

Mayors Dialogue on Growth and Solidarity

City profile: Accra, Ghana



Population: 2,052,341 (2019)
GDP per capita: \$3,388 (2019)
Major industries: services (wholesale, retail), manufacturing
Percentage of migrants: 4% (2010)
Mayor's name: Mohammed Adjei Sowah

Socioeconomic profile

Accra is the largest city and capital of Ghana, located in the Gulf of Guinea, which is part of the Atlantic Ocean off the west coast of Africa. The city's population is 2,052,341 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2019a), although it experiences a daily influx of more than two million commuters, doubling the size of the urban population by day (Accra Metropolitan Assembly, n.d.a). The city is part of the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area, which is home to 4.9 million people (Ghana Statistical Service, 2019a) and is one of the fastest growing city regions in West Africa (Government of Ghana and World Bank Group, 2017). Its rapid growth and unplanned spatial expansion have created numerous challenges, including highly congested traffic, housing shortages, urban sprawl and informal settlements that are not connected to essential services and infrastructure. There has been progress in some areas, notably electricity access, with 96.5% of the population of the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area recorded as having access to electricity in 2016/2017 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2019b). The city is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change due to sea level rise and flooding, as

well as other challenges. Around 80% of the greater metropolitan area's 225 km shoreline is vulnerable to erosion due to sea level rise (Government of Ghana and World Bank Group, 2017). Its low-lying nature combined with its location between two lagoons, poor waste management practices and inefficient drainage systems have all contributed to some devastating floods in the city region (Accra Metropolitan Assembly and C40 Cities, 2020).

Accra is the economic hub of Ghana. The Greater Accra Metropolitan Area is responsible for around 25% of the GDP of the country (Government of Ghana and World Bank Group, 2017) implying a GDP per capita for the city region of around \$3,388 in 2019.¹ Most of the workforce in the city is employed in the services sector (65%), with wholesale and retail trade being very important; around 24% are employed in manufacturing (Ghana Statistical Service, 2019b). The unemployment rate in Greater Accra is the highest in the country (12% compared with the national average of 8%), with high youth unemployment a major challenge (30% of young people aged 15–24 were unemployed in 2017) (Ghana Statistical Service, 2019b). Accra is the least poor region in Ghana, with

Migrant profile of Accra, 2010



Source: Ghana Statistical Service (2014)

¹ Based on author's own calculations. The GDP figure for Ghana is taken from the World Bank database (www.data.worldbank.org). The GDP figure for 2019 (\$66.984 billion) is used and the GDP for the city region is calculated using the 25% benchmark contribution estimated for the greater metropolitan area. The per capita figure is then calculated for the city region using the population figure for the wider metropolitan area provided by the Ghana Statistical Service for 2019.

the wider metropolitan area recording a 2% poverty rate in 2016/2017 (down from 12% in 2005/2006) (Ghana Statistical Service, 2019b). This compares with the national average of 23.4% (Ghana Statistical Service, 2019b).

Migration profile

In 2010, the total resident population in Accra was 1,665,086, of which, 65,160 held foreign nationality (around 4% of the population). As the chart shows, around 74% of foreigners in Accra were from countries in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Nearly 14% of foreign migrants were from non-ECOWAS African countries, showing that Accra attracts a sizeable migrant population from other African countries. Just under 12% of the migrant population came from outside the African continent.

Accra is also a major destination for regional migration from other parts of Ghana and receives the highest proportion of internal migrants in the country. As per the Population and Housing Census (2010), the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area has a total of 778,267 residents who were born outside the region – this represents around 47% of the population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). There are vast differences in the patterns of regional migration from outside Accra: more than 30% of internal migrants were born in the Eastern region of the country, compared with just 1% born in the Upper West region.

Governance structure

The Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) is responsible for the administration of the city of Accra. However, there are 29 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies that form the Greater Accra region. Coordination and joint planning across all Assemblies is important for the development of the wider metropolitan region and its strategic initiatives, such as transportation, which are coordinated between all the local government authorities. The AMA has 55 members. The majority are elected (41), with other members appointed by the Government of Ghana to work alongside the Metro Chief Executive (Mayor) (Accra Metropolitan Assembly, n.d.a). Structurally, the AMA is made up of the General Assembly at the apex, followed by 10 Sub-Metropolitan District Councils, which perform the operational functions assigned to them by the Assembly (Accra Metropolitan Assembly, n.d.b).

The AMA recently conducted the city's first greenhouse gas emissions inventory for Accra and developed a Climate Action Plan (2020–2025), which will be implemented against this emissions baseline (Accra Metropolitan Assembly and C40 Cities, 2020). The plan identifies a range of actions to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve quality of life, create green jobs and set the city on a path towards climate resilience and carbon neutrality by 2050. Priority actions will be taken in five areas: solid waste and wastewater; energy, buildings and industry; transportation; land-use and spatial planning; as well as measures aimed at mainstreaming the climate change threat into the city's development processes.

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