of agricultural output, particularly for staple crops such as maize, rice, and vegetables. However, many smallholder farmers struggle to afford fertiliser due to high global prices, currency depreciation, and supply chain disruptions. The Russia-Ukraine war and geopolitical tensions in the Middle East have further increased Fertiliser costs globally, placing pressure on African food systems.

Morocco's intervention, therefore, provides immediate economic and agricultural relief. By easing Fertiliser shortages and reducing pressure on government subsidy programs, the support helps farmers increase yields and maintain production levels. Higher crop production can improve food availability, reduce food inflation, and support rural livelihoods.

Additionally, Morocco's expertise in phosphate-based fertiliser production positions it as a valuable technical partner for Ghana. Morocco controls some of the world's largest phosphate reserves and has become one of Africa's leading Fertiliser exporters through the OCP Group.

The company has expanded across the continent with initiatives focused not only on Fertiliser supply but also on farmer training, agronomic research, financing, and climate-smart agriculture.

One significant long-term opportunity lies in the proposed Fertiliser manufacturing plant in Ghana. If fully implemented, the project could transform Ghana's agricultural sector by reducing import dependency, creating jobs, lowering Fertiliser costs, and strengthening local industrial capacity. Ghana currently imports most of its Fertiliser requirements, making the country vulnerable to global price shocks and supply disruptions. A domestic production facility could improve national resilience and make fertilisers more accessible to farmers across the country.

The partnership may also contribute to broader regional agricultural integration under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Stronger collaboration between Morocco and Ghana could enhance intra-African trade in agricultural inputs and reduce the continent's dependence on external markets.

Despite these advantages, Fertiliser donations alone cannot guarantee long-term food security. Dr. Charles Nyaaba of the Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana warned that "Fertiliser donations without storage, irrigation, and road infrastructure will not stop hunger." Ghana's agricultural challenges extend beyond Fertiliser access. Poor irrigation systems, post-harvest losses, weak road networks, limited storage facilities, land degradation, and climate change continue to affect productivity.

There are also concerns about dependency. Continuous reliance on external fertilizer support could expose Ghana to future geopolitical or economic risks if diplomatic relations or global market conditions change. Food security experts, therefore, emphasize the need for Ghana to prioritize sustainable agricultural reforms rather than depending heavily on periodic external interventions.

Another challenge is ensuring the equitable distribution of Fertiliser support. In previous subsidy programs, concerns have emerged

over delays, political interference, and unequal access among smallholder farmers. Without transparency and effective monitoring, fertiliser support may fail to reach the farmers who need it most. Ghana's existing Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) subsidy program has faced similar distribution challenges, and it remains unclear how Morocco's donation will integrate with or complement this local initiative.

Environmental sustainability is another critical issue. While fertilisers improve crop yields, excessive or improper use can damage soil quality, pollute water bodies, and contribute to environmental degradation. Agricultural experts therefore recommend balancing fertiliser use with sustainable farming practices such as organic manure application, crop rotation, and soil conservation methods.

Nevertheless, Morocco's support reflects a growing model of South-South cooperation in Africa, where African countries collaborate to address shared developmental challenges. Unlike traditional aid models, the Ghana-Morocco partnership combines trade, investment, technical assistance, and agricultural modernisation.

The long-term impact of Morocco's fertiliser support on Ghana's food security will ultimately depend on how Ghana leverages the partnership. If the country successfully combines fertiliser access with local production, irrigation expansion, farmer education, mechanisation, and strong agricultural policies, the cooperation could significantly strengthen Ghana's food system for years to come.

However, if the support remains limited to periodic fertiliser donations without structural reforms, its impact may only provide temporary relief rather than a permanent solution to Ghana's food security challenges. As Ghana continues to pursue agricultural transformation under initiatives such as "Feed Ghana," partnerships like the one with Morocco could play a crucial role. The real test, however, will be whether these interventions translate into lasting agricultural independence, affordable food prices, and sustainable rural development for future generations.

How Ghana Must Manage The Post-IMF Programme Transition To Sustain Economic Growth

By: Hulera Ibrahim

GHANA'S engagement with the International Monetary Fund has been a recurring feature of its economic management over the decades. Each programme brings short-term stabilization through fiscal discipline, debt restructuring, and structural reforms. But the real test to the country's economic and financial sustainability begins when the programme ends. How Ghana manages the post-IMF transition will determine whether the gains achieved are consolidated or quickly eroded.

Maintain Fiscal Discipline Beyond Conditionality:

IMF programmes enforce spending limits and revenue targets that bring deficits under control. After exit, the temptation is to relax these rules for political expediency and social reasons. To sustain growth, Ghana must institutionalise fiscal discipline through stronger Public Financial Management laws, independent fiscal councils, and transparent budgeting. Revenue mobilisation, especially through broadening the tax base and reducing leakages, should continue as a priority.

Reforms in the energy, public sector inefficiency, and state-owned enterprises are often initiated under IMF programmes but remain incomplete. The post-programme period should be used to complete these reforms. A more efficient energy sector, for example, reduces the fiscal burden and improves competitiveness for private businesses. Without follow-through, the economy reverts to the inefficiencies that necessitated the programme in the first place.

Strengthen Debt Management and Market Access:

With debt restructuring now underway, Ghana must avoid accumulating unsustainable debt



again. This means cautious borrowing, prioritising concessional and project-tied loans, and building credibility with international capital markets. A clear medium-term debt strategy and consistent communication with investors will help lower borrowing costs and open market access.

Similarly, sustained economic growth cannot come from government spending alone. The transition period should focus on creating a stable macro-economic environment that encourages private investment. This includes predictable exchange rate management, lower inflation, and regulatory reforms that reduce the cost of doing business. Agriculture, manufacturing, and services have the potential to drive job creation if given the right incentives and formidable conditions to thrive.

Also, one risk after IMF programmes is public frustration when austerity measures continue without visible benefits. The government and Bank of Ghana must communicate clearly about why reforms are necessary, what progress is being made, and what timelines look like.

Another factor is that transparency builds trust and reduces policy reversals. Ghana's history with IMF programmes shows a clear pattern: stabilisation during the programme, followed by a return to fiscal slippage once conditionality ends. Managing the transition well means

turning temporary discipline into permanent habits.

Here's how, with concrete examples.

Lock in Fiscal Discipline with Rules, Not Promises.

During an IMF programme, spending is capped and revenue targets are monitored quarterly. After exit, political pressure often pushes for higher wages, subsidies, and unbudgeted projects.

Fiscal rules make it harder to backslide. An independent Fiscal Council can review the budget and flag deviations in real time. For instance, after its 2017-2019 IMF programme, Ghana passed the Fiscal Responsibility Act to cap the fiscal deficit at 5% of GDP. Countries like Chile use an independent fiscal council to score budgets against long-term targets, which has built market confidence. Ghana can strengthen its Fiscal Council to play a similar role, publishing quarterly assessments that are made public.

In addition, IMF programmes often start reforms in the energy sector, SOEs, and public payroll. Stopping halfway leaves the same leaks that caused the crisis. Reforms reduce the amount of money government has to spend plugging holes, freeing resources for growth. An example is when Ghana's energy sector suffered from tariff shortfalls and excess capacity payments. Under the last programme, steps were taken to improve ECG's revenue collection and renegotiate IPP contracts. Completing this by installing prepaid meters nationwide and enforcing collection targets would cut the annual Gh¢10bn+ burden on the budget. Rwanda did something similar by moving to prepaid metering and raising utility cost recovery to over 95%.

Post-programme, Ghana needs to re-enter international capital markets without repeating past debt buildup. Credibility comes from consistent policy, transparent debt data, and realistic growth forecasts. Markets punish surprises. After defaulting in 2022, Ghana is now restructuring its debt. To avoid another cycle, it should follow Senegal's approach: publish a Medium-Term Debt Management Strategy annually, stick to it, and avoid non-concessional borrowing for recurrent spending. Kenya's frequent investor calls and roadshows

also show how consistent communication lowers risk premiums.

Shift to Private Sector-Led Growth with Clear Incentives Government cannot spend its way to 6-7% growth. The private sector needs a stable cedi, lower inflation, and fewer regulatory barriers. Macro stability reduces risk for investors. Targeted reforms in agriculture, manufacturing, and digital services can create jobs fast. For example, the 1D1F initiative tried to boost manufacturing, but many factories struggled with power costs and input taxes. If post-IMF policy pairs tax incentives with cheaper, reliable power from energy reforms, factories like those in Tema can scale. Ethiopia's industrial parks worked because they combined infrastructure, tax breaks, and export facilitation in one package.

Communicate to Manage Public Expectations Austerity measures often continue after the IMF exit, but without IMF visibility, people assume government is just being harsh. Clear communication reduces suspicion and policy reversals. People accept tough measures if they see a plan and progress. For instance, during its post-2010 adjustment, Rwanda published quarterly "Economic Updates" in simple language, showing inflation, growth, and project delivery. Ghana's Ministry of Finance can do the same: a 2-page public brief every quarter showing deficit trends, debt levels, and key project milestones.

Exiting an IMF programme is not the end of reform;

It is the beginning of ownership. Ghana's ability to lock in gains, avoid old fiscal habits, and create a stable environment for private investment will decide whether this transition leads to sustained growth or another cycle of crisis. The policy choices made in the next 12-24 months will matter more than anything during the programme itself.

The post-IMF transition is where ownership matters most. Ghana has the tools: a Fiscal Responsibility Act, ongoing energy reforms, and a chance to rebuild market trust after debt restructuring. The difference between success and relapse will be whether these tools are used consistently, and independent fiscal oversight to show the public that discipline is not temporary.

How the Free Primary Health Care Programme Is Reshaping Ghana's Public Health Landscape

By: Grace Acheampong



ACCCESS to affordable, quality healthcare has long been a key priority in Ghana's development journey. Over the years, the country has made significant progress in expanding health insurance coverage, improving maternal and child healthcare, and strengthening disease surveillance systems. Despite these gains, many Ghanaians, particularly those in rural and low income communities, continue to face barriers to healthcare due to cost, distance, and limited access to preventive services.

The introduction and expansion of the Free Primary Health Care (FPHC) Programme mark a major step toward addressing these challenges. By eliminating user fees at the point of care and placing greater emphasis on preventive and community-based services, the programme is transforming healthcare delivery and improving health outcomes across the

country.

Expanding Access and Reducing Financial Barriers

One of the most notable achievements of the Free Primary Health Care Programme is its ability to improve access to essential health services. For many Ghanaians, especially those working in the informal sector or living in rural areas, the cost of healthcare has often discouraged early treatment. As a result, minor health conditions were frequently left untended until they developed into more serious, and become complicated and thereby more expensive to treat.

The FPHC Programme helps address this challenge by providing essential primary healthcare services free of charge. These services include consultations, maternal and child healthcare, immunizations, treatment for

common illnesses, basic laboratory services, and health education. By removing financial barriers, the programme encourages people to seek medical attention early, leading to quicker diagnoses, timely treatment, and fewer complications.

The initiative also supports Ghana's broader goal of achieving universal health coverage. Families are less likely to face financial hardship due to healthcare expenses, which is particularly important in communities where livelihoods depend on subsistence farming, small-scale trading, and other informal economic activities. Beyond improving health outcomes, the programme contributes to poverty reduction by easing the financial burden on households.

Strengthening Preventive and Community-Based Care

A key strength of the Free Primary Health Care Programme is its focus on prevention rather than treatment alone. Primary healthcare emphasizes health promotion, disease prevention, and early intervention, approaches that are both cost-effective and impactful.

Through the expansion of community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) compounds, healthcare is being brought closer to the people who need it most. Community health officers provide services such as immunizations, antenatal care, family planning, malaria testing and treatment, and health education directly within communities. This approach does not only improve access but also strengthens trust between healthcare providers and community members.

Preventive initiatives, including routine immunization campaigns, nutrition education, and screenings for conditions such as hypertension and diabetes, are helping Ghana address both infectious diseases and the growing burden of non-communicable diseases. As chronic illnesses continue to rise, early detection and management have become increasingly important. Identifying conditions such as hypertension early can help prevent

serious complications, including strokes and kidney disease.

Improving Maternal and Child Health Outcomes

Maternal and child health remains a central focus of Ghana's healthcare agenda, and the Free Primary Health Care Programme is reinforcing efforts in this area and also by providing early diagnosis and treatment ensuring that pregnant women and children can access essential services without financial constraints, ultimately, the programme is helping to improve health conditions services situation for some of the country's most vulnerable populations.

Free antenatal care, skilled delivery services, postnatal care, and childhood immunizations enable mothers and children to receive the care they need throughout pregnancy and early life. Expectant mothers are more likely to attend regular health check-ups when services are accessible and affordable, allowing healthcare providers to detect and manage complications such as anaemia and preeclampsia early.

The programme has also strengthened Ghana's immunization efforts, helping to maintain high vaccination coverage and protect children against preventable diseases. By investing in health from the earliest stages of life, the country is building healthier communities while reducing future pressure on the healthcare system. Healthier children are more likely to attend school regularly, perform better academically, and contribute positively to national development.

Decongesting Higher-Level Health Facilities

Before the expansion of free primary healthcare services, many people bypassed local clinics and sought treatment directly at district and regional hospitals, even for minor health conditions. This often resulted in overcrowded facilities, long waiting times, and increased pressure on healthcare professionals.

The Free Primary Health Care Programme is helping to change this pattern. As local facilities become more accessible and trusted, patients are increasingly seeking care at the appropriate level of the healthcare system. This allows hospitals to focus their resources on more complex cases that require specialized treatment.

A stronger referral system, combined with better-equipped and adequately staffed primary healthcare facilities, is contributing to a more efficient and coordinated healthcare system. Ultimately, this improves both patient experiences and the quality of care delivered.

Promoting Equity and Social Inclusion

Health disparities between the urban and rural communities have long been a challenge in Ghana. While urban areas generally benefit from better-equipped health facilities and a higher concentration of healthcare professionals, many rural communities continue to face shortages of infrastructure and medical personnel.

The Free Primary Health Care Programme seeks to narrow this gap by prioritizing deprived communities with the most vulnerable population. Investments in CHPS compounds, the recruitment of community health workers, and targeted outreach initiatives are helping extend healthcare services to areas that have historically been underserved.

By making healthcare both affordable and accessible, the programme promotes greater social inclusion and helps reduce inequalities in health outcomes. Women, children, older adults, and persons with disabilities stand to benefit significantly from these interventions. Removing financial barriers empowers vulnerable groups to seek healthcare when needed and reinforces the principle that access to healthcare should be available to everyone.

Challenges and the Way Forward

Despite its positive impact, the Free Primary Health Care Programme faces several

challenges. Sustaining adequate funding remains essential, particularly as increased utilization places greater demands on medicines, equipment, infrastructure, and healthcare personnel. Occasional shortages of essential medicines and supplies can affect service delivery and undermine public confidence.

In addition, investments in healthcare infrastructure must be accompanied by efforts to recruit, train, and retain skilled health professionals. The success of the programme depends not only on expanding access but also on maintaining high standards of care.

Looking ahead, digital health solutions, stronger health information systems, and deeper community engagement will play a critical role in ensuring the programme's long-term success. Continuous monitoring and evaluation will also be necessary to identify gaps, improve service delivery, and enhance sustainability.

Conclusion

The Free Primary Health Care Programme represents a significant shift in Ghana's healthcare approach, from a system largely focused on treating illness to one that prioritizes prevention, community engagement, and early intervention. By removing financial barriers, strengthening preventive healthcare, improving maternal and child health services, and promoting equity, the programme is making a meaningful difference in the lives of many Ghanaians.

While challenges remain, the initiative reflects Ghana's commitment to achieving universal health coverage and ensuring that no one is left behind. With sustained investment, effective management, and continued community support, the Free Primary Health Care Programme has the potential to build a healthier, more resilient, and more prosperous nation for generations to come.

The Other Side of Free SHS in Ghana: Addressing the Quality and Infrastructure Gaps That Access Alone Cannot Fix

By: Grace Acheampong

THE introduction of the Free Senior High School (Free SHS) policy in 2017 marked one of the most ambitious educational reforms in Ghana's history. Widely celebrated at its launch, the policy removed the financial barriers that had previously prevented many young people from pursuing secondary education, and thereby opening the doors of opportunity to millions of Ghanaian students. Enrollment soared almost immediately, fulfilling the policy's central objective of expanding access to secondary education. Yet, several years after its implementation, a more complex picture has emerged. While access has improved significantly, schools across the country are grappling with overcrowded classrooms, overstretched teachers, and inadequate infrastructure. The challenge now is not simply getting students into school, but ensuring they receive quality education once they arrive.

The success of Free SHS in increasing enrollment was both its greatest achievement and its first major test. As student numbers surged, many schools found themselves unprepared for the rapid expansion. Existing facilities, which were already under pressure in some areas, struggled to accommodate the influx. Classrooms became overcrowded, dormitories filled beyond capacity, and essential facilities such as laboratories, workshops, and sanitation systems faced unprecedented strain. In many rural communities, shortages of dormitory space, clean water, and educational resources became particularly severe. Consequently, learning environments that should have fostered academic growth often became congested and under-resourced, limiting the full benefits of increased access.

These infrastructure challenges have inevitably affected the quality of education. While more students are attending school than ever before, improvements in learning outcomes have not kept pace with enrollment growth. Studies and assessments continue to highlight concerns about literacy, numeracy, and subject mastery. Large class sizes make it difficult for teachers to provide individualized support, forcing many to rely on lecture-based instruction that offers limited opportunities for critical thinking, practical learning, and student engagement. As a result, the promise better education risks being reduced to attendance rather than meaningful learning.

Compounding this challenge is the growing pressure on Ghana's teaching workforce. The increase in student enrollment has created a demand for teachers that recruitment efforts have struggled to meet. This problem is particularly evident in remote and underserved regions, where attracting and retaining qualified educators remains difficult. Many schools continue to depend on inexperienced teachers who may lack specialized training in the subjects they teach. Although professional development initiatives have been introduced to upgrade the quality of instructors the implementation of the initiatives remains inconsistent. At the same time, concerns about heavy workloads, delayed promotions, and irregular allowances have affected teacher morale, contributing to absenteeism and staff turnover.

The strain extends beyond human resources to the physical environment and condition at the schools themselves. In many cases, infrastructure development has not kept pace with enrollment growth. Constructing new classrooms and dormitories is only part of the

solution; maintaining them requires consistent funding and effective management. Unfortunately, maintenance budgets are often insufficient, leading to deteriorating facilities over time. Inadequate water and sanitation services create health concerns, while unreliable electricity and limited internet access restrict opportunities for digital learning. Similarly, poorly equipped laboratories and workshops undermine the quality of science, technical, and vocational education, leaving students without the practical skills needed in a modern economy.

Although Free SHS was designed to provide equal opportunities for all, the benefits of the policy have not been experienced uniformly across the country. Well-resourced urban schools generally have greater capacity to absorb growing student populations and maintain educational standards. In contrast, many rural and peri-urban schools continue to struggle with limited resources and inadequate facilities. This disparity risks widening existing inequalities in educational outcomes. Furthermore, certain groups—including girls, students with disabilities, and children from the poorest households—still face significant barriers. Overcrowded dormitories, inadequate sanitation facilities, and limited support services can affect both access and academic success for these vulnerable populations.

At the same time, the rapid expansion of general secondary education has not been matched by equivalent investment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). As a result, many students complete Senior High School without acquiring practical, job-ready skills or a clear pathway into employment. Strengthening vocational education, improving career guidance services, and aligning curricula with labor market demands are essential if education is to translate into meaningful economic opportunities. Stronger partnerships between the academia in general and industry can also help bridge the gap between classroom learning and workplace expectations.

Underlying many of these challenges is the

question of financial sustainability. Free SHS requires substantial and continuous public investment, yet funding shortfalls and delayed disbursements frequently disrupt critical operations. These financial constraints affect everything from teacher recruitment and procurement of learning materials to infrastructure maintenance and expansion. Moreover, weaknesses in financial management and accountability can reduce efficiency and undermine public confidence in the policy. To maximize impact, resources must be allocated strategically, guided by reliable data and transparent planning systems that prioritize both educational quality and infrastructure needs.

Addressing these challenges will require a deliberate shift from expansion to consolidation. The next phase of Free SHS should focus on improving the quality of education while strengthening the systems that support it. This means prioritizing investments in classrooms, laboratories, learning materials, and maintenance. It also requires expanding teacher recruitment, strengthening continuous professional development, and creating incentives for educators to serve in underserved communities. Equally important is the need to strengthen TVET programs, improve career counseling, and ensure that students graduate with skills relevant to the evolving job market.

In addition, policymakers should invest in robust data systems that provide real-time information on enrollment, teacher deployment, infrastructure needs, and learning outcomes. Such data can support more effective decision-making and help identify struggling schools before problems become entrenched. Collaboration will also be critical. Local governments, communities, alumni associations, businesses, and development partners all have a role to play in supporting infrastructure projects, internships, and educational programs. At the same time, targeted interventions should be introduced to address persistent inequalities, including improved facilities for girls, inclusive infrastructure for students with disabilities, and

additional support for disadvantaged schools.

Technology can also contribute to improving educational outcomes, but only if implemented thoughtfully. Affordable digital tools can enhance teacher training, expand access to learning materials, and improve administrative efficiency. However, technology investments must be accompanied by reliable electricity, internet connectivity, and adequate teacher support if they are to deliver meaningful results.

There is no doubt that Free SHS has transformed access to secondary education in Ghana and remains one of the country's most significant social interventions. Yet the true measure of its success will not be found in enrollment figures alone. It will be determined by whether students graduate with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to succeed in higher education, the workforce, and society. Bridging the gaps in quality and infrastructure will require sustained investment, effective management, and unwavering

political commitment. Only then can the promise of Free SHS be fully realized and translated into lasting social and economic progress.

The next chapter of the Free SHS story must therefore focus on consolidation rather than expansion alone. Government, development partners, communities, and the private sector must work together to strengthen school infrastructure, improve teaching quality, and build accountable systems that support student success. Without these reforms, a policy that successfully expanded access could fall short of delivering its full potential. With them, however, Free SHS can become not only a symbol of educational access, but also a foundation for national development and opportunity for generations to come.

Securing the Waves That Feed Us: What Ghana's First Marine Protected Area Means for Our National Future

By: Irene Wirekoaa Osei



EVERY year, millions of citizens across the nation sit down to enjoy meals of fufu, banku, or kenkey, relying on the Atlantic Ocean to provide the fish that adds to the diet. Yet, beneath the waves of our coast, an invisible crisis has been quietly threatening our national food security particularly in the fishing industry.

In April 2026, the government met this challenge by declaring the Greater Cape Three Points area as Ghana's first Marine Protected Area. Covering 703 square kilometres of coastal waters, reefs, and mangroves, this historic zone represents a bold rewriting of our relationship with the sea, balancing the immediate needs of coastal communities with the survival of the oceans that feed us all.

For decades, artisanal fishermen across our

coastline have watched their catches dwindle. The small pelagic fish species, including sardinella, anchovies, and mackerel, form the primary animal protein source for millions of Ghanaian households. Overfishing by an expanding domestic canoe fleet, destructive practices by industrial trawlers, and changing climate patterns have brought these national fish populations close to collapse. In response, the newly formed reserve introduces a zoning system designed to give marine life a chance to regenerate, securing food supplies for the entire country.

The structural design of the reserve splits the waters into different sectors. A core zone bans all fishing activities to serve as an absolute sanctuary for spawning and nursery grounds. Surrounding this core are multiple-use zones where local fishers can continue operating

under strict regulations regarding gear type and seasonal access. By excluding industrial bottom trawlers and prohibiting destructive methods, the initiative intends to create a spillover effect. As fish populations multiply within the protected sanctuary, they will migrate into open fishing grounds, eventually improving the daily catch for small-scale operations nationwide.

Transitioning from open ocean access to a regulated sanctuary presents immediate challenges for coastal livelihoods, a reality the state is actively managing. Thousands of families rely entirely on daily fishing loops to pay for food, fuel, and education. When waters are closed off, fishers lose immediate access to traditional grounds.

To address this friction, the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, alongside civil society groups, is focusing on community co-management. Instead of enforcing rules entirely from the capital city of Accra, governance relies on local committees. Representatives from the 21 participating villages help draw the zone boundaries and handle daily monitoring.

Local involvement aims to foster accountability, but economic survival remains the core concern for residents in villages like Dixcove, Akwidaa, and Princess Town. Government agencies and development partners are introducing alternative livelihood programs to ease the immediate financial strain on households. These initiatives include investments in sustainable mariculture projects, improved fish processing technologies for local women, and alternative coastal trades. The success of the reserve depends heavily on whether these alternative economic buffers can support families while national fish stocks recover.

Beyond local livelihoods, the establishment of the Greater Cape Three Points reserve changes the structure of ocean governance

across West Africa. Ghana possesses roughly 237,000 square kilometers of marine waters, meaning this initial reserve covers only a small fraction of our maritime domain.

However, the legal basis for the zone is tied to the Fisheries and Aquaculture Act of 2025. Section 39 of this law grants the fisheries ministry the authority to create marine reserves based on scientific assessments and local consultation. This framework provides a template that authorities expect to replicate along other parts of the coastline, such as the Volta Estuary.

The reserve also aligns Ghana with international conservation targets, specifically the global goal to protect 30 percent of the world's lands and oceans by the year 2030. Achieving this target requires moving away from reactive fisheries management toward systemic spatial planning. The new model treats the ocean as a shared national ecosystem rather than an infinite resource pool. It clarifies institutional mandates, allowing environmental agencies, maritime authorities, and local canoe councils to coordinate enforcement efforts against illegal fishing.

The coming months will test the practical strength of this new social contract between the coastal population and the state. Finalizing the exact boundaries of the zoning system, establishing effective sea patrols, and ensuring compliance without deploying heavy-handed state force are complex tasks.

If the co-management groups can successfully curb illegal operations while alternative livelihoods stabilize village economies, the Greater Cape Three Points reserve could demonstrate how conservation supports long-term food security for all Ghanaians. For now, citizens across the country are watching the horizon, waiting to see if a protected ocean will bring the fish back to our nets.

Ghana's Growth Gap: Why Public-Private Partnerships Are the Only Deal Worth Making

By: Irene Wirekoaa Osei



FOR decades, the state carried the entire burden of financing national infrastructure, from expansion projects at the sea ports to the construction of major highways. Global economic shifts and tightening national budgets have made that model unsustainable, and the country now needs new financing frameworks to close the infrastructure gap.

For much of that period, private investors viewed infrastructure projects in Ghana with caution. Uncertain regulatory environments and shifting political priorities created financial risks that dampened their enthusiasm. The Public-Private Partnership Act, 2020 (Act 1039) was designed to break that pattern by creating a transparent legal pathway for collaboration.

Rather than setting up a separate outer agency, the act places regulatory oversight directly within the existing state apparatus. It creates the Public Private Partnership Committee,

chaired by the Minister of Finance, alongside a specialized Public Private Partnership Office within the Ministry of Finance. This body centralizes the evaluation process. It reviews feasibility studies and examines bid evaluation reports before sending major concessions to Cabinet and Parliament.

That structure also divides commercial risk between the public sector and private entities. The state facilitates land acquisition and environmental permits, while private partners manage design, construction, and operations. The arrangement gives international financial institutions the predictability they need to commit long-term development funds. With that clarity in place, the country can draw on private capital to build modern transport networks and logistics corridors while protecting tax revenues for other public services.

The benefits extend well beyond the projects themselves. Immediate construction work

provides short-term wages for artisans, surveyors, and engineers, but the lasting economic value of these partnerships lies in the secondary employment networks they create. Modern infrastructure acts as a multiplier across the wider economy.

Reliable utility supply shows this principle clearly. By partnering with independent power producers, the state stabilizes the industrial energy grid. That stability allows domestic manufacturing firms to expand production shifts, scale up operations, and increase full-time staff.

Agriculture sees similar gains through structured joint ventures tied to the Grow24 agricultural transformation framework under the government's 24-Hour Economy strategy. The initiative aims to convert traditional, seasonal production into continuous, year-round operations that drive import substitution and reduce food inflation.

Private investment fits neatly into this goal. Smart cold-storage infrastructure, networked warehousing systems, and modern processing facilities all work to reduce post-harvest losses. By using partnerships to establish round-the-clock agro-processing hubs and specialized Farmer Services Centres, the state connects rural yields to twenty-four-hour supply chains. The result is steadier farming incomes and stable, multi-shift employment across the agricultural marketing chain.

Local benefit is built into the law itself. Act 1039 enforces strict local content rules that require foreign consortiums bidding on national projects to hire domestic technical talent, transfer operational technology, and source a set percentage of raw materials from local suppliers. In practice, this turns major infrastructure projects into training

environments that upgrade the skills of the Ghanaian workforce.

These advantages depend on careful regulatory oversight. Partnerships protect the public interest only when contracts are well structured, since poorly written agreements can expose the state to long-term financial liabilities. If a joint venture misses its projected revenue targets, weak guarantee clauses can force the government to absorb the deficit.

Ghana's own history makes the point. In the emergency energy procurement sector, early take-or-pay agreements obligated the state to buy power it never consumed, which created domestic financial imbalances. To avoid repeating that experience, the Fiscal Commitment Technical Committee now advises on fiscal risks and scrutinizes every contract before authorization.

Affordability matters just as much. User fees must stay aligned with the economic realities of the public, so toll structures and service tariffs need careful balancing. The aim is to give private investors a fair return without putting public utilities out of reach for low-income citizens.

Transparency holds the whole system together. To keep partnerships working as a lasting engine of economic growth, the state relies on open, competitive tendering. Competitive bidding avoids the inefficiencies of sole-sourced contracts and ensures the public receives full value for money.

Closing the national infrastructure gap calls for innovative financing, and Act 1039 offers the legal clarity to make it work. By inviting private capital to build enduring public assets, and by maintaining rigorous oversight and firm local content enforcement, Ghana can ensure these partnerships keep delivering sustainable employment and industrial growth for years to come.



Beyond the Blackout: Building the Policy Framework Ghana Needs for a Stable and Reliable Power Supply

By: Jacinta Amo-Apraku

Introduction

Electricity powers every aspect of Ghana's economy that propels development. From factories in Tema and hospitals in Kumasi to street-lit communities and growing digital startups, reliable power is essential for economic growth and improved living standards. Yet for many years, Ghanaians have had to contend with recurring power outages, popularly known as dumsor, which disrupted businesses, interrupted education, and cost the country billions in lost productivity.

Although the situation has improved in recent years, the challenges that contributed to these outages have not completely disappeared. Achieving a truly stable and reliable electricity supply requires more than increasing generation capacity. It calls for a comprehensive policy framework that addresses the structural, operational, financial, and governance challenges within Ghana's power sector.

The Current State: Progress Amid Persistent Challenges

Ghana's electricity sector has made significant strides over the past decade. The country's energy mix has expanded beyond its traditional dependence on hydropower to include natural gas, solar energy, and other renewable sources. Installed generation capacity has grown from approximately 4,000 megawatts in 2012 to more than 5,000 megawatts today. Despite this progress, several vulnerabilities continue to threaten the sector's long-term stability.

One major concern is Ghana's continued reliance on hydropower and natural gas, both of which are susceptible to external shocks. Prolonged droughts can reduce hydroelectric

output, while fluctuations in global gas prices increase the cost of thermal power generation. Aging transmission and distribution infrastructure also remains a challenge, contributing to technical losses that exceed 15 percent, well above internationally accepted standards.

The sector is further burdened by a persistent revenue crisis. Unpaid electricity bills, tariffs that often fail to reflect the true cost of supply, and delayed payments from public institutions have created significant liquidity constraints. These constraints limit the utilities' ability to invest in maintenance, upgrades, and future expansion projects.

In addition, the involvement of multiple players in the power sector, including the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC), Volta River Authority (VRA), Bui Power Authority (BPA), Independent Power Producers (IPPs), and the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission (PURC), has sometimes led to overlapping responsibilities, coordination challenges, and accountability gaps.

Policy Pillars for Stability

1. Revenue and Tariff Reforms

Financial sustainability remains one of the most pressing issues in Ghana's power sector. While electricity tariffs in Ghana are often considered low compared to those in many African countries, they can still be burdensome for low-income households. This reflects a longstanding tension between political regimes and industry players to keep electricity affordable and the need for utilities to recover their operating costs.

A more sustainable approach would be to

clearly separate social support measures from commercial operations. Government subsidies for vulnerable households should be explicitly budgeted for rather than absorbed by utility companies. Any cross-subsidies should be transparent, targeted, and time-bound.

At the same time, tariff structures should reflect the actual costs of generation, transmission, and distribution. Regular reviews, linked to inflation and fuel price movements, would help ensure that utility companies remain financially viable. To achieve this, the PURC must be empowered to make tariff decisions independently and free from political interference.

Improving revenue collection is equally important. Expanding smart metering systems, particularly in urban areas, would help reduce losses caused by electricity theft and illegal connections. Better customer service, including digital payment platforms and automated bill notifications, can also encourage timely payments. For commercial and industrial consumers, existing penalties for non-payment should be applied consistently. Government institutions must also lead by example by settling their electricity bills promptly.

2. Generation Diversification and Renewable Energy Integration

Reducing dependence on hydropower and imported natural gas is essential for long-term energy security. Ghana should pursue an ambitious but realistic renewable energy agenda, with renewables accounting for 30 percent of the energy mix by 2030 and increasing to 50 percent by 2040.

Achieving this goal will require significant investment in solar and wind power. Policies such as feed-in tariffs, streamlined approval processes, and access to affordable financing can help attract private investment in renewable energy projects.

However, expanding renewable generation alone is not enough. Ghana must also strengthen its grid management capabilities to effectively integrate variable energy sources.

Investments in battery storage systems, pumped hydro storage, and other technologies will be critical to maintaining reliability. Establishing a strategic energy reserve fund could also help cushion the sector against fuel price shocks and supply disruptions.

3. Institutional Reform and Good Governance

A more efficient power sector requires clearer institutional roles and stronger accountability mechanisms. A streamlined governance framework should clearly define responsibilities across the sector. Generation entities such as VRA and BPA should focus on power production, while ECG and NEDCO concentrate on distribution. GNPC should continue managing petroleum resources under transparent supply arrangements.

The establishment of an Independent System Operator (ISO) would further strengthen the sector. An ISO would oversee grid operations, ensure efficient power supply, and guarantee fair access to transmission infrastructure. This separation of system operations from commercial interests would improve reliability and transparency.

Transparency should be a cornerstone of these reforms. Public disclosure of sector finances, operational performance, and regulatory decisions can improve accountability and public confidence. Independent audits and performance-based management systems should be used to ensure that utility executives are held accountable for measurable outcomes such as reduced losses, improved customer service, and increased revenue collection.

4. Infrastructure Investment and Asset Management

Significant investments are needed to modernize Ghana's electricity infrastructure. High transmission and distribution losses continue to undermine efficiency and increase costs of operation across the sector.

A medium-term infrastructure development plan should prioritize the replacement of aging distribution networks in major urban centres

such as Accra and Kumasi, the construction of additional substations to reduce congestion, and the upgrading of critical transmission corridors. Modern Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems should also be deployed to improve monitoring, fault detection, and overall grid management.

The estimated investment requirement of between US\$2 billion and US\$3 billion over the next five years will require a combination of funding sources, including government allocations, concessional financing from development partners, and performance-based funding linked to efficiency improvements.

5. Consumer Protection and Equity

While financial sustainability is important, electricity policies must also ensure that no segment of the population is left behind.

Ghana should continue pursuing universal electricity access, with a target of reaching at least 95 percent of the population by 2030. Particular attention should be given to rural and peri-urban communities where access remains limited. In many cases, off-grid solar solutions and mini-grid systems may offer more practical and cost-effective alternatives to traditional grid expansion.

The current subsidy framework should be replaced with a more transparent and targeted lifeline tariff system that provides affordable electricity for low-income households. Clear eligibility criteria and a reliable beneficiary registry would ensure that support reaches those who need it most.

Public institutions such as hospitals, schools, and water facilities should also benefit from targeted support and priority service arrangements to ensure uninterrupted operations.

Implementation and Oversight

Even the best policies will have little impact without effective implementation. To drive

reforms and coordinate efforts across the sector, Ghana should establish a dedicated Power Sector Reform Unit within the Ministry of Energy, supported by adequate resources and technical expertise.

Regular stakeholder engagement is equally important. Quarterly review forums involving utilities, regulators, consumers, civil society organizations, and private sector stakeholders can help track progress, address challenges, and maintain accountability.

Ghana can also draw valuable lessons from successful reforms elsewhere on the continent. Rwanda's achievements in prepaid metering, Kenya's progress in renewable energy integration, and South Africa's experience in long-term infrastructure planning offer practical insights that can inform local reforms.

Conclusion

Securing a stable and reliable electricity supply for Ghana will require far more than expanding generation capacity. It demands a comprehensive policy framework that addresses financial sustainability, institutional efficiency, generation diversification, infrastructure development, and social equity. Most importantly, these reforms must be driven by a long-term national commitment that extends beyond political cycles. Transparent governance, strong institutions, and realistic implementation plans will be essential to success.

The benefits are substantial. Reliable electricity attracts investment, supports industrial growth, improves healthcare and education, and enhances the quality of life for all citizens. Ghana already possesses the resources, technical expertise, and institutional foundations needed to build a modern and resilient power sector. The challenge now is to translate policy ambition into sustained action and move decisively beyond the era of blackouts toward a future powered by stable, affordable, and sustainable electricity.

Free Visa Policy for African Nationals: Weighing the Opportunities Against the Risks

By: Jacinta Amo-Apraku

THE push for visa-free travel across Africa has gained considerable momentum in recent years, emerging as a key component of the continent's broader vision for unity, economic integration, and sustainable development. The proposal seeks to allow African citizens to move freely across national borders without the restrictions imposed by traditional visa requirements.

This vision aligns closely with major continental initiatives such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the African Union's Agenda 2063, both of which seek to create a more connected, prosperous, and integrated Africa. Advocates of the visa free policy argue that easing travel restrictions will unlock new economic opportunities, strengthen cultural ties, and deepen the sense of shared African identity. At the same time, critics warn that such a move could create security vulnerabilities, strain public resources, and present significant administrative challenges.

As discussions around visa liberalization continue to gain attention across the continent, it is important to carefully examine both the opportunities and the risks associated with a free visa policy for African nationals.

Opportunities Presented by Visa-Free Travel

One of the strongest arguments in favor of a free visa policy is its potential to stimulate economic growth. Despite Africa's vast market and abundant resources, trade among African countries remains relatively low compared to other regions of the world. Bureaucratic barriers, including restrictive visa requirements, often discourage business travel and limit opportunities for cross-border investment.

Removing these barriers would make it easier

for entrepreneurs, traders, and investors to move freely across the continent, explore new markets, and establish business partnerships. Increased mobility could contribute significantly to the success of the AfCFTA by facilitating the movement of people alongside goods and services. A more connected business environment would encourage innovation, enhance competitiveness, and create opportunities for economic expansion across multiple sectors.

The tourism industry also stands to benefit considerably from the visa policy. Africa is home to some of the world's most breathtaking landscapes, diverse wildlife, and rich cultural heritage. Yet complicated visa procedures can discourage potential visitors, including travelers from neighboring African countries.

A visa-free regime would make travel more accessible and attractive, encouraging Africans to explore destinations within the continent. Increased tourist arrivals would generate revenue for local businesses, support job creation, and contribute to economic growth. Countries such as Rwanda and Seychelles have already demonstrated the positive impact of more open travel policies, recording growth in tourism and business travel following the introduction of visa-free or visa-on-arrival arrangements for African nationals.

Beyond the economic advantages, easier movement across borders has the potential to strengthen African unity and foster a greater sense of continental identity. The idea of a borderless Africa reflects the long-standing Pan-African vision of solidarity, cooperation, and shared progress.

Greater mobility would encourage cultural

exchange programmes, educational opportunities, and professional collaboration in various fields. Students could pursue academic programs in other African countries with fewer barriers, while professionals would have broader access to employment opportunities across the continent. Families separated by colonial-era boundaries would also find it easier to maintain connections and strengthen social ties. These interactions can promote mutual understanding, reduce stereotypes, and contribute to peace building efforts across regions.

Visa liberalization may also help address challenges associated with irregular migration. Limited legal pathways for movement often push individuals to undertake dangerous and undocumented journeys in search of economic opportunities or better living conditions. By providing legal and regulated channels for travel, governments could improve migration management while reducing the risks associated with unauthorized movement. Combined with modern identification systems and coordinated border management, a visa-free framework could enhance both mobility and oversight.

Risks and Challenges

Despite its many potential benefits, a free visa policy is not without challenges. Security concerns remain among the most significant issues raised by governments and policymakers. Critics argue that increased freedom of movement could make it easier for criminal networks, traffickers, and extremist groups to operate across borders.

In regions already facing security threats, weak border management systems could make it more difficult to monitor and control unlawful activities. To address these concerns, countries would need to strengthen intelligence-sharing mechanisms, improve cooperation among security agencies, and invest in modern technologies such as biometric identification systems. Effective collaboration between states will be essential to ensuring that open borders do not compromise public safety and national security.

Economic disparities among African countries present another challenge. Nations with relatively stronger economies may become attractive destinations for individuals seeking employment and better living conditions. While labor mobility can contribute positively to economic development, sudden increases in migration could place pressure on public services, including healthcare, education, housing, and social welfare systems.

To mitigate these effects, governments would need to develop complementary labor market policies and social protection measures that can accommodate changing migration patterns. Careful planning will be necessary to ensure that the benefits of mobility are distributed fairly and sustainably.

Administrative readiness is another critical factor. Successfully implementing a visa-free regime requires efficient border management systems, reliable identification documents, and strong institutional coordination. Some African countries may currently lack the technological infrastructure or financial resources needed to effectively manage increased cross-border movement.

Without adequate systems in place, challenges such as identity fraud, document forgery, and difficulties in monitoring overstays could arise. Investments in digital infrastructure, data-sharing platforms, and training for immigration and border officials will therefore be essential to the success of any large-scale visa liberalization effort.

Public perception also cannot be overlooked. In some countries, citizens may worry about increased competition for jobs, pressure on public services, or potential security threats. These concerns, whether real or perceived, can influence the public and for policy reforms.

Governments must therefore engage citizens through transparent communication and public education campaigns. Clearly explaining the benefits, safeguards, and objectives of visa liberalization can help address misconceptions

and build trust in the process. Inclusive dialogue with stakeholders will be crucial to ensuring that reforms receive broad support.

Striking the Right Balance

The debate surrounding a free visa policy for African nationals ultimately comes down to finding the right balance between openness and security, as well as between opportunity and preparedness. While the potential benefits are substantial, successful implementation will require careful planning and strong institutional frameworks.

A phased approach may provide the most practical path forward. Regional economic communities such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have already demonstrated that free movement protocols can function effectively when supported by clear legal frameworks and cooperation among member states. The lessons learned from these regional experiences can serve as valuable guides for broader continental implementation programs.

Furthermore, visa liberalization should be pursued alongside other development initiatives. Investments in transportation infrastructure, digital transformation, trade facilitation, and security cooperation will help maximize the benefits of increased mobility while minimizing associated risks. Strengthened border technology, standardized

travel documents, and effective intelligence-sharing systems can create a framework that promotes both freedom of movement and public safety.

Conclusion

A free visa policy for African nationals represents an ambitious and transformative step toward a more integrated and prosperous continent. The potential benefits, including increased trade, stronger economic growth, expanded tourism, enhanced cultural exchange, and deeper continental unity, are significant and far-reaching.

However, these opportunities must be balanced against legitimate concerns relating to security, economic pressures, and institutional capacity. Visa liberalization cannot succeed through policy declarations alone; it requires strong governance, effective planning, and sustained cooperation among African states.

With the right safeguards and supporting investments in place, the advantages of greater mobility can outweigh the risks. Ultimately, the success of a visa-free Africa will depend not only on removing barriers at borders but also on building the systems, partnerships, and public confidence needed to ensure that freedom of movement becomes a powerful driver of shared prosperity and progress for all Africans.

From Accra to Harare: Unpacking the Gains Ghana Stands to Make from Its MOU with Zimbabwe.

By: Judith Twumwaa



AFRICA'S future may well depend on how effectively its nations choose to work together. At a time when the continent is pushing for deeper economic integration and self-reliance, Ghana and Zimbabwe have taken a bold step toward strengthening intra-African cooperation through a series of Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) signed in Accra in April 2026.

The agreements signed during the official state visit of Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa to Ghana, represent far more than a diplomatic exchange between two governments. It reflects a growing

determination among African nations to build stronger economic partnerships within the continent rather than depending heavily on external markets and foreign alliances.

Dubbed “From Accra to Harare,” the partnership has the potential to unlock significant opportunities for Ghana across sectors such as trade, agriculture, tourism, investment, energy, and industrial development. More importantly, it aligns with the vision of the African Continental Free Trade Area, whose secretariat is based in Accra.

For years, African economies traded more with

Europe, Asia, and North America than with neighbouring countries. This imbalance weakened regional industrial growth and limited the continent's collective economic potential. Ghana's renewed partnership with Zimbabwe signals a conscious effort to change that narrative by prioritizing African-led growth and cooperation.

One of the key areas Ghana stands to benefit from with the implementation of the MOUs is trade expansion. Historically, trade volumes between Ghana and Zimbabwe have remained relatively modest despite the cordial relations between the two countries. The new agreements seek to bridge that gap by creating stronger trade corridors, improving logistics cooperation, and opening access to broader regional markets.

Zimbabwe's strategic location in Southern Africa offers Ghanaian businesses an important gateway into the Southern African Development Community (SADC) market. This creates opportunities for Ghanaian manufacturers, exporters, and entrepreneurs to expand their reach beyond West Africa. Sectors such as processed foods, pharmaceuticals, textiles, cosmetics, and consumer goods could particularly benefit from easier market access and reduced trade barriers.

For Ghana, which has increasingly positioned itself as a regional trade and logistics hub, the partnership reinforces its growing importance within continental commerce. By deepening ties with Zimbabwe, Ghana strengthens its influence within the AfCFTA framework while demonstrating its commitment to practical African integration.

Agriculture is another major sector where the partnership could produce meaningful gains. Both Ghana and Zimbabwe rely heavily on agriculture for employment, food security, and economic stability. However, the two countries continue to face similar challenges, including climate change, low productivity, post-harvest losses, and inadequate access to modern farming technology.

The agreement creates room for collaboration through knowledge sharing, technology transfer, and joint agricultural initiatives. Zimbabwe's experience in commercial farming and irrigation systems could complement Ghana's strengths in cocoa production, rice cultivation, and agro-processing.

For Ghanaian farmers and agribusinesses, the partnership could provide access to improved farming techniques, better irrigation methods, and opportunities for value addition. This would not only improve food production but also help create jobs for young people while reducing dependence on imported food products.

At a time when global food prices continue to fluctuate, stronger agricultural cooperation among African countries has become increasingly important. Partnerships such as this could help build more resilient food systems capable of withstanding future economic and environmental shocks and volatility.

Investment collaboration also presents enormous economic potential for Ghana. Zimbabwe is richly endowed with natural resources, including gold, platinum, lithium, and other strategic minerals that are increasingly critical to modern industries and green technologies. Ghana, already globally recognized for its gold industry, can leverage this partnership to deepen cooperation between mining institutions, investors, and research bodies.

The agreement could encourage Ghanaian companies to explore opportunities in Zimbabwe's mining support services, logistics, renewable energy, and industrial sectors. Likewise, Zimbabwean investors may find Ghana's relatively stable political environment and business-friendly climate attractive for expansion.

Such investment exchanges have the potential to stimulate industrial growth, strengthen regional supply chains, and generate employment opportunities in both countries. For Ghanaian entrepreneurs seeking to expand

into Southern African markets, Zimbabwe could serve as a strategic entry point into the region.

Beyond economics, the MOU also strengthens diplomatic and political relations between the two countries. Historically, African nations have achieved greater influence globally when they work together on issues such as trade negotiations, climate action, governance reforms, and peacekeeping.

The agreement reflects the enduring ideals of Pan-Africanism championed by leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah, who believed that African nations could achieve lasting prosperity through unity and cooperation. Decades later, that vision remains highly relevant as the continent seeks to reduce overdependence on external powers.

Tourism and cultural exchange form another promising aspect of the partnership which could benefit both countries. Ghana has emerged in recent years as one of Africa's leading tourism destinations through initiatives such as the "Year of Return" and "Beyond the Return." Zimbabwe, on the other hand, is home to world-renowned attractions including the Victoria Falls.

The tourism agreement between both countries seeks to encourage joint tourism promotion, cultural festivals, educational exchanges, and easier travel arrangements. Such initiatives could increase visitor numbers while promoting greater cultural understanding between the people of Ghana and Zimbabwe.

The partnership undoubtedly also opens new opportunities for the Ghanaian creative industry, such as musicians, filmmakers, and artists, to collaborate across borders. Africa's creative economy continues to grow rapidly, and stronger cultural cooperation could help amplify African stories and talents on the global stage.

In sectors such as energy and waste management, the agreements could also deliver long-term benefits. Ghana's expertise in

electricity generation and distribution may provide opportunities for technical support and consultancy in Zimbabwe, which continues to experience energy supply challenges. Environmental cooperation through waste management partnerships could further promote sustainability and cleaner communities.

Despite the enormous opportunities, the success of the Ghana-Zimbabwe MOU will ultimately depend on implementation. Across Africa, many bilateral agreements have failed to produce meaningful results because of bureaucracy, weak institutional coordination, inadequate funding, and inconsistent political commitment.

To ensure success, both countries must develop clear implementation strategies and timelines and equally maintain regular follow-ups through the Permanent Joint Commission for Cooperation (PJCC). The active involvement of the private sector, educational institutions, farmers, investors, and tourism operators will also be critical.

Infrastructure development, transportation connectivity, and trade facilitation mechanisms must equally be strengthened to ensure that the partnership moves beyond political symbolism into practical outcomes that improve the lives of citizens.

Ultimately, the Ghana-Zimbabwe MOU represents more than a diplomatic agreement. It is a reflection of a changing African mindset, one where African countries increasingly look inward for solutions, partnerships, and economic opportunities.

From Accra to Harare, a new bridge of cooperation is being built. If carefully nurtured, that bridge could help drive economic growth, strengthen regional integration, and advance the broader dream of an Africa that prospers through unity, collaboration, and shared ambition.

The Policy Challenges and Opportunities Behind Ghana's Move into Cannabis Farming

By: Judith Twumwaa



FOR many years, cannabis occupied a fixed place in Ghana's public imagination, closely associated with crime, substance abuse, and law enforcement. It was rarely discussed in economic or developmental terms. Today, however, that narrative is gradually shifting. Ghana's decision to open a regulated space for the cultivation of industrial hemp signals an important policy turn, one that places agriculture, innovation, and economic diversification at the centre of the conversation.

The shift has not come without debate. While some view it as a timely opportunity to unlock new sources of income, employment, and investment, others worry about regulatory risks, public health concerns, and the risk of misuse. As Ghana steps into this emerging global industry, it faces a complex question: how can

the country develop a profitable cannabis sector without compromising social stability and public safety?

A Changing Global Industry with Local Implications

Globally, cannabis is no longer treated as a single, uniform substance. Countries such as Canada, South Africa, Morocco, and parts of the United States have already developed regulated systems for both medicinal cannabis and industrial hemp. These two categories are now widely distinguished in policy and practice. Industrial hemp, in particular, has gained global attention due to its versatility. It is used in producing textiles, paper, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, food supplements, and even eco-friendly construction materials. Unlike recreational cannabis, hemp contains very low levels of THC, the compound responsible for

intoxication, making it suitable for industrial and commercial use under strict regulation.

For Ghana, this global shift presents both an opportunity and a challenge. The country has long relied on a narrow range of export commodities, particularly cocoa, which is increasingly vulnerable to climate change, price volatility, and global market pressures. Against this backdrop, policymakers are actively exploring alternative crops that can diversify the economy and strengthen rural livelihoods.

With its fertile land, favourable climate, and a youthful population in search of employment, Ghana is well-positioned to participate in this emerging industry. Advocates argue that cannabis farming, particularly industrial hemp, could become a strategic addition to the country's agricultural portfolio and an additional source of revenue to the state if properly harnessed and controlled.

Economic Opportunities and Value Chain Potential

Beyond cultivation, the true economic promise of cannabis lies in its value chain. If properly developed, the industry could move Ghana away from exporting raw agricultural materials toward a more industrialised and value-added system.

Hemp can be processed into a wide range of products, including oils, fibres, medicinal extracts, biodegradable plastics, textiles, and construction materials. This opens up opportunities not only for farmers but also for manufacturers, researchers, transport operators, and exporters.

A well-regulated cannabis sector could therefore generate employment across multiple levels. Farmers would benefit from new cash crop opportunities, while Agro-processing industries could emerge in both rural and urban areas. This would help address one of Ghana's long-standing development challenges: limited industrial transformation within the agricultural sector.

There is also growing interest in the scientific

and pharmaceutical dimensions of cannabis. Universities, research institutions, and health-related industries may eventually explore cannabis-derived compounds for medical applications. If supported by proper regulation and investment, this could contribute to Ghana's growing knowledge economy.

Furthermore, the sector has the potential to attract foreign direct investment. International companies operating in the hemp and medicinal cannabis industries are increasingly looking toward stable, regulation-friendly environments. Ghana's political stability and agricultural base may position it as a competitive destination if its policy framework remains credible and consistent.

Regulatory Complexity and Institutional Challenges

Despite the economic potential of its cultivation, Ghana's cannabis policy framework remains tightly controlled and, in some respects, restrictive.

Current regulations allow only the cultivation of cannabis varieties with very low THC content, and all activities require formal licensing. While this is intended to prevent abuse and illegal diversion, stakeholders have raised concerns about the cost and complexity of obtaining licences.

A major issue is accessibility. Smallholder farmers, who make up the majority of Ghana's agricultural workforce, may find it difficult to meet licensing requirements, technical standards, and financial obligations. This raises concerns that the sector could become dominated by large investors, potentially excluding rural farmers from its benefits.

In addition to the above, another critical challenge is enforcement. Ghana must establish strong systems to differentiate legal hemp production from illegal cannabis cultivation. Without effective monitoring, there is a risk that criminal networks could exploit regulatory gaps, undermining both the industry and national security.

To prevent this, coordination between regulatory bodies, law enforcement agencies, and agricultural institutions will be essential. This will require training, investment in monitoring systems, and clear operational guidelines. Weak enforcement could damage investor confidence and Ghana's international credibility.

Transparency in licensing and regulation will also be key. The success of the industry depends not only on the laws themselves but on how fairly and consistently they are applied.

Public Perception and Social Concerns

Beyond policy and economics, Ghana's cannabis debate is deeply shaped by public perception.

For decades, cannabis has been strongly associated with illegal drug use in many communities. As a result, the introduction of industrial hemp cultivation has generated caution among sections of the public, including religious leaders, parents, and educators.

A common concern is that expanding cannabis farming could indirectly encourage recreational drug use or weaken long-standing anti-drug efforts. These fears, while not always based on scientific distinctions, reflect deeply rooted social attitudes that cannot be ignored.

This makes public education a central component of policy success. Citizens need clear, accessible information about the difference between industrial hemp and psychoactive cannabis, as well as the safeguards built into the regulatory system.

At the same time, the government must ensure that economic ambitions do not override public health considerations. If poorly managed, the industry could create unintended social consequences, particularly among young people, where misinformation and weak enforcement could lead to misuse.

Building trust will therefore be as important as building infrastructure.

A Strategic but Sensitive Economic Gamble

Ghana's move into cannabis farming represents a broader attempt to rethink agricultural policy and expand economic opportunities. It is not simply about introducing a new crop—it is about positioning the country within a rapidly evolving global industry.

The potential benefits are significant. A well-managed cannabis sector could support job creation, industrial development, foreign investment, and scientific research. It could also help reduce pressure on traditional agricultural exports and provide new income streams for rural communities.

However, the risks are equally real. Weak regulation, limited access for small farmers, and poor public engagement could undermine the sector before it fully develops. The challenge, therefore, lies not in whether Ghana should participate in the cannabis industry, but in how it should do so.

Conclusion: Balancing Opportunity with Responsibility

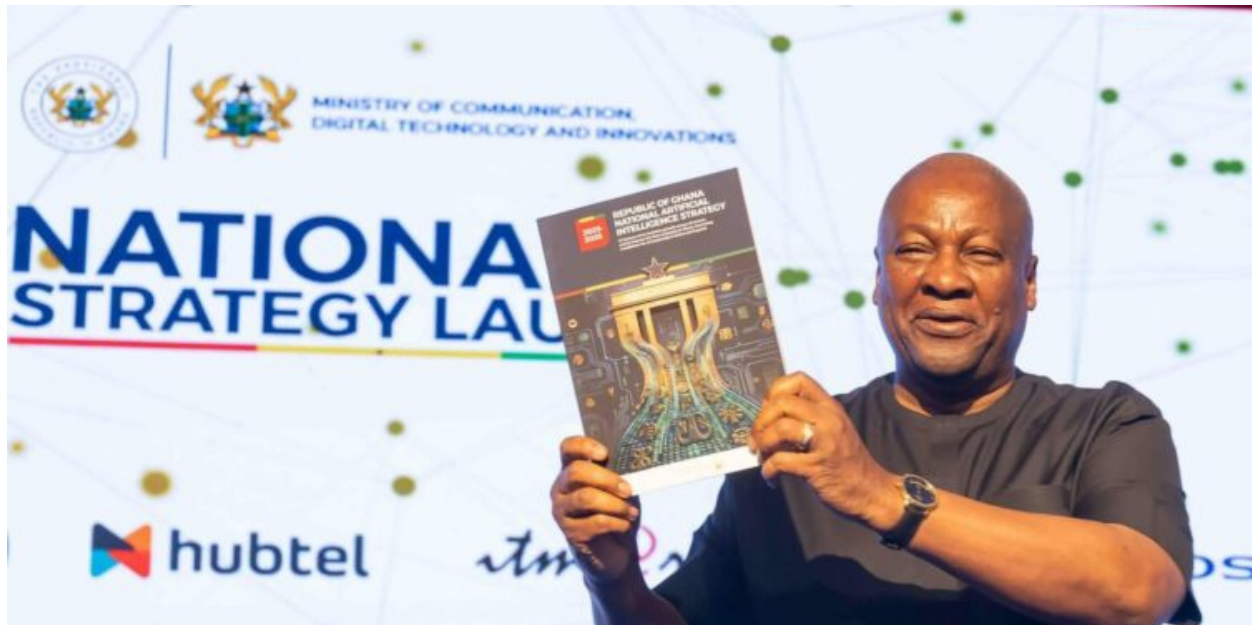
Ultimately, Ghana's cannabis policy is a test of governance, institutional strength, and long-term planning. Success will depend on whether the country can build a system that is inclusive, transparent, and effectively regulated.

Farmers must be given fair access to participate in the industry. Regulatory institutions must remain independent and capable. Public education must be sustained with honesty. And policymakers must resist short-term pressures in favour of long-term national interest.

Cannabis farming will not transform Ghana's economy on its own. But if approached with discipline and care, it could become one important pillar in a broader strategy to modernize agriculture, expand industrial capacity, and position Ghana more competitively within the global economy.

How Ghana's National AI Strategy Can Drive Global Competitiveness

By: Margaret Adjeley Sowah



Introduction

Ghana has entered a new era in its digital transformation with the launch of its National Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategy. The initiative, unveiled in April 2026 at the Accra International Conference Centre by President Mahama, is designed to position the country as an innovation-driven economy and a competitive force in the global digital landscape. More than a policy document, it represents a national commitment to harnessing AI for inclusive growth, job creation, and global relevance. The strategy is intended not only to modernize Ghana's economy but also to make it a competitive hub for AI in West Africa and beyond.

Building Capacity for Transformation

At its core, the strategy is about building capacity. By investing in education and training, Ghana aims to equip its youthful population with the skills needed to thrive in the digital economy. The One Million Coders Programme exemplifies this ambition, creating a pipeline of talent that can drive innovation both locally and

internationally. Alongside skills development, the expansion of broadband, cloud services, and secure data systems, will provide the infrastructure necessary for AI adoption.

President Mahama captured the spirit of the moment when he noted that “technology is not destiny, but shaped by human choices, policy direction, and responsible leadership.” His words underscored Ghana's resolve to actively design and govern AI rather than remain a passive consumer of global innovations.

Complementing this vision, the Minister for Communications, Digital Technology and Innovation, Mr. Samuel Nartey George, described the strategy as “a comprehensive framework anchored on ethical AI, strong data governance, infrastructure expansion, and workforce readiness.” He stressed that implementation would be coordinated across government agencies and supported by institutions such as the National Information Technology Agency and the Data Protection Commission, alongside international partners

including UNESCO and UNDP.

What sets Ghana apart is its focus on localization. By ensuring AI systems reflect Ghanaian languages and cultural contexts, the country is carving out a niche that larger economies often overlook. This approach not only makes AI more accessible to citizens but also positions Ghana as a hub for culturally grounded AI solutions that can be exported across Africa.

Equally important is the emphasis on research and innovation. Universities and research centers are being strengthened to develop solutions tailored to Ghana's needs, from improving agricultural productivity to enhancing healthcare diagnostics.

The strategy also underscores the importance of ethics and governance. By embedding transparency, inclusivity, and trust into AI frameworks, Ghana is setting itself apart as a responsible adopter of technology. In a world where concerns about bias, privacy, and accountability dominate global debates, this commitment enhances Ghana's credibility and attractiveness to international partners.

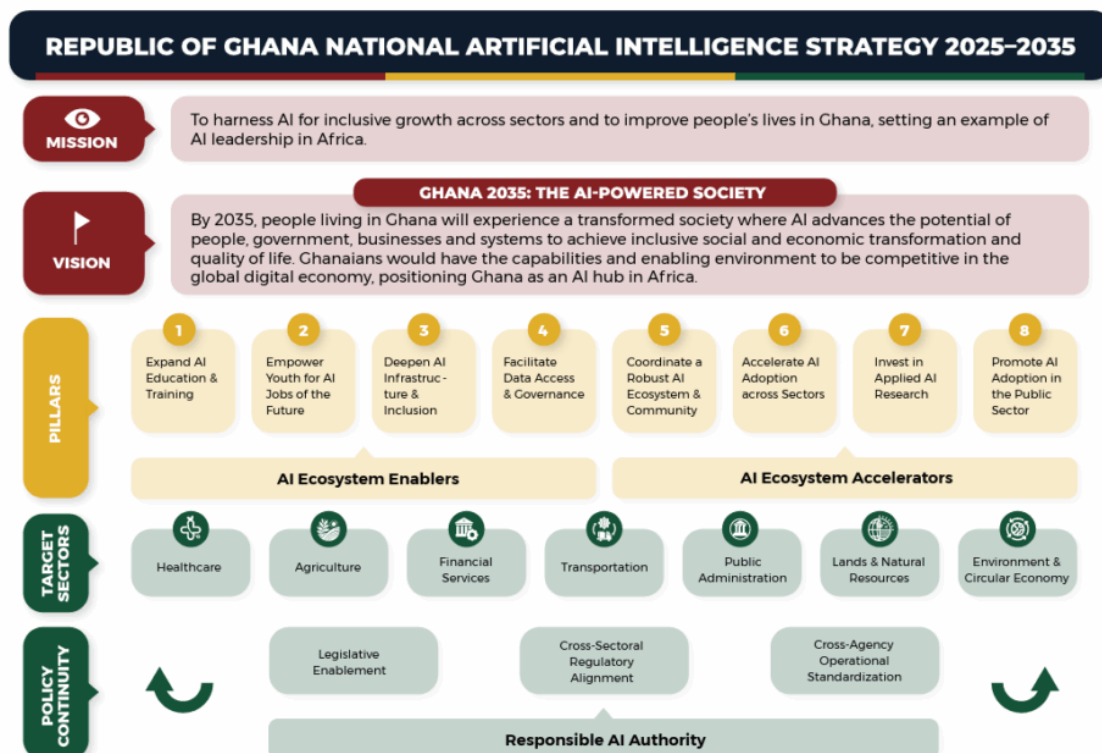
Challenges

However, challenges remain, including bridging the digital divide between urban and rural communities, sustaining political will, and differentiating Ghana from larger AI economies such as Nigeria and South Africa. Yet the strategy's emphasis on inclusivity, ethics, and innovation provides a strong foundation for success.

Conclusion

The launch of Ghana's National AI Strategy by President Mahama was more than a ceremonial event; it was a declaration of intent and decisive steps towards global competitiveness. With strong leadership, ministerial coordination, and international support, Ghana has laid the foundation for a digital future that is inclusive, ethical, and globally competitive.

If implemented with discipline and foresight, the strategy could establish Ghana as West Africa's AI hub, empower its youth, and position the nation as a global leader in responsible, human-centered AI adoption.



Can Ghana Widen Its Revenue Base Without Burdening Its Most Vulnerable Workers?

By: Margaret Adjeley Sowah



Ghana's economy has long relied on a narrow tax base, with a large share of revenue coming from a small group of formal sector workers and businesses. Yet, the majority of Ghanaians who operate in the informal sector, where tax compliance is low and collection mechanisms are weak hardly contribute to the revenue box. As the country seeks to expand its fiscal space to fund development, the question arises: can Ghana widen its revenue base without placing additional burdens on its most vulnerable workers?

The government's ambition to broaden revenue collection is rooted in the need for sustainable financing. With rising demands for infrastructure, healthcare, education, and digital transformation, Ghana cannot depend solely on external borrowing or aid. Expanding

the tax net is therefore essential.

One promising avenue is digitalization. The Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) has emphasized digitalization as the cornerstone of revenue expansion. Through initiatives such as e-VAT, electronic invoicing, and mobile money integration, the GRA aims to capture more businesses into the tax net. It noted that these reforms are designed to improve compliance and broaden the base without disproportionately affecting low-income earners. By leveraging technology, the Authority hopes to make tax collection more efficient and equitable.

Another strategy for widening Ghana's revenue base lies in sectoral diversification. Agriculture, which contributes a substantial portion to the

country's DP, remains under-taxed due to its largely informal nature. Introducing simplified tax regimes for smallholder farmers and agribusinesses, paired with incentives such as access to credit and extension services, could generate revenue while supporting growth. Similarly, the booming digital economy, creative industries, and renewable energy sectors offer untapped opportunities for taxation that do not disproportionately affect vulnerable workers. The World Bank has reinforced this view, noting that Ghana's tax-to-GDP ratio, which stood at around 13.8% in 2022, remains below the average for lower middle-income countries. In its report *Enhancing Revenue Mobilization in Ghana*, the Bank recommended widening the tax base by targeting high-net-worth individuals, strengthening property tax systems, and formalizing informal businesses. Importantly, it emphasized that revenue expansion should be achieved through fairness and efficiency rather than squeezing vulnerable workers who already face economic pressures.

Equally important is fairness in taxation. Progressive tax policies, where higher-income earners and large corporations contribute more, can protect low-income groups. Closing loopholes in corporate taxation, addressing illicit financial flows, and strengthening property

tax systems are measures that shift the burden away from vulnerable workers while ensuring equity.

Despite these opportunities, challenges remain. The digital divide between urban and rural communities limits the reach of digital tax systems. Resistance from informal sector operators, who often view taxation as punitive, can hinder compliance. Political will is also crucial: past attempts at broadening the tax base have faltered due to weak enforcement and public mistrust. Moreover, balancing revenue expansion with social protection requires careful policy design to avoid exacerbating inequality.

Ghana's path to widening its revenue base lies not in burdening its most vulnerable workers, but in innovation, fairness, and inclusivity. By embracing digitalization, diversifying taxable sectors, and enforcing progressive taxation, the country can generate sustainable revenue while safeguarding livelihoods. The challenge is considerable, but with stringent implementation, Ghana can build a fiscal system that funds development, protects the poor, and strengthens its competitiveness in the global economy.



Beyond the Hills: Can the Kwahu Business Forum Translate Conversations into Concrete Policy Outcomes?

By: Deborah Narkie Nartey



EVERY Easter, the hills of Kwahu transform into more than just a tourist destination. What was once known primarily for paragliding, music, and holiday festivities has increasingly evolved into a hub for business networking, entrepreneurship, and national economic conversations. The Kwahu Business Forum, now a major feature of Ghana's Easter calendar, has grown into a platform where policymakers, entrepreneurs, investors, and development partners gather to discuss the future of Ghana's economy.

Yet, beneath the excitement, networking sessions, and high-profile speeches lies a pressing question: can the forum move beyond conversation and symbolism to produce concrete policy outcomes that would genuinely transform Ghana's business environment?

The answer may determine whether the Kwahu Business Forum becomes a lasting institution of economic influence or remains largely an annual ceremonial gathering.

A Growing Platform for Economic Dialogue

Over the years, the forum has attracted significant political and business attention. Government officials use the platform to announce initiatives aimed at supporting entrepreneurship, expanding access to finance, and boosting private-sector growth. Financial institutions showcase funding opportunities, while startups and small businesses seek partnerships and visibility.

The forum's appeal lies in its informal but influential setting. Unlike rigid policy conferences held in capital cities, Kwahu creates an atmosphere where business leaders

and government officials interact more freely. Ideas flow more naturally, networks are built more quickly, and entrepreneurs gain direct access to decision-makers.

For many young Ghanaian entrepreneurs, the event represents hope, a rare opportunity to present business ideas to investors and policymakers who are otherwise difficult to reach.

But dialogue alone is not development.

The Gap Between Promises and Implementation

One of the recurring criticisms of business forums across Africa is the tendency for ambitious declarations to fade after the cameras disappear. Grand speeches often generate headlines, but implementation timelines, institutional accountability, and measurable outcomes are frequently absent.

The Kwahu Business Forum risks falling into the same pattern unless mechanisms are created to track progress beyond the annual event.

Entrepreneurs in Ghana continue to face persistent challenges: high interest rates, an unstable electricity supply, currency volatility, limited access to long-term financing, multiple taxation concerns, and bureaucratic inefficiencies. While these issues are regularly discussed at forums and conferences, many businesses argue that policy reforms remain slow or inconsistent.

For the forum to have meaningful long-term impact, discussions must transition into actionable frameworks with clear deliverables. This means moving beyond inspirational rhetoric toward measurable commitments.

What Concrete Outcomes Could Look Like

If the Kwahu Business Forum is to influence national economic policy, several practical outcomes could emerge from its discussions.

First, the forum could produce a formal annual policy communiqué outlining agreed

recommendations from the private sector. Such a document could be submitted directly to Parliament, the Ministry of Finance, and key government agencies for implementation and review.

Second, policymakers could establish a dedicated implementation task force responsible for monitoring commitments announced during the forum. This would help ensure continuity between annual gatherings and prevent conversations from ending with the event itself.

Third, the forum could become a launch pad for targeted business reforms. For example, if discussions repeatedly identify access to capital as a major challenge for SMEs, the government and financial institutions could use the platform to unveil measurable lending targets or guarantee schemes tied to specific timelines.

Fourth, there is an opportunity to decentralize economic policymaking. Hosting major business discussions outside Accra symbolically challenges the concentration of economic influence in the capital. The forum could therefore become a catalyst for regional investment strategies and local enterprise development across Ghana.

The Private Sector Must Also Lead

The responsibility for turning dialogue into policy outcomes does not rest solely with government.

Private-sector actors must also approach the forum with long-term strategic engagement rather than short-term networking goals. Business associations, chambers of commerce, and industry leaders should use the platform to present data-driven policy proposals instead of broad complaints about the economic climate.

Stronger collaboration between academia, think tanks, and business leaders could also improve the quality of recommendations emerging from the forum. Research-backed proposals are more likely to influence

government policy than general appeals for support.

A Symbol of Ghana's Entrepreneurial Ambition

Despite its limitations, the Kwahu Business Forum represents something important in Ghana's evolving economic story: a growing recognition that entrepreneurship and private-sector development are central to national progress.

Kwahu's hills have become a powerful symbol of aspiration and opportunity. Whether the forum ultimately shapes economic policy in a meaningful way will depend on what happens after the Easter celebrations end.

The true measure of success will not be the number of speeches delivered, attendees registered, or social media impressions generated.

It will be whether entrepreneurs leave future forums seeing real improvements in the business environment, easier access to financing, simplified regulations, improved infrastructure, and policies that genuinely support enterprise growth.

Until then, the question remains: can the Kwahu Business Forum climb beyond conversation and reach the heights of lasting economic impact?

What the US-Iran-Israel Ceasefire Framework Means for Africa's Economy and Geopolitical Standing

By: Deborah Narkie Nartey



THE 2026 Iran War, triggered by the massive joint U.S.-Israeli military campaign (Operation Epic Fury) and the subsequent killing of Iran's Supreme Leader, sent shockwaves through the global ecosystem. For months, the world reeled from the largest energy-supply disruption in history following Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz and a subsequent dual naval blockade.

As negotiators finalized a tentative 60-day ceasefire extension to prolong the initial April truce and initiate formal nuclear negotiations, the global economy was afforded a significant reprieve. For Africa, a continent deeply vulnerable to macroeconomic volatility and external geopolitical pressures this de-escalation re-shapes both its economic survival and its strategic leverage.

▪ **The Economic Lifeline: Relief from the Stagflation Trap**

The war pushed Brent crude prices well past \$100 a barrel, sparking a global fuel crisis, inflating maritime shipping insurance, and disrupting vital fertilizer supply chains. For

African nations, the economic relief of a sustained ceasefire cannot be overstated.

1) Taming Imported Inflation: The vast majority of African nations are net oil and food importers. The conflict severely exacerbated domestic food inflation and depleted foreign exchange reserves in countries like Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Africa. The proposed untolled reopening of the Strait of Hormuz to commercial shipping will immediately cool global energy and commodity markets, offering immense fiscal breathing space to the international community.

2) Easing Debt and Borrowing Pressures: To combat the war-induced global inflationary surge, major central banks kept interest rates aggressively elevated. This effectively locked many African frontier markets out of international capital markets and heightened debt distress. A stabilized Middle East reduces global economic risk, paving the way for a more predictable international interest rate environment.

- **The Hydrocarbon Shift: Normalizing the Windfall**

While oil-importing nations celebrate cheaper fuel, Africa's primary energy exporters are adjusting to a rapid shift in market dynamics.

During the peak of the (2026) conflict, when Gulf oil and LNG flows slowed to a trickle, the West turned its eyes toward alternative suppliers. African energy giants including Nigeria, Angola, and Algeria, alongside emerging LNG powerhouses like Mozambique and Senegal suddenly found themselves positioned as vital alternative security partners for a desperate European market.

- **Africa's Growing Geopolitical Relevance**

The conflict has also highlighted Africa's increasing geopolitical importance in global affairs.

As tensions intensified in the Middle East, strategic attention shifted toward the Red Sea, the Horn of Africa, and North African maritime corridors. Countries such as Egypt, Djibouti, Sudan, and Somalia suddenly became even more significant because of their proximity to key global trade routes.

The Suez Canal and Red Sea shipping lanes are essential to international commerce, and any instability in those corridors affects not only Europe and Asia but also African economies. During the conflict, fears grew that regional instability could spill into East Africa through maritime insecurity, armed groups, or proxy rivalries.

This evolving landscape has strengthened Africa's strategic value to global powers

including the United States, China, Russia, Gulf states, and the European Union. African ports, military partnerships, energy projects, and diplomatic alliances are becoming increasingly important in international security calculations.

In many ways, the ceasefire underscores a broader reality: Africa is no longer merely observing global geopolitical shifts; it is becoming central to them.

The Path Forward: A Window for Resilience

The extreme fragility of this truce, underscored by continuous U.S. Treasury warnings regarding potential maritime tolls and residual skirmishes serve as a clear warning to African leadership.

The economic whiplash of early 2026 demonstrated that relying entirely on global supply chains tied to distant geopolitical chokepoints is an existential risk. The broader lesson is unmistakable: global conflicts increasingly have immediate local consequences.

The US–Israel–Iran conflict demonstrated how quickly wars thousands of kilometers away can trigger inflation, food insecurity, currency instability, and political pressure across African economies. It also revealed Africa's growing strategic relevance in a rapidly shifting international order.

If the ceasefire holds, African economies may gain valuable breathing space. But the deeper challenge remains unresolved: building a continent resilient enough to withstand the economic shocks of an increasingly volatile world.

Ghana at the One Health Summit: What the Country Brought to the Table and What It Must Take Home

By: Priscilla Osei-Wusu Nimako



AS countries around the world confront rising health threats linked to climate change, food insecurity and infectious diseases, the “One Health” approach is gaining renewed attention among the intentional community as a framework for collective action. The concept recognises the close connection between human health, animal health and the environment, and calls for stronger collaboration across sectors to prevent and respond to disease outbreaks and environmental risks.

At the recent One Health Summit, held in Lyon, France Ghana joined other nations, researchers and development partners to discuss how countries can strengthen systems that protect people, animals and ecosystems at

the same time. For Ghana, the summit was both an opportunity to showcase progress and a reminder of the work that still lies ahead.

The country arrived at the summit with experience shaped by public health emergency challenges, climate pressures and recurring disease outbreaks. These challenges have pushed national institutions to rethink how health threats are identified and managed.

Ghana’s response to the COVID 19 pandemic remains one of the country’s strongest examples of cross sector coordination in recent years. Health authorities, local government institutions, security agencies, laboratories and community health workers worked together to monitor infections, enforce public health

measures and expand testing and vaccination campaigns. Though the pandemic exposed gaps in preparedness, it also demonstrated the value of coordinated action across multiple sectors.

That experience has influenced Ghana's broader engagement with the One Health agenda.

The country has also dealt with outbreaks of zoonotic diseases, which are infections transmitted between animals and humans. Cases of avian influenza, rabies and other animal related diseases have reinforced concerns about surveillance systems and the need for stronger collaboration between veterinary and human health services.

At the summit, Ghana highlighted efforts to improve disease surveillance and emergency preparedness through collaboration between the Ministry of Health, the Ghana Health Service, the Veterinary Services Directorate and environmental institutions. Officials pointed to investments in laboratory capacity, data sharing and early warning systems aimed at improving the country's response to outbreaks. Climate change formed another major part of discussions involving Ghana.

Floods, droughts and changing weather patterns continue to affect food production, water quality and public health across the country. Northern Ghana has experienced prolonged dry spells that threaten agricultural livelihoods and increase food insecurity. Flooding in other regions has displaced communities and raised concerns about sanitation and waterborne diseases.

Health experts say these environmental pressures are no longer separate from public health concerns. Poor sanitation, deforestation and unregulated human activity near wildlife habitats are increasing the risk of disease transmission and environmental degradation.

At the summit, Ghana presented some of the policies and interventions aimed at addressing these interconnected threats. Programmes

focused on environmental sanitation, food safety, climate resilience and public health surveillance were among the areas highlighted by delegates.

The country also drew attention to its growing use of community based health systems. Community health nurses and local volunteers continue to play an important role in disease monitoring, vaccination campaigns and public education, particularly in rural areas where access to healthcare remains limited.

Agriculture was another area where Ghana contributed to the conversations at the summit. As a country where many livelihoods depend on farming, Ghana faces the challenge of balancing food production with environmental sustainability and disease prevention. Discussions around antimicrobial resistance, pesticide use and livestock management were especially relevant.

Health and agricultural experts have warned that the misuse of antibiotics in humans and animals could increase resistance to treatment and create new health risks. Ghana has already introduced policies and awareness campaigns on antimicrobial resistance, but enforcement and public education remain ongoing concerns. Despite the progress highlighted at the summit, Ghana also faces several limitations that could affect the implementation of the One Health agenda at home.

Funding remains a major challenge. Many public health and environmental programmes depend heavily on donor support, raising concerns about sustainability. There are also gaps in coordination among institutions, especially during emergencies where responsibilities can overlap or communication can break down.

Another issue is data management. While agencies collect information on diseases, environmental changes and agricultural activities, integrating that information into a unified system remains difficult. Experts at the summit stressed that timely data sharing between sectors is essential for detecting

outbreaks early and responding effectively.

Human resource capacity is another concern. Rural health facilities, veterinary offices and environmental agencies often face shortages of trained personnel and logistical support. This can slow response efforts and reduce monitoring in high risk communities.

Public education awareness also emerged as an area requiring greater attention. Health professionals argue that the success of the One Health approach depends not only on government institutions but also on public understanding and community participation. Practices such as poor waste disposal, unsafe animal handling and illegal mining continue to create environmental and health risks in parts of the country.

For Ghana, the summit served as more than a platform for international engagement. It offered lessons on how countries are adapting to increasingly complex health and environmental threats. Delegates returned with examples of stronger surveillance systems, integrated emergency response structures and financing models that could help improve

Ghana's own approach.

The discussions also reinforced the idea that health challenges can no longer be handled in isolation. Disease outbreaks, environmental degradation and food insecurity are deeply connected, requiring policies that bring together experts from health, agriculture, climate science and local governance.

As Ghana continues to face climate related pressures and emerging health threats, the effectiveness of its One Health efforts will depend on how well institutions can coordinate, share information and sustain investment in prevention and preparedness.

Ghana's presence at the summit reflected both progress and ongoing work. The country has built a foundation that connects human, animal, and environmental health systems, but sustaining and expanding this framework will require continued commitment across government, communities, and partners. The direction taken will shape how effectively the country responds to future health challenges that do not respect sector boundaries.



How Ghana's National Shock Responsive Social Protection Strategy Measures Up Against Climate and Economic Crises

By: Priscilla Osei-Wusu Nimako



GHANA is facing a growing list of climate and economic pressures that continue to test the country's ability to protect vulnerable households. Floods, droughts, rising food prices and public health emergencies have exposed weaknesses in social support systems and highlighted the need for faster and more coordinated responses during periods of crisis.

The launch of "Ghana's National Shock Responsive Social Protection Strategy" together with its standard operating procedures and implementation plan marks an effort to address these challenges through a more adaptive and coordinated approach. The strategy seeks to strengthen the country's ability to respond quickly when disasters or economic shocks threaten livelihoods, especially among low income households.

At the launch of the framework, The Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection

(MoGCSP) Dr. Agnes Naa Momo Lartey described the initiative as a practical response to the increasing frequency of emergencies affecting communities across the country. The strategy is designed to ensure that social protection programmes can expand rapidly during times of crisis and provide support to affected households without long delays.

Recent events have shown why such a system is needed.

In 2023, the Akosombo Dam spillage displaced more than 30,000 people across the Volta, Eastern and Greater Accra regions. Homes, farms and businesses were destroyed while schools and health services were disrupted. Many families lost their sources of income and depended heavily on emergency assistance for survival.

The following year, severe floods in parts of the Central and Northern regions displaced

thousands of more residents and damaged properties and farmlands. More than 2,000 people were displaced in the Central Region while around 70,000 people in Northern Ghana were also affected by flooding. At the same time, prolonged dry spells worsened conditions for farming communities and affected more than 214,000 households enrolled on the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty programme, widely known as LEAP.

These developments reflect broader concerns raised by climate experts and development institutions. The Inte-governmental Panel on Climate Change has repeatedly warned that Africa remains highly vulnerable to climate variability, with droughts, floods and extreme weather events becoming more frequent. Such conditions continue to threaten food security, household incomes and national development gains.

Economic shocks have also added pressure on vulnerable households. The COVID 19 pandemic disrupted livelihoods across Ghana and exposed weaknesses in the country's emergency response systems. Informal sector workers, who make up a large part of the labour force, were among the hardest hit as restrictions slowed economic activity and reduced incomes.

The pandemic revealed how difficult it was to identify and support affected populations quickly. It also highlighted the importance of reliable databases, digital payment systems and coordinated institutions that can respond rapidly during emergencies.

The Gender Minister stated that the new strategy seeks to close those gaps by creating a national framework for preparedness, rapid response and recovery. The plan focuses on strengthening existing systems instead of creating entirely new structures.

Programmes such as LEAP are expected to serve as the foundation for expanding assistance during crises. The Ghana National Household Registry programme will also play a role in identifying vulnerable households and

improving targeting. Officials believe this will help reduce delays and ensure support reaches those most in need.

The strategy also places attention on early warning systems. Agencies such as the National Disaster Management Organisation, the Ghana Meteorological Agency and the National Centre for Coordination of Early Warning and Response Mechanisms are expected to work more closely to improve risk monitoring and preparedness.

Digital payment systems are another area receiving attention under the framework. Authorities say improving electronic payment channels could help beneficiaries receive assistance faster and more securely during emergencies.

The strategy further aims to strengthen coordination among ministries, local government authorities, development partners and civil society organisations. Officials involved in the programme argue that responses to disasters often suffer from fragmented efforts and poor communication among institutions. The framework therefore promotes a whole of government and whole of society approach to crisis response.

Development partners have also played a role in shaping the strategy. The World Bank, UNICEF, the UK Government and the World Food Programme were among organisations acknowledged for supporting Ghana's social protection agenda through technical and financial assistance.

Global experience suggests that adaptive social protection systems can reduce the social and economic impact of disasters when implemented effectively. During the COVID 19 pandemic, several countries used existing welfare programmes and digital platforms to scale up support within weeks. Such examples are now influencing social protection reforms in many developing countries, including Ghana.

Despite the promise of the strategy, questions remain about implementation and financing.

Social protection programmes often face challenges related to funding gaps, data quality and institutional coordination. Expanding support during large scale emergencies requires strong financial backing and efficient systems that can operate under pressure.

There is also concern about whether local institutions have the capacity to manage rapid responses across all regions, especially in remote communities where access to services remains limited.

Still, analysts say the strategy represents a shift towards more preventive and adaptive social protection planning in Ghana. Instead of responding to disasters only after damage has occurred, the framework seeks to improve preparedness and strengthen resilience before crises escalate.

The success of the strategy will largely depend on how effectively the country can integrate its existing systems and maintain long term investment in social protection infrastructure. Reliable household data, effective coordination and predictable financing are likely to determine whether the framework delivers meaningful support during future emergencies.

As climate risks and economic uncertainties continue to affect livelihoods across the country, Ghana's ability to build a responsive and inclusive social protection system may shape how well vulnerable communities recover from future shocks. The new strategy presents an opportunity to strengthen that response, but its impact will ultimately be measured by how quickly and effectively support reaches those facing hardship when the next crisis emerges.

Who Tells Ghana's Story? The Quiet Reinvention of the ISD

By: Richard Aniagyei



THERE is a particular kind of irony in the fact that Ghana's official communication agency spent years struggling to communicate its own relevance. Tucked away in ageing offices, operating a shrinking fleet of vehicles, and watching the public turn to X (formerly known as Twitter), Facebook, and WhatsApp for their daily dose of news, the Information Services Department (ISD) had become something of a ghost in the machinery of Ghanaian governance. An institution that existed to make sure people knew things had itself become largely unknown.

That, at least, is beginning to change.

The ISD was born in 1939, not out of ambition but out of necessity. The British colonial government needed a way to tell Gold Coast citizens about the Second World War, and so a small unit was created to do exactly that. It produced a weekly journal, passed on official

news, and kept the public informed about events happening far beyond their villages and towns. It was simple work, but it mattered. When independence came and Ghana found its own voice, the Department grew with the country, helping governments explain their policies, announce their programmes, and connect with citizens in a nation where not everyone could read, and many lived days away from the nearest city.

For a long time, that model worked well enough. But the world moved fast, and the ISD did not always move with it. By the time smartphones had become common in Ghanaian pockets and data bundles had made social media accessible to millions, the Department was still largely relying on methods that belonged to a different era. Field officers had too few vehicles to travel. Offices lacked basic amenities. Historical records that should have been preserved as national treasures were

deteriorating in storage, eaten away by insects and moisture. The agency that was supposed to be the government's voice had grown quiet.

The consequences were not just institutional. When people cannot get reliable information from official sources, they fill the gap with whatever they can find. In Ghana, as across much of the world, that often means misinformation. Rumours about government policies, false news about health programmes, and distorted accounts of national events spread rapidly across social media platforms that move faster than any government press release. The absence of a strong, credible, and accessible public information service creates space for confusion, and confusion has a cost.

This is the problem the ISD is now trying to solve, and the approach is more considered than simply buying new equipment. Fixing this has required more than patching up old systems.

The ISD has laid out a transformation agenda that works on several fronts at once, and the most visible part of it is already on the road.

The procurement of 40 new mobile information vans and their distribution across all 16 regions is the most visible part of the transformation programme. These vehicles are different from what came before. They carry screens, projectors, speakers, and internet connections. They can broadcast live, host community discussions, and travel to places where a government official has not shown up in years. In the Upper East, the Western Region, the Volta Region, and the North, these vans are already moving, pulling up in markets and town squares and doing what the ISD has always been meant to do: showing up where the people are.

But hardware alone does not build trust. The ISD's leadership seems aware of this. Alongside the vans, a digital strategy is being

rolled out to give the Department a proper presence on the platforms where Ghanaians are actually spending their time. Information officers are being trained to create content that people will actually stop to read and share. A coordination platform called BONSU now connects Public Relations Officers across government ministries and agencies, helping them speak with one voice instead of a dozen conflicting ones. An Access to Information Division has been set up to make it easier for ordinary Ghanaians to formally request information from public institutions, a small but meaningful shift in how the government thinks about transparency.

Perhaps the most underrated part of the transformation is the Research Division's new role. The ISD has always been seen as a one-way street, a body that pushes government messages outward. The idea that it should also be listening, collecting data on how people are actually responding to policies, running surveys, and feeding that information back to decision-makers, is a different philosophy entirely. It treats citizens not as an audience to be addressed but as participants whose views should shape what government does next.

Whether all of this adds up to a genuine transformation or simply a well-funded upgrade remains to be seen. Institutions do not change because they receive new vehicles or new systems. They change when the people inside them change how they think about their work. The ISD's real challenge is not technological. It is about rebuilding a relationship with the Ghanaian public that has grown distant over many years.

The vans are on the road. The platforms are being built. The question now is whether, when a farmer in the Northern Region or a trader in Kumasi or a fisherman along the Volta hears something from the ISD, they will believe it. That kind of trust is not procured. It is earned, slowly, one honest conversation at a time.

Clean Ghana, Dirty Streets - Where Did We Go Wrong?

By: Richard Aniagyei



It is a typical morning in Accra's Agbogbloshie market. Traders unpack produce. Children pick through smouldering electronic waste. At the edge of the Odaw River, a young mother watches her son wade through a stream of plastic bottles, rotting food, and black sludge. Further downstream, the Korle Lagoon lies choked with solid waste, its surface barely visible beneath discarded sachets. This is the other Ghana, the one not found in tourism brochures. For over three decades, successive governments have launched sanitation campaigns with names like "Operation Clean Your Frontage," "National Sanitation Day," and "Clean Ghana," each promising to transform the nation into a model of urban hygiene. Yet the World Bank reports that Ghana generates

more than 12,000 tonnes of solid waste per day, and only about 10 percent is collected and properly disposed. The rest ends up in drains, open spaces, wetlands, and oceans.

Ghana's history of cleanliness drives goes back to the 1980s with mandatory community labour. In 2017, the "Clean Ghana" campaign began under the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources. "Operation Clean Your Frontage" compelled property owners to keep their immediate surroundings tidy. In 2021, the Accra Sanitation and Waste Management Project received a \$200 million World Bank facility. Yet a 2022 UNICEF report ranked Ghana among the top ten countries for open defecation, with over 18 percent of the rural population lacking

any toilet facility. Poor sanitation costs Ghana an estimated \$79 million each year in healthcare, lost productivity, and early deaths.

Plastic waste is the most visible problem. Ghana consumes about 1.1 million tonnes of plastic annually, but only 2 to 5 percent is recycled. The rest blocks drain and pollutes the soil. Attempts to ban thin plastics have been announced three times but never fully enforced. During every major rainfall, Accra floods, not because the rain is exceptional, but because drains are clogged with bottles, sachets, and styrofoam. In many cities, drainage systems have become rubbish dumps. In Kumasi, the Subin and Aboabo rivers overflow into homes each year. In Sekondi Takoradi, beach clean ups routinely pull hundreds of tonnes of plastic from the shoreline. The root cause is simple: inadequate waste collection coverage. In low income communities, fewer than 30 percent of households receive regular collection. With no alternative, residents dump waste in drains or burn it.

Behavioural change remains the hardest task in dealing with the sanitation challenge. A 2020 Afrobarometer survey found that while 87 percent of Ghanaians agree littering is a serious problem, nearly 60 percent admitted to throwing rubbish on the ground in the past month because there was no bin nearby or because everyone else does it. There is also a mindset that someone else will clean up. Sanitary workers are stigmatised, and cleaning is often seen as work for the poor or for government alone. Weak enforcement of sanitation bylaws allows the cycle to continue.

Institutional fragmentation makes matters worse. Waste management involves the Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy and religious affairs, the Environmental Protection Agency, Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), private contractors, and many NGOs. No single command structure exists. A plastic sachet thrown in Accra passes through multiple jurisdictions, and accountability is diluted. MMDAs complain of insufficient funds; waste collection can

consume up to 40 percent of an Assembly's budget in urban areas. The only engineered landfill at Kpone is nearing capacity, and illegal dumpsites are spreading.

Despite the challenges, some progress is visible. The Madina Waste Recycling Plant turns plastic into pavement blocks and benches. The Accra Compost and Recycling Plant processes 600 tonnes of organic waste daily into compost. The youth led NGO "The Plastic Punch" combines beach clean ups with upcycling, turning waste into school desks. The "Fix Your Frontage" bylaw has shown results in upscale Accra neighbourhoods where enforcement is steady. The government's recent Ghana National Clean Up Campaign aims to mobilise military and national service personnel for monthly clean ups across all 16 regions.

Experts suggest five steps forward. First, give district MMDAs more funding and autonomy to ensure regular collection in all zones. Second, enforce fines for littering while providing accessible public bins. Third, build a recycling economy with tax breaks for recycling companies and a deposit refund system for plastic bottles. Fourth, make sanitation education compulsory in schools, as some private schools have already done with success. Fifth, use technology such as citizen reporting apps and GPS tracked collection trucks to improve efficiency.

The Clean Ghana campaign is not a failure. It is an unfinished effort. The country has shown it can mobilise millions for a Saturday clean up. It has built modern landfills and recycling plants. What it lacks is a system that works every day, not just on campaign days. The path to a clean Ghana runs through every household, drain, and landfill. It requires citizens to accept responsibility and governments to maintain what they build. Until then, the young mother at the Odaw River will keep watching her son wade through filth, and the dream of a clean nation will wait for the courage to turn slogans into daily action.

Why Ghana's Tiered Pension System Needs Reform Before Another Generation Retires in Hardship

By: Sarah Safo Boamah



RETIREMENT is supposed to be a season of dignity, rest, and security after decades of hard work. Yet for many older Ghanaians, retirement has become a period marked by financial anxiety, dependence, and disappointment. To address the challenge, the government introduced pension reforms. One of the reforms was the introduction of the three-tier pension system under the National Pensions Act, 2008 (Act 766) intended to modernize retirement security and protect workers from poverty in old age. Nearly two decades later, however, many workers remain uncertain about whether the system can truly guarantee a decent retirement.

The reality is difficult to ignore unless urgent reforms are made, another generation of Ghanaians may retire into hardship despite contributing to the pension scheme throughout their working lives.

Ghana's tiered pension system was introduced to replace the old Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) structure, which many criticized for being unsustainable and inadequate. The new arrangement consists of three levels.

The first tier is a mandatory basic national social security scheme managed by SSNIT. It is designed to provide monthly pensions to retired workers. The second tier is also mandatory but privately managed, intended to provide lump-sum benefits upon retirement. The third tier is voluntary and encourages workers to make additional retirement savings through provident funds and personal pension schemes.

On paper, the structure appears balanced and forward-looking. It combines state protection with private investment opportunities and individual savings. Unfortunately, the experience of many workers suggests that the practical implementation has fallen short of

expectations.

One of the biggest concerns surrounding the pension system is administrative inefficiencies, weak coordination between pension fund managers, and inconsistent record-keeping continue to undermine public confidence. Some workers approach retirement only to discover discrepancies in their contribution histories. Others are unable to track their pension growth transparently.

A pension system should provide certainty, not confusion.

Another serious challenge is the declining real value of pension benefits due to inflation and economic instability. While workers contribute consistently throughout their careers, the purchasing power of their pensions often diminishes significantly by the time they retire.

In a country where the cost of living continues to rise sharply, retirees frequently find that their monthly pensions cannot adequately cover rent, healthcare, food, and utility expenses. The situation becomes even worse for workers in low-income sectors whose contributions are already modest.

The painful truth is that many pensioners who once held respectable jobs now struggle to survive financially after retirement.

Ghana's informal sector accounts for a substantial portion of the national workforce, yet pension coverage within this group remains alarmingly low. Traders, artisans, farmers, transport operators, and many self-employed workers often lack structured retirement protection.

Although the third tier allows voluntary participation, awareness remains limited, and many informal workers either cannot afford regular contributions or do not trust the system enough to invest in it. As a result, millions of Ghanaians risk entering old age without any meaningful financial safety net.

A pension system that excludes a large share of the workforce cannot be considered fully successful.

There must be the need for stronger regulation and transparency. Concerns about accountability within pension fund management have also emerged over the years. Contributors deserve regular, transparent updates about how their funds are



invested and the returns being generated. Yet many workers have little understanding of where their retirement savings are held or how effectively they are being managed.

Stronger regulation by the National Pensions Regulatory Authority is essential to protect contributors savings from mismanagement and ensure that pension funds are invested responsibly. Public trust is the backbone of any pension system. Once confidence weakens, participation declines.

Ghana stands at a critical moment. The country's youthful population may create the impression that retirement issues can be postponed, but demographic realities suggest otherwise. Every year, thousands of workers approach retirement age with growing uncertainty about their future.

Reforming the pension system should therefore become a national priority rather than an occasional political discussion. Key reforms should include:

- Faster and more efficient processing of pension claims
- Improved digital record systems for contributors
- Better inflation protection for pension benefits
- Greater inclusion of informal sector workers
- Enhanced transparency and public education



- Stronger oversight of pension fund investments

Without these changes, the gap between pension expectations and retirement realities will continue to widen.

A nation that fails to protect its elderly risks undermining the value of lifelong work and sacrifice. Pension reform is not merely an economic issue; it is a moral and social responsibility. Workers who spend decades contributing to national development deserve security and dignity in old age.

Ghana's tiered pension system was built with good intentions, but intentions alone are not enough. The country must confront the weaknesses within the system before another generation reaches retirement only to discover that years of contribution cannot guarantee financial stability.

The time for meaningful reform is now not after more pensioners are forced into hardship.

Confronting the Graduate Unemployment Crisis Through Policy, Not Promises

By: Sarah Safo Boamah



IN many developing economies today, the celebration of university graduation is increasingly followed by uncertainty, frustration, and prolonged unemployment. Thousands of graduates leave lecture halls each year with hopes of meaningful employment, only to encounter shrinking opportunities, underpaid work, or complete exclusion from the labour market. The graduate unemployment crisis has therefore become more than an economic challenge; it is now a social and political concern demanding urgent policy intervention rather than repeated political promises.

In Ghana, the issue continues to affect national productivity and youth morale. While governments frequently assure citizens of job creation initiatives, many graduates still struggle to transition from education into employment. The time has come to move

beyond campaign rhetoric and adopt deliberate, practical, and sustainable policies capable of transforming graduate employment outcomes.

One of the central causes of graduate unemployment is the mismatch between university education and labour market demands. Many tertiary institutions continue to emphasize theoretical learning while industries increasingly require practical, digital, and technical competencies. As a result, graduates often possess certificates without the professional skills employers seek. Policy makers must therefore prioritize curriculum reforms that align academic training with current economic realities. Universities should collaborate closely with industries to develop programmes that reflect emerging sectors such as technology, renewable energy, agribusiness, artificial intelligence, and digital

entrepreneurship.

Additionally, internship and apprenticeship systems require serious restructuring. In many cases, graduates complete their studies without any meaningful workplace experience. A national graduate internship policy, supported by both government and the private sector, could help bridge this gap. Such a programme should not merely exist on paper but should provide structured mentorship, practical exposure, and pathways into permanent employment.

Another major contributor to unemployment is the limited growth of industries capable of absorbing graduates. Economic policy must therefore shift toward supporting productive sectors that generate sustainable jobs. Governments should invest in industrialization, innovation hubs, and small business development rather than relying excessively on public sector recruitment. Youth entrepreneurship programmes should also move beyond ceremonial launch events and provide genuine access to funding, training, and business support systems.

Equally important is the need for stronger investment in technical and vocational education. For too long, many societies have placed excessive prestige on traditional university education while neglecting technical and vocational skills development. Yet modern economies require engineers, technicians, artisans, software developers, and creative professionals as much as lawyers or administrators. Policymakers must redefine national attitudes toward skills development and create equal opportunities for technical career pathways.

Corruption and political favoritism also continue to undermine employment opportunities for qualified graduates. In many institutions, recruitment processes are influenced by personal connections rather than merit. This

discourages hardworking young people and weakens public trust. Transparent recruitment systems and stronger anti-corruption measures are therefore essential in confronting graduate unemployment effectively.

Furthermore, governments must recognize that unemployment is not merely an economic statistic but a human reality. Prolonged unemployment among graduates often leads to depression, low self-esteem, social unrest, and migration pressures. A nation that invests heavily in education but fails to create opportunities for its educated youth risks wasting its most valuable resource: human capital.

The graduate unemployment crisis cannot be solved through speeches, slogans, or temporary interventions designed for political applause. It requires long-term national planning, educational reforms, industrial expansion, and accountable leadership. Young graduates deserve more than promises repeated every election cycle. They deserve policies that create pathways to dignity, productivity, and economic participation.

Ultimately, confronting graduate unemployment through policy rather than promises is not simply an option; it is a national necessity. The future of any country depends largely on how effectively it empowers its educated youth. Governments that fail to act decisively today may face deeper economic and social consequences tomorrow.





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