

# The Republic of Ghana

## Geography

Ghana is a country located on the Gulf of Guinea, only a few degrees north of the Equator, therefore giving it a warm climate. The Greenwich Meridian also passes through Ghana, specifically through the industrial city of Ghana-Tema; so it is said that Ghana is geographically closer to the "center" of the world than any other country. Côte d'Ivoire is located to the west of Ghana while Burkina Faso and Togo are located to its north and east respectively. The coastline is mostly a low, sandy shore backed by plains and scrub and intersected by several rivers and streams. A tropical rain forest belt, broken by heavily forested hills and many streams and rivers, extends northward from the shore. North of this belt, the land is covered by low bush, park-like savannah, and grassy plains.

The climate is tropical. The eastern coastal belt is warm and comparatively dry (see Dahomey Gap); the southwest corner, hot and humid; and the north, hot and dry. Lake Volta, the world's largest artificial lake, extends through large portions of eastern Ghana.



Map of Ghana



the Famous Larabanga Mosque  
(In the Northern Region of Ghana)

**Government:** Ghana was created as a parliamentary democracy at independence in 1957, followed by alternating military and civilian governments. In January 1993, military government gave way to Fourth Republic after presidential and parliamentary elections in late 1992. The 1992 constitution divides powers among a president, parliament, cabinet, Council of State, and an independent judiciary. The Government is elected by universal suffrage.

**Administrative Divisions:** There are ten administrative regions which are divided into 110 districts, each with its own District Assembly. Below districts are various types of councils, including 58 town or area councils, 108 zonal councils, and 626 area councils and 16,000 unit committees on the lowest level.

## Tamale City Profile



Mosque in downtown Tamale

### **Population and expected growth (2015 horizon):**

Tamale has a total population of 350,000 people as per the last census (2000 census). Currently the growth rate of Tamale is 2.5% per annum. The population is estimated to reach a total of 411,250 by 2015.

### **Ecosystem and climate**

The climate of Ghana is tropical generally, but temperature varies from season and elevation. The city of Tamale experiences one rainy season beginning April and lasting until September with rainfall averaging 1,100mm (about 43 inches). The dry desert wind (harmattan), blows from northeast from December to March, lowering humidity and creating hot days and cool nights in the north in general. The temperature of the area can be described as hot and dry ranging between 23c to 40 c. naturally the vegetation of the area is guinea savannah woodland type. It consist of short trees and grasses with the shea tree and “dawadawa” as the most predominant trees. These trees of great important value and its evidence by the fact that majority of women in both urban and peri-urban Tamale are engaged in shea-butter and dawadawa processing as their main source of livelihood.

### **Main characteristics of the city:**

Tamale is one of the fastest growing cities in West Africa. It is the capital of the northern region of Ghana and the third largest city in country after Accra and Kumasi. Livelihood in the city is largely dependant on agriculture (crop, livestock/poultry, and agro-processing) despite its Metropolitan status. The population of the city grew by 48.8% between 1984 and 2000 (population census, 2000) placing considerable challenges such as unprecedented demand on land for residential and industrial development, unemployment especially for the poor and vulnerable , slum development, environmental degradation and poverty in general.

### **Current and Future Challenges on UA**

Summarize in a few words illustrated by key quantitative or qualitative data both the current and expected challenges that the city is facing for the following issues that CFF is contributing to:

#### ***Urban Poverty***

It is estimated that 7 out of 10 people are poor in the northern region and Tamale happens to be the capital of the region with people around the region migrating into the city in search of jobs. This situation further puts the city in lots and lots of challenges in its bit to fighting poverty. These challenges include:

- Rising unemployment especially among the poor and vulnerable groups

- Slum development among especially farm families

### ***Urban Food Security***

The food security situation of Tamale especially among the poor and vulnerable is on the decline due largely to:

- Speedy decline of farmlands for residential and industrial purposes
- Decline in soil fertility due largely to continues cropping
- Inadequate access to credit by small scale farmers
- Inadequate access to extension services
- Poor market access for women agro-processors

### ***Urban environment***

Tamale Metropolis is also faced with some key environmental challenges:

- Increase generation of liquid and solid waste that pollutes water sources use for farming particularly vegetable production
- Depletion of vegetation due largely to residential and industrial development
- Use of chemicals by farmers to maximize production on small parcels of land that have negative implications on the environment in general and on soils and consumers health in particular

### ***Empowerment of urban farmers***

The formation and animation of farmer groups/association as basis for effective extension delivery and for gaining access to agricultural credit can not be over emphasized. 70% of all livelihood activities in Tamale are carried out in individual settings as opposed to group settings (URBANET, 2006). Even though a lot of work has gone into mobilizing farmers/communities into effective groups through training in areas such as:

- Leadership and group dynamics
- Basic record keeping
- Development of group bye-laws and constitutions

There is still the challenge of most communities/farmer groups not functioning as effective groups and needs to be reached out to for capacity development.

### ***Participatory city governance***

The participation of communities and farmer groups in particular in discussions especially in the area of extension delivery with MoFA is though gradually improving through farmers' fora and stakeholder meetings a lot still needs to be done to increase participation. The key challenges for effective participation are:

- Non-existence of policy framework for integrating urban agriculture
- The urban agriculture stakeholder process been championed by URBANET still at infant stages
- Weak collaboration especially among state agencies

- No Assembly bye-laws specially aimed at developing linkages to urban agriculture

### **Other Major Challenges Faced by the City**

Another important challenge faced by the Tamale Metropolis has been that many development partners see Tamale as a Metropolis with the most facilities and affluence and so focus more on the rural districts to the neglect of the very poor, vulnerable and displaced urban farmers. It is very common to hear that agric is done in rural communities and that is where poverty is highest. But the fact still remains that over sixty percent of the people of Tamale still depend on small ruminants, poultry, vegetable farming and agro-processing for their livelihoods that do not get the necessary support due to this kind of perception.

### **For more information contact:**

Mr. Rashid Zakaria: [urbanetnorthern@yahoo.com](mailto:urbanetnorthern@yahoo.com)

*Or*

*Visit: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamale](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamale)*