

Overview



Introduction

This edition of the *Ghana Social Development Outlook* (GSDO) is the second in a series, following the maiden one published in 2013. The main objective of the GSDO is to provide a critical and timely document which captures and discusses pressing social issues in Ghana at the time of writing. Thus, it seeks to aid the development of Ghana. Among other things, it seeks to be informational, and also to provide a document for the policy debates and related actions that will move Ghana forward on its development agenda. The GSDO also provides the much needed context-relevant and timely information and course material for teaching development-related social issues in Ghana.

The GSDO is an output from the Social Division of the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) and is meant to be produced biennially. It is anticipated that over a two-year period, relevant information and newer social and policy issues will have emerged in the country to warrant evidence-based research and policy discourse. Depending on data availability, a trend analysis of the main indicators for each thematic area will be traced for progress or otherwise every four years. In addition, urgent social and public policy issues will be tracked and discussed every two years, in between the four-year tracking of social development indicators.

Like the edition before it, GSDO 2014 is a flagship publication on current social issues affecting debate and policy dialogue on the development and well-being of Ghana. The guiding principle for GSDO 2014 is to discuss social and policy issues that call for immediate attention, and analyse current policies that are deemed critical for the social development of Ghana. It also aims to

bridge the information and policy gap on social issues in the international arena which have significance and relevance for Ghana. Thus, GSDO 2014 serves the purpose of providing in one book a resource for pertinent policy issues, debate and policy guidance and recommendations on the social development of Ghana.

Social Policy and Development in Ghana: A Contribution

Social arrangements are important for development (Sen, 2004), and human capital is an important resource for development (Frankel, 2005). It has been pointed out that “social development is driven by robust social policy. Social policy is the roadmap and the means by which we engineer a better life for all and address the impact on people of some developmental problems” (ISSER, 2013, p.3). Development has been defined in several ways, with arguably its broadest definition provided by Sen (1999) who conceptualizes development as having at its core the enhancement of lives and freedoms. ISSER (2013, 95) proposes that development is “a process of change that may lead to improvement in social, political, environmental and economic well-being and increased confidence of people.” It is on the basis of these conceptual definitions of development that GSDO 2014 addresses the critical issues that currently confront Ghanaians as a whole, and seeks to promote debate in both public and private arenas.

Ghanaians are becoming increasingly responsive to the myriad social issues that confront us daily, ranging from sanitation to school placement and to corruption, among others. That these issues permeate the radio discussions, social media exchanges after TV programmes, and electronic news sites is common knowledge. The question that every free-minded person in the country should ask and demand an answer to is the basis of the information these self-appointed callers and commentators use in their heated discourse. More importantly, what is the level of credulity of the average Ghanaian regarding the information that is peddled through these media? What is the basis of the often heated political debate in the country? For example, who is correct in insisting that there is already free secondary education in Ghana, or that this is a policy that must be implemented immediately? And if it is needed or it already exists, is free education the end of the debate? Beyond free education, what is the country doing in practice about the bulging youth population in the country, and the associated problems of school access and quality, unemployment and housing deficits? Is there a connection between

these and the increasing crime rate in the country? Are the youth needed principally to make noise on political issues and to vote for politicians or are they optimally engaged in the political processes and parties? In a similar vein, is it enough for us to boast and showcase our gains under the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) internationally? Does quality of healthcare matter? Are we dealing proactively with the effects of increasing public access to the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS)? Does the burden of this increase on professional healthcare personnel need to be addressed ahead of time? Who is insured, and who is not, to begin with? Will paying critical attention to the huge sanitation menace in the country help promote our health and longevity and cut down on our burden of disease? As a nation, are we giving adequate consideration to climate change, and the related energy crisis? Do the over-frequent electricity outages have an impact on our development in any way, and have we given this any serious attention, other than the usual politicization it attracts? These are some of the issues for which GSDO 2014 hopes to provide critical, credible, data-driven material for constructive debate and public discourse. Through the GSDO, ISSER hopes to provide a serialized one-stop source of critical information that will contribute to policy formulation and implementation in social and development issues in Ghana.

Link between GSDO 2012 and GSDO 2014

GSDO 2012 noted forcefully that the social development agenda is very auspicious both globally and regionally. Current matters include finalizing indicators related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Rio+20 process to expand the goals of economic and social development and environmental sustainability, and the post-2015 development agenda that continues to seek progress on key social development issues such as social protection, adaptation to climate change, promotion of gender relations and women's empowerment, social protection and human rights. While there were programmes for social protection and governance, there appeared to be some deficiencies in policy formulation for the social development agenda in Ghana. Thus, GSDO 2012 scrutinized the challenges the country faces in areas such as rapid urbanization, the demographic challenges of the "youth bulge" alongside a significant ageing segment of the population, and a changing concept of the family. It noted the unavoidable effects of the global financial, food and energy crises and the failure of the structural adjustment and economic liberalization programmes to produce the expected effects. In effect, Ghana's economic growth over the last two decades or so has not had enough impact on key social arenas such as education, healthcare, employment, governance, social security and protection, energy, housing,

human security, and water and sanitation. GSDO 12 called for the appropriate policies and resource commitments that would promote the optimal development of the nation with the goal of attaining sustainable indicators for human capital, social capital, natural capital and economic capital over time. GSDO 2014 follows on by focusing on the current burning issues in the social space of Ghana, critically analyzing these and providing the needed policy alerts.

GSDO 2014: The Report – Conceptions, Contents and Omissions

For the purposes of continuous evaluation of the state of social development issues, every chapter in the current edition provides a short overview of the equivalent chapter in GSDO 12. Based on the availability of newer data, each chapter also updates the indicators in GSDO 2012, again, to show a trend. When possible, additional indicators on the critical issues discussed in each chapter are also provided. GSDO 2012 presented the historical background of policy discourse on the thematic issues as well as the current situation on the ground, ending with policy recommendations.

The focus of GSDO 2014 is to discuss current burning social and policy issues that call for immediate attention and current policies that are deemed critical to the social development of Ghana. It has 12 chapters, most of which have single authors, and 14 authors. There are chapters on education, housing, population, human security, and energy. Other chapters are on water and sanitation, health and environment. The remaining chapters are on governance, social relations, and population. Unique to GSDO 2014, each chapter carefully delineates the current state of the gender and youth dimensions of the topic of focus, as well as the social policy ramifications. Each chapter ends with critical policy, and sometimes technical, recommendations for follow up action. Current socio-economic indicators for the different thematic areas are provided in the final section. As noted in GSDO 12, the indicators provide a composite picture of social development in Ghana, and should not be considered individually due to challenges of data availability, quality, reliability and timeliness.

Some of the chapters cut across the various development issues. For instance, the chapters on education, population, governance and human security have inter-related elements regarding the development of Ghana's human resources in order to face the current social challenges. The chapter on

governance, for instance, notes the importance of education for the youth as a bedrock for their involvement in democratic governance and human security. Similarly, the linkages between adequate and safe housing, health and proper harnessing of human and material resources, particularly of the youth, in relation to employment and human security are discussed in several other chapters. The chapters on water and sanitation, energy and environment point to the critical inter-relationship these sectors have with health and longevity, while the chapter on health underscores the fact that good health is a pre-requisite for socio-economic development.

The synopses of the individual chapters are provided below.

The State of Social Development in Ghana: Current Burning Social Policy Issues

Education: There is a growth spurt and increasing privatisation but also nagging questions

One major trend in Ghana's education system in recent times is the increasing privatization of tertiary education. The tertiary level has historically received less policy and research attention than the basic and secondary levels. There is at least one private tertiary institution in each of the 10 regions. However, the majority are sited in the Greater Accra Region. Out of 55 listed degree-granting private universities and colleges, 36 are located in Accra and Tema. In the 2012/2013 academic year, the student population at the tertiary level was 283,506, which represents an increase of 1,021 percent in 15 years. Despite this remarkable increase in enrolment, there still appears to be unmet demand.

Gender equity is better in private universities. In the 2012/2013 academic year, females in private institutions made up 43 percent of the student population, compared with 34 percent for the public universities and 36 percent for all public tertiary institutions. However, heightening concerns about quality of education accompany any significant expansion in enrolment and the drive towards internationalization of tertiary education. According to public perception, private universities train young people in skills in demand on the job market, in contrast to the public universities that are often perceived as teaching "theory" unrelated to skills needed for the world of work. The question of funding of tertiary education has implications for access and equity among other important concerns. The imposition of taxes and lack

of government financial assistance might lead to higher fees or reduced capacity to absorb students.

The expansion of tertiary education, and particularly the growth spurt in both public and private higher education, has been described as “unbridled, unplanned and often chaotic”, with implications for quality, access and equity. Effective planning of tertiary education in terms of the contributions of different types of institutions and programmes to national goals is therefore imperative.

Population: The implications of the youth bulge in the demographic transition needs to be better managed to take advantage of the demographic dividend

The chapter presents a review of Ghana’s population dynamics and trends to highlight the implications for the country’s development. It argues that while some progress has been made in efforts to harness the demographic dividend to improve development prospects, Ghana continues to face challenges in bridging the gap between population growth and economic development since its youthful population is characterized by high levels of unemployment and underemployment.

Ghana’s population censuses since 1960 show that the population of the elderly (65 years and above) increased from 3.2 percent in 1960 to 5.3 percent in 2000 but declined to 4.7 percent in 2010. In terms of absolute numbers, however, the population of the elderly increased from over 215,000 in 1960 to over 1.6 million in 2010. More than half of the total population resides in communities classified as urban (50.9 percent). Sixty-five percent of the active work force is self-employed. Between 2000 and 2010, total employment increased from 7.4 million to 10.2 million, representing about 3.3 percent average annual growth. As of the time of the 2010 Census, 5.8 percent of the labour force was unemployed. There appears to be a mismatch between the current educational system and industry leading to high rates of unemployment among graduates. A strategic investment in the areas of the economy, education, health and governance is necessary to rectify the situation. The chapter ends with some policy actions that are likely to reposition the country to take advantage of the demographic dividend. These include restructuring of the educational system to make it more skill-oriented, ensuring full commitment to implementation of the national ageing policy, and striking a balance between rural and urban development.

The large youthful population could be a hindrance to the realisation of economic goals if nothing is done about it. However, high-level political commitment and determination to implement appropriate policies and programmes will enable Ghana to take advantage of the demographic dividend. Among other recommendations, the chapter calls for periodic national labour market surveys to inform policy direction and programme interventions. Against the background of the rapid breakdown of the extended family system that hitherto provided some economic security during old age, the government is encouraged to implement the national ageing policy and pension schemes already set up.

Health: Stronger healthcare policy formulation and implementation are needed to prevent an erosion of the achievements made

Health has a critically important relationship with development. Good health correlates with improved socio-economic well-being for individuals, households, corporate entities and nations. This chapter concentrates on access to healthcare and reviews five dimensions of access to healthcare: geographical, socio-economic, human resources, financial, and logistical resources for healthcare delivery. It also looks at the current state of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). It further discusses the overall implications of these dimensions for healthcare policy.

Overall, the Ministry of Health and its affiliates are making serious efforts to improve healthcare delivery, particularly in terms of access. Nevertheless, and despite the priority attention the government gives to the health sector, nearly all the different categories of access are still problematic, and social inequities prevail, particularly at regional levels. Healthcare resources are still concentrated in the Greater Accra Region, particularly the Accra-Tema metropolitan area. While there has not been an appreciable increase in health manpower, the loss of midwives over the last few years is of particular concern and needs to be addressed immediately. Resources for psychiatric care also need an immediate turn-around from the status quo. It is notable that Ghana's health sector budget has been decreasing. Against this background, the NHIS is improving access to healthcare but its challenges, including its solvency, necessitate several policy changes. The most urgent involve increasing premiums and making premium charges progressive, implementing the intended unitary scheme, and universal coverage to take optimum advantage of the increased numbers these will yield. Efforts are also needed to sustain the NHIS financially, particularly in light of shrinking government and donor funding for the health sector. Given that financial

support for healthcare delivery in the country is under threat, a national healthcare financing forum is recommended.

Water and sanitation: While the overall water situation has improved, there has been no significant improvement in sanitation in Ghana

That water and sanitation remain crucial for national development and general wellbeing of citizens is evident in international discussions, including the post-2015 agenda. This chapter examines developments in Ghana's water and sanitation sector, with emphasis on the poor performance in sanitation. It looks at service provision, sources of funding, and its allocation by geographical area (rural and urban) and also by sector (water and sanitation). While overall access to potable water has seen encouraging improvement, a lot of people continue to depend on unimproved sources such as water sachets, rivers and streams. There are also regional inequities in access to good drinking water, with the Greater Accra Region surprisingly having as much as 33 percent of its inhabitants depending on unimproved sources of drinking water, particularly sachet water. Also, residents of the Western, Volta, Eastern, Northern and Brong Ahafo regions depend mostly on rivers and streams for drinking water. The Upper West, Upper East and Ashanti regions fare best in terms of access to improved water. There are rural-urban inequities in access to improved water, in favour of the urban areas.

However, there appears to have been no significant improvement in sanitation in Ghana. Open defecation continues to be a problem, particularly in rural areas, and has worsened between 1990 and 2012. By 2015, an estimated 18.7 million inhabitants in Ghana will be without improved toilet facilities. As a result, another MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF) for Sanitation has been developed in Ghana for purposes of fast-tracking the attainment of MDG 7C by 2015. Urban-rural differences continue to show extreme inequalities as well as gender disparities, which have implications for girl-child school enrolment. Thus, the water and sanitation situation in Ghana should remain a source of concern for government and policy makers. Recommendations include a joint public-private effort to improve the sector, with the government creating an enabling environment that ensures stronger collaboration to harness the support of all stakeholders. This is very important in the area of youth participation. Additionally, service provision should be seen as a matter of human rights and devoid of partisan politics. Gender inequalities need to be addressed by providing improved separate sanitary facilities in schools to encourage girl-child education.

Housing: There is a huge housing deficit, particularly for low-income groups and the youth, in the face of unprecedented urbanization, culminating in an increasing slum menace. Efforts at solving these have only been short-termed and short-sighted

Although the last decade has witnessed a boom in residential development in urban Ghana, access to housing remains a challenge, especially among low-income groups. More importantly, there is increasing incidence of slums largely due to high land, rent and housing prices in a context of rapid urbanization and the inability of the housing supply market to meet effective demand. Consequently, poor housing and slums are increasingly becoming a feature of the Ghanaian urban landscape, particularly in the large metropolitan areas of Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi, Tamale and Tema. Furthermore, the effects of poor housing fall disproportionately on the youth, individuals who are streaming to Ghanaian towns and cities ill-prepared for the challenges of urban life due to their low level of education and training. They become unemployed or earn low-wages, and hence, are unable to afford decent housing.

Too often, city authorities and the state have either directly intervened to remove informal settlements through forced eviction of residents and their livelihood activities or adopted an ambivalent attitude by allowing large projects such as construction of highways, shopping malls, office complexes and real estate for the wealthy to be developed in these areas of the city. In many cases, these direct and/or indirect approaches by city authorities and the state are done under the guise of 'city beautification' for the purposes of attracting investments, hosting global events and marketing cities as international tourism destinations. Theoretical and practical experiences to date suggest that these interventions are only short-term and short-sighted measures that only cause displacement, misery and impoverishment of vulnerable populations, particularly poor youth and women.

As a response to the challenges of housing and urban development, many policy documents have been formulated with far-reaching implications for housing the poor and slum upgrading and prevention. Among the key documents are the Ghana National Urban Policy Framework (NUPF) and its Action Plan, 2012; Draft National Housing Policy, 2013; and Draft National Slum Upgrading and Prevention Strategy, 2013. With the exception of the NUPF, which has been adopted by Cabinet and formally launched by the President, the other policy documents remain in draft.

The NUPF and its Action Plan contains 12 policy action areas on urban development including improving access to adequate and affordable low-income housing. Policy measures to achieve this goal include providing an enabling environment for private sector delivery of low-income housing; promoting indigenous building materials and appropriate construction; promoting provision of social/rental housing through public-private partnerships; upgrading slums and dilapidated houses; exploring the introduction of non-conventional housing finance and strategies that benefit low-income groups; and encourage formation of housing cooperatives. In addition, the draft policy documents on housing and slum upgrading and preventing strategies contain specific policy recommendations for promoting affordable housing, slum upgrading and orderly human settlement growth with physical and social infrastructure to support economic activities. The government and other stakeholders, including the private sector, are encouraged to provide the necessary legislation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation oversight to ensure that Ghanaians have optimum access to housing.

Work and Employment: Ghana's youth unemployment situation is nearly alarming and emanates principally from training inadequacies, low employment growth rates, and low investment rates

Globally, unemployment has been a growing concern. As of 2013, the global unemployment figure stood at an estimated 201.8 million. The three hardest hit regions of the world are East Asia, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. The youth unemployment situation in Ghana, both historically and current, is similar to that which pertains globally in that the rates for the youth are much higher than that for the adult population. Since the 1960s, the rate of unemployment among those aged between 15 and 24 has been greater than that of those aged between 45 and 64. Even though the situation improved by 2000, there was still a gap between the two age groups. The World Bank (2014) gives a rate of 15.3 percent youth (15-24 years old) unemployment for 1991, 16.3 percent in 2000, and 6.4 percent in 2012. The Ghana Statistical Service (GSS, 2013) gives a 3.2 percent current youth unemployment rate in Ghana (3.3 percent for males and 3.0 percent for females) and an adult (15-64 years) unemployment figure of 1.8 (1.6 males, 2.0 females) in Ghana. The International Labour Organization (ILO: 2014) gives 4.4 percent adult unemployment for 1991 in Ghana, 8.4 percent for 2000, and 3.4 percent for 2012.

Both supply-side factors – which include the size of the youth population and its inadequacies in terms of training – and demand-side factors such as low

growth rates of jobs and low investment rates account for the high rate of youth unemployment in Ghana. In spite of these constraints, the state has over the years developed policy and project-specific interventions, aimed at improving employment conditions for both the adult and youth. Two major interventions aimed at reducing youth unemployment are the National Service Scheme (NSS) and the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP).

While it is clear that the state benefits from the NSS and the NYEP, particularly in terms of the large cost savings made by paying the youth minimal wages for essential services, particularly in the educational and sanitation management sectors, it is harder to justify these programmes in terms of the long-term benefits to participants.

Ghana needs to produce enough decent jobs on an annual basis to accommodate the large numbers of youth who graduate from different levels of education each year. The education sector needs to be revamped drastically to focus as much on issues of quality as on issues of equity. The mismatch between training and placement in the NYEP and the NSS should be eliminated.

Energy: Inadequate and unreliable power supply is a major constraint on social development in Ghana. Opportunities for natural energy sources have not been explored to the fullest

Inadequate access to clean, reliable and affordable energy is now considered a major concern for sustainable development. However, for some countries, understanding the basic drivers to such achievements is the core problem. This chapter considers Ghana's challenges in this area, examines the energy access situation, and analyses measures taken to improve it.

Even though about 72 percent of the population are connected to the national electricity grid, the current power shortages and load-shedding exercise in Ghana suggest that inadequate and unreliable power supply is a major constraint on social development. Nearly 28 percent of Ghana's population consumes no electricity and of these nearly 51 percent are in rural areas. Lack of a reliable supply of electricity is estimated to have a significant impact on economic growth and productivity. It has been estimated that power failures are costing the Ghanaian economy a whopping amount of between US\$320 million and US\$924 million (excluding indirect costs) or between 2 percent and 6 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) every year.

Ghana is relatively well endowed with a variety of energy resources including biomass, hydrocarbons, hydro, solar and wind power. It also has the capacity to produce modern biofuels. Statistics show that only 18.2 percent of the population has access to liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). Wood fuel remains the dominant cooking fuel in most households. The low access rate to cleaner cooking fuels (LPG) in Ghana and thus the high dependence on biomass fuels for cooking has both environmental and health implication, especially on women and girls who are mainly responsible for cooking. Deforestation rates in Ghana are among the highest in Africa, with current levels of wood fuel consumption far exceeding forest growth.

Ghana has enough solar, wind and mini-hydro resources to provide off-grid and mini-grid solutions to meet rural electrification challenges but these opportunities have not been explored to the extent they should. Electrification options using biomass resources have also not been given due attention. For this reason, various policies have been drawn up to increase energy supply by exploring these resources such as the National Electrification Scheme, launched in 1990, the National Energy Policy of 2010 and the Renewable Energy Law 2011 (Act 832). Much work is still needed to address power system losses. Increased access to LPG will also result from creating a favorable investment environment to attract the private sector into the provision of LPG to ensure a regular and adequate supply to peri-urban and rural areas. The government must also ensure proper integration of solar photovoltaic and other renewable energy systems into electrification programmes at both national and regional levels. Key barriers to exploitation of renewable energy technologies such as high initial capital, lack of favorable pricing policy and financing schemes should be systematically addressed.

Human security: While Ghana is relatively peaceful, there are several security threats

Over the past few decades, the concept of security has been reviewed to place the human/individual as the centre of reference. This perspective is termed human security, which aims at creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems for viable livelihoods and dignity, and consequently protecting people from pervasive threats to their rights, their safety or even their lives. The chapter monitors some indicators in GSDO 2012, and also introduces fire outbreaks and *okada* (motorbike taxi) as new security issues. Politically, despite the country's widely touted image as a beacon of peace in a troubled region, and the much touted democratic credentials, contested presidential and parliamentary election results constitute potential threats to political security of the country.

With regard to the current poverty situation in Ghana, while the incidence of poverty at the national level declined between 1991 and 2005, some regions and socio-economic groups did not experience much poverty reduction. Current data on food security also indicate that the highest incidence of poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition occurs in the three northern regions. The food insecurity in the rural areas of the three northern regions is worse now than it was in the period preceding publication of GSDO 2012.

Fire outbreaks, particularly market fires, are another source of human insecurity in the country. Many lives and property running into millions of Ghana cedis were also lost to fire outbreaks from 2011 to 2013. Other human security issues discussed are unreliable electricity supply, free fall of the local currency and illegal commercial motorbike transport services. To enhance human security to promote social development in the country, the government is urged to safeguard and sustain the current political progress. The Electoral Commission must be resourced to recruit the appropriate personnel to help with the conduct of all elections. The Inter-Party Advisory Committee should work closely with the Commission in all its deliberations in order to build credibility and confidence for itself in all stakeholders. The government is also urged to make use of all available sources, including hydro and solar energy to create electricity for both domestic and commercial uses.

Social relations: Gender-based violence persists and remains widespread in Ghana. More robust evidence-based research to inform gender policies and legislation is required

Violence in Ghana is extremely gendered. The country continues to struggle with the implementation of the national plan of action to combat violence and criminalize violence against women and girls. As in other parts of the world, women suffer more violence from men than vice versa, and physical and sexual violence against women and girls are quite common (WHO, 2005). It is significant to note that the impact and outcomes of gender-based violence are severe and harmful not just to the women but also to children, youth, families, communities and, indeed, the entire society. Otherwise worthy national and stakeholder programmes, however, have focused mainly on domestic violence and sexual assault. Yet these are not the only forms of gender-based violence in Ghana. Other forms of damaging gender-based violence are widespread and unreported because they remain un-criminalized.

In Ghana as in other parts of the world, males are the main offenders in a major form of gender-based violence – domestic violence against women. However, male and females are often equal perpetrators of other forms of

gender-based violence. While the perpetrators of physical and sexual violence are mainly intimate partners (including current or previous husbands and partners), they often also include other family members and acquaintances. And while the most prevalent types of violence are intimate partner violence (including marital rape), non-partner sexual violence, traditional practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM), ritual slavery and widowhood rites cause untold emotional havoc to their victims. In essence, gender-based violence in Ghana needs to be contextualized and recognized in all its forms. Current practices demonstrate that commitment by the state as a legislator of gender justice still remains weak.

After the immense efforts of women's organizations and the state, there is greater awareness among Ghanaians, especially women, of the criminality of gender-based violence but many are unconvinced about the effectiveness of the law in preventing such violence, especially domestic abuse. There is a need to adopt a rights-based participatory approach to augment protection orders, and to enact legislation to enforce criminalization and prevent gender-based violence. Supportive gender strategies by critical stakeholders – public and private, and donor institutions – to assist the institutionalization of gender justice must be better coordinated to erase any remaining cultural acceptance of gender-based violence and abuse in all its forms. More evidence-based research to inform gender policies and legislation will enable transformative practices by the state as an equitable stakeholder and upholder of gender justice.

Governance: The youth are not excluded from decision-making processes in Ghana but more needs to be done

Democratic governance is necessary for development. This chapter focuses on youth participation in the processes of democratic governance. Globally, youth participation has become topical, particularly in terms of the prominent role youth play in political violence. Their demographic characteristics, untapped potential, ability to be confrontational and violent in the face of stress and frustration, and the implications of these elements for future development make the youth an important stakeholder in governance processes. Yet globally, research has concluded that young people are among the most marginalized and they are affected by weaknesses in the social, economic and political frameworks of their nations. Ghana is no exception to this. In Ghana, the youth constitute a significant proportion of the labour force as well as the voting population. Thus, the youth represent untapped potential which can be appropriately harnessed for national development. This recommends the creation of appropriate political space for young persons in Ghana (aged 15 to

35 years) to participate in national development, at the different levels of governance and not feel excluded and exploited.

An historical overview of youth involvement in governance to date indicates that the youth are the backbone of many important struggles for change, from pre-independence Gold Coast to post-independent Ghana, through both constitutional rule and military regimes. Though not a threat, the youth should not be taken for granted but rather properly engaged as partners in development, so they can yield a huge dividend rather than be a 'time bomb' in the country's democratic development. As an important stakeholder in the democratic development of Ghana, the youth need to be empowered to lift them out of any disadvantaged position. It is argued that although the institutional framework for youth engagement has challenges, the youth are not entirely excluded from political decision-making processes in Ghana. This Fourth Republic period provides a platform for more youth participation in various capacities. The continuous involvement of young people aged between 15 years and 35 years in the decision-making processes is crucial to democratic development of Ghana.

Involvement of the youth in government in Ghana is tilted in favour of males. Conscious efforts should be made to groom young females for political leadership. Good role models and mentors for both young males and females should be properly institutionalised to give the youth in Ghana their rightful place in the democratic development of Ghana.

Environment: Growth in the population of Ghana has contributed to environmental challenges, including the impact of climate change—agriculture is the hardest hit

Empirical studies in recent years have revealed the interface between climate change and its effects on development, and vice versa. While various forms of socio-economic development have affected the environment, the negative impact of climate change also impedes the development prospects of many developing countries including Ghana. Underpinned by the Drivers, Pressures, State, Impacts and Responses (DPSIR) framework, this chapter explores the interplay between development processes and climate change and variability in Ghana. Key among the drivers of climate change in Ghana is population growth, which has resulted in increased demand for goods and services. Due to this increased demand for goods and services, various pollutants including methane (CH₄) and carbon dioxide (CO₂) – the most prevalent greenhouse gases in Ghana – are released into the atmosphere, leading to changes in climatic conditions. Statistics have shown a mean temperature rise over all

months of the year since 1960, a sea-level rise of about 2.1mm per year over the last 30 years while annual rainfall is expected to decline between 1.1 percent and 20.5 percent within the period 2020 and 2080. The impact of climate change in Ghana is felt across all sectors of the economy, but the hardest hit is the agriculture sector, which employs the majority of Ghanaians. The National Climate Change Policy (NCCP), the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategies (NCCAS) and the National Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) are some of the responses devised by the government. Although these interventions have chalked some successes, the adaptive capacity of the vulnerable in society still remains weak, which is indicative of the weaknesses of the interventions. The chapter recommends various measures to enhance both the adaptation of strategies to climate change and the mitigation of climate change drivers in order to bring holistic development to Ghana.

Reflections on social development: the statistics and beyond

All the thematic areas covered in GSDO 2014 fall under the MDGs and provide some information for their assessment. This is particularly important as the benchmark year for assessing the MDGs is 2015. New indicators have been proposed for use as milestones for spearheading social development. Generally, the availability of Ghanaian social developmental indicators is improving. For instance, for most of the thematic areas the GSDO covers, there have been updates in the data since GSDO 2012. This is important feat in the effort to provide the necessary pointers for social policy dialogue and action. The National Health Insurance Authority, for instance, has produced yearly reports on the NHIS, and importantly, put these in the public domain electronically. The Ministry of Health currently does the same with its series of annual holistic assessment of its Programme of Work reports. The timely availability of several series of data from other sources such as the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) and the Ministry of Education/Ghana Education Service for instance, is commendable. What remains challenging, however, is the reliability and consistency of some of the data. It is common for figures for the same indicator to change in different annual reports for the same agency. This calls for improving the quality of data from some of the agencies as well as the timeliness and availability in the public domain.

In spite of the overall apparent improvement in the key indicators tracked by the GSDO over the last two to three years, there is cause for worry about

several other current social development indicators. For instance, while gross enrollment for primary school was 105 percent, and was about the same for both girls and boys in 2012/2013, the net enrollment rate for primary school that year was 84 percent, meaning that as many as 16 percent of Ghanaian children of primary school age were out of school for that academic year. This is in spite of several attempts by the Ministry of Education, the Ghana Education Service and the government to implement international and local policies and programmes. These include free compulsory basic education, school feeding and provision of some school supplies such as uniforms for some public elementary schools, and also the MDG on primary education. It is commendable that public spending on education improved from 5.5 percent of GDP in 2010 to 8.1 percent of GDP in 2011. However, the junior high school (JHS) completion rate of 70 percent nationally, and a male-female ratio of 75:65 percent in 2012/2013 leaves much to be desired, since this is the stage that all children are supposed to go through to complete basic education. The rates for JHS completion for the 2011/2012 academic year were even worse, 67 percent nationally, and a female rate of 63 percent. Worse still is a gross senior high school enrollment rate of about 37 percent nationally, and 40:34 percent male-female ratio for 2012/2013 (Ministry of Education, 2012, 2013; World Bank, 2014a). Without doubt, there is the need for additional effort to encourage female education in the country.

In the domain of water and sanitation, critical ingredients for social development, while it is quite appreciable that 81 percent and 93 percent of rural and urban dwellers, respectively, were using improved water sources in 2012, much attention still needs to be paid to several issues related to water. As of 2010, 9.2 percent of the populace depended on a river or a stream as a source of drinking water, with as much as 19 percent of rural dwellers depending on these sources for drinking water. The current national canker of environmental degradation, including the menace of *galamsey* and its negative impact on water bodies, makes it imperative that efforts are made to provide better sources of drinking water in Ghana than rivers, streams, dugouts, ponds, lakes, dams and canals. Equally needing attention for several reasons is the sachet water menace. Although sachet water is technically branded as an unimproved source of water by the World Health Organisation, 9 percent of Ghanaians depended on sachet water as a source of drinking water in 2010, with as many as 14 percent of the population in urban areas using sachet water for drinking, against 3 percent of rural residents. Besides the unacceptability of sachet water as a good source of drinking water, there is the problem of the littering and poor biodegradability of the polythene used to package the sachet water. These cause environmental pollution and have a

negative effect on aquaculture. Worse still, as many as 24 percent of people living in Ghana use unimproved sources of drinking water, with 30 percent or more of the residents in three regions (Greater Accra, Volta and Northern) depending on unimproved sources of drinking water in 2010 (GSS, 2013a).

It is startling, particularly as the period of tracking the MDGs draws to a close, that only 14 percent of the population in Ghana was using improved toilet facilities in 2012 (World Bank, 2014b). Recent indicators for deforestation are another source of worry. From 2009 to 2012, the forest coverage of the country diminished rapidly from 50,554 to 47,092 square kilometres (World Bank, 2014c). Furthermore, extreme regional diversity in some of these indicators point to aspects of the great and reportedly growing inequities in social development indicators in Ghana.

For instance, in 2013, the doctor-population ratio in the Upper West Region was 16.7 times worse than that of the Greater Accra Region (1:53,064 versus 1:3,178, respectively), and more than five times the national ratio of 1:10,170 (MoH, 2014). Sometimes, the regions acclaimed to be the best overall in these indicators (Greater Accra and Ashanti), which also have the highest population concentration, fare the worst in some of the social development indicators. One example is the use of unimproved drinking water, which is 33 percent for the Greater Accra Region compared to 10.5 percent in the Upper West Region (GSS, 2013a). With the current membership of the NHIS for instance, the Greater Accra fares worst (MoH, 2013). In 2012, with regard to the nurse-population ratio, the Ashanti Region fared second worst nationally with 1 nurse to 1,550 population.

Thus, north-south dichotomies exist, often but not always to the disadvantage of the northern regions. For instance, in 2012, the Northern Region had a higher nurse/population ratio (1:1,601) than Greater Accra (1:917, and 1:1,251 nationally) (MoH, 2013). Sometimes, however, the three northern regions do better overall, such as with use of unimproved sources of drinking water, in nurse and midwife-population ratios, and with access to the NHIS. The Upper West and Upper East regions typically fare best in these latter indicators (MoH, 2013, 2014). The GSDO 2012 described some of these inequities as sobering and disturbing. We can go further and describe them as shocking in the context of our declared middle-income status as a country. As observed in GSDO 2012, to a large extent, there is some contradiction between economic and social policies in Ghana.

GSDO 2014 closes by highlighting the disadvantaged position of certain population segments in the social development indicators. Broadly, these are women and girls. Others are children, people with disabilities, the poor and the aged and special population groups such as those in prisons, people living with HIV/AIDS, and those in leprosia. The observed interlinkages in several chapters of both GSDO 2012 and 2014 underscore the congruence and connectivity of social development themes and call for a more holistic reckoning and solution to key social development issues.

We hope GSDO 2014 will generate policy dialogue and practical moves towards enhanced social development in Ghana. It is anticipated that the 2016 GSDO will discuss the progress made in social development indicators since the maiden edition, GSDO 2012. It is hoped that GSDO 2016 will identify and highlight additional areas of concern in the polity and development of Ghana, particularly focusing on post-MDG discourse and policy formulations regarding human, social, economic and natural capital in Ghana. It is has been observed that inequality in Ghana is continuing and deepening (UNDP Ghana, 2008; GSS, 2013a). GSDO 2016 is therefore likely to include tracking the regional, rural-urban, and north-south dichotomies in social development indicators and proposing tenable solutions and policy guidance for these. A detailed analysis of the situation of several disadvantaged groups in Ghana is particularly called for. It is further recommended that greater attention be paid to improving water and sanitation, factoring in the need for markedly improved public-private engagement in this sector. Equally important is the need to increase funding from both private, governmental and donor sources, as water and sanitation has attracted a dismal 3 percent of GDP since 2009 (WaterAid, n.d.)

Given the realities on the ground regarding youth (including graduate) under-employment and unemployment, we strongly recommend that the Ghana Statistical Service increases its window period for tracking unemployment which is currently one week. For instance, largely shaped by the official period for tracking unemployment, a current unemployment figure of 1.8 percent nationally and 3.2 for persons aged 15 to 24 years was found in the Sixth Round of the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GSS, 2013b). We strongly believe that the unemployment figures are higher than is reported. A better measurement of the problem would probably attract more serious policy attention. The same applies to underemployment. The World Bank (2014d) reported a 2012 youth unemployment rate of 13.5 percent internationally, 13.8 percent for sub-Saharan Africa, and only 6.4 percent for Ghana. Finally, given the congruent nature of the social development issues, it is strongly recommended that painstaking efforts be made to promote their inter-

connectivity, with possibly, the setting up of a special desk under the auspices of the National Development Planning Commission and the appropriate Parliamentary Committee to track the interconnected impact of several of these thematic areas of social life in Ghana.

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