

Ghana

Geography

Location: Western Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean, between Cote d'Ivoire and Togo

Area:

total area: 238,540 sq km

land area: 230,020 sq km

Land boundaries: total 2,093 km, Burkina 548 km, Cote d'Ivoire 668 km, Togo 877 km

Coastline: 539 km

Maritime claims:

contiguous zone: 24 nm

continental shelf: 200 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: tropical; warm and comparatively dry along southeast coast; hot and humid in southwest; hot and dry in north

Terrain: mostly low plains with dissected plateau in south-central area

Natural resources: gold, timber, industrial diamonds, bauxite, manganese, fish, rubber

Land use:

arable land: 5%

permanent crops: 7%

meadows and pastures: 15%

forest and woodland: 37%

other: 36%

Irrigated land: 80 sq km (1989)

Environment:

current issues: recent drought in north severely affecting agricultural activities; deforestation; overgrazing; soil erosion; poaching and habitat destruction threatens wildlife populations; water pollution; inadequate supplies of potable water

natural hazards: dry, dusty, harmattan winds occur from January to March; droughts

Note: Lake Volta is the world's largest artificial lake; northeasterly harmattan wind (January to March)

People

Population: 17,763,138 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 46% (female 4,030,154; male 4,069,945)

15-64 years: 51% (female 4,638,451; male 4,494,533)

65 years and over: 3% (female 276,186; male 253,869) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 3.06% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 43.57 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 12.02 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: -0.94 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 81.7 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 55.85 years

male: 53.88 years

female: 57.88 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 6.09 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Ghanaian(s)

adjective: Ghanaian

Ethnic divisions: black African 99.8% (major tribes - Akan 44%, Moshi-Dagomba 16%, Ewe 13%, Ga 8%), European and other 0.2%

Religions: indigenous beliefs 38%, Muslim 30%, Christian 24%, other 8%

Languages: English (official), African languages (including Akan, Moshi-Dagomba, Ewe, and Ga)

Literacy:

total population: 60%
male: 70%
female: 51%

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Republic of Ghana

conventional short form: Ghana

former: Gold Coast

Capital: Accra

Independence: 6 March 1957 (from UK)

National holiday: Independence Day, 6 March (1957)

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Flag: three equal horizontal bands of red (top), yellow, and green with a large black five-pointed star centered in the gold band; uses

the popular pan-African colors of Ethiopia; similar to the flag of Bolivia, which has a coat of arms centered in the yellow band

Economy

Overview: Well endowed with natural resources, Ghana is relatively well off, having twice the per capita output of the poorer countries in West Africa.

Industries: mining, lumbering, light manufacturing, aluminum, food processing

Agriculture: accounts for almost 50% of GDP (including fishing and forestry); the major cash crop is cocoa; other principal crops - rice, coffee, cassava, peanuts, corn, shea nuts, timber; normally self-sufficient in food

Illicit drugs: illicit producer of cannabis for the international drug trade; transit hub for Southwest and Southeast Asian heroin destined for Europe and the US

Transportation

Railroads:
total: 953 km

Highways:
total: 32,250 km

Inland waterways: Volta, Ankobra, and Tano Rivers provide 168 km of perennial navigation for launches and lighters; Lake Volta provides 1,125 km of arterial and feeder waterways

Pipelines: none

Ports: Takoradi, Tema

Airports:
total: 12

Defence Forces

Branches: Army, Navy, Air Force, Police Force, Palace Guard, Civil Defense