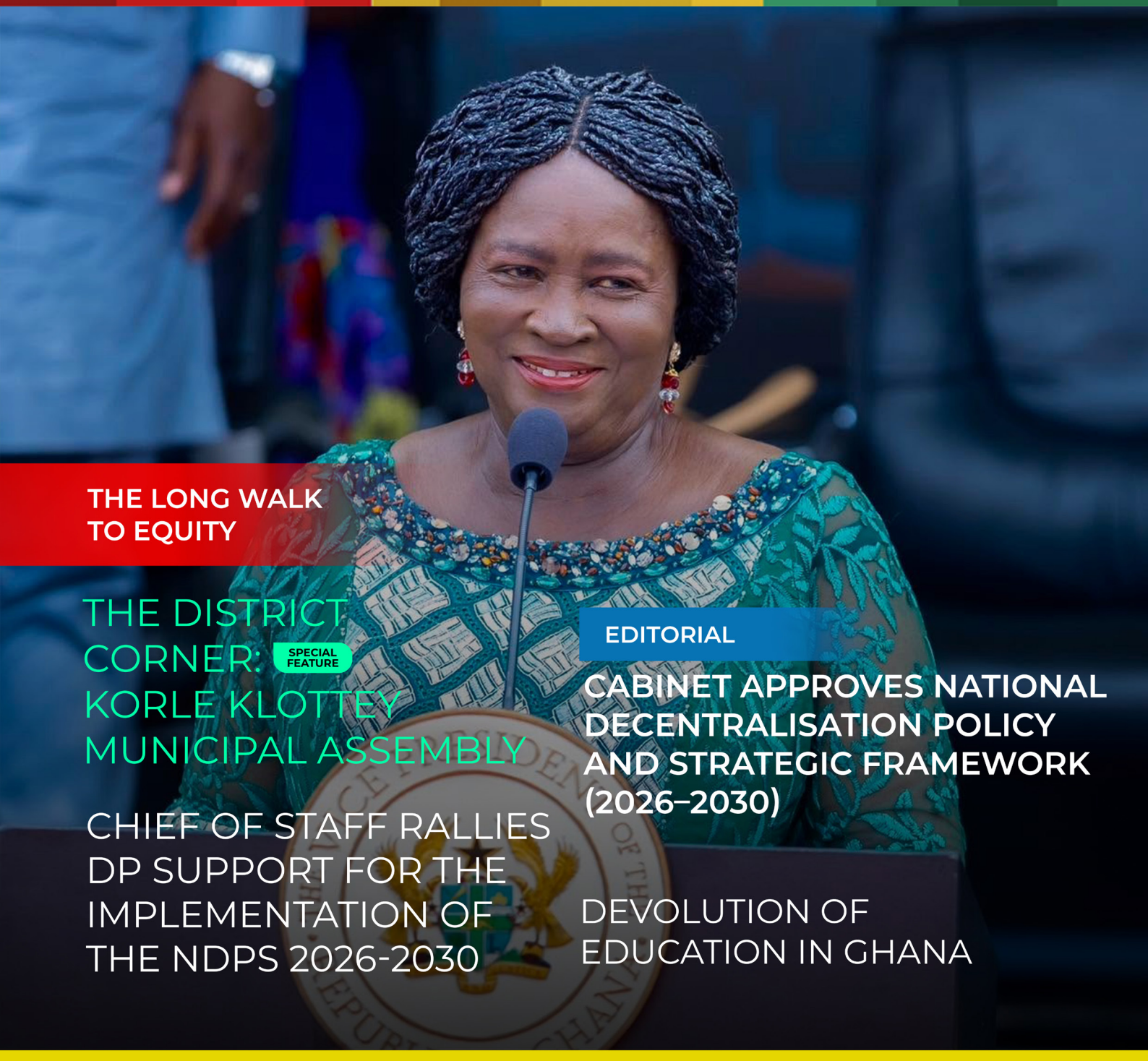
The Decentralist

IMCC SECRETARIAT

DEEPENING DECENTRALISATION IN GHANA

SQ 2026 EDITION



THE LONG WALK TO EQUITY

THE DISTRICT CORNER: SPECIAL FEATURE KORLE KLOTTEY MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY

CHIEF OF STAFF RALLIES DP SUPPORT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NDPS 2026-2030

EDITORIAL

CABINET APPROVES NATIONAL DECENTRALISATION POLICY AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK (2026–2030)

DEVOLUTION OF EDUCATION IN GHANA

The Decentralist
DEEPENING DECENTRALISATION IN GHANA



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IMCC SECRETARIAT

INTER-MINISTERIAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON DECENTRALIZATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

VISION STATEMENT

A devolved local governance system through effective coordination of reforms.



MISSION STATEMENT

To provide coordination and oversight of inter-sectoral policy on decentralisation and for the decentralised local governance system through effective research, policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation, technical backstopping, and multi-stakeholder engagements.



EDITORIAL:

CABINET APPROVES NATIONAL DECENTRALISATION POLICY AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK (2026–2030)



Government's commitment to decentralisation and local governance has once again been demonstrated following Cabinet's approval of the National Decentralisation Policy and Strategic Framework (2026–2030).

The new policy, themed "Re-setting Democratic Decentralisation for Accountable Public Service Delivery and Accelerated Local Development," sets a clear pathway to deepen democratic decentralisation, strengthen citizen participation, enhance the quality of public service delivery, and empower local governments to serve as catalysts for equitable and sustainable development across the country.

At the heart of the policy are reforms across six key thematic areas, all aimed at strengthening local governance in a more coordinated and impactful way. In the area of political decentralisation, the framework proposes far-reaching measures to deepen local democracy, including renewed efforts to enable the non-partisan election of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs), while strengthening sub-district structures and improving citizen representation. It also seeks to boost public confidence in local elections through enhanced transparency, civic education, and stronger accountability mechanisms for local leaders.

On administrative decentralisation, the policy prioritises the restructuring and full operationalisation of decentralised departments to improve efficiency in public service delivery. Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) will be empowered with greater authority over staffing and service delivery, while reforms will streamline reporting systems, strengthen

coordination among government institutions, and promote ethical leadership and anti-corruption practices at the local level. Digital systems are also expected to play an increasingly central role in modernising local administration.

Fiscal reforms feature prominently in the new framework, with a strong focus on improving local financing. The government aims to increase the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) to 7.5 per cent of national revenue, while ensuring that disbursements are timely and predictable. The policy also introduces innovative financing mechanisms, including municipal bonds, and emphasises strengthening internally generated funds through digital revenue systems, enhanced financial management, and improved transparency in budgeting and expenditure reporting.

The policy further underscores the importance of decentralised planning as a tool for responsive and inclusive development. It promotes integrated, evidence-based planning that aligns spatial, sectoral, and socio-economic priorities, while strengthening community participation in decision-making. The use of technology, particularly digital platforms and geographic information systems, is expected to support data-driven planning and improve development outcomes at the local level.

In advancing local economic development, the framework positions MMDAs as key drivers of economic transformation and job creation. It outlines strategies to support micro, small and medium enterprises, promote value addition to local resources, and attract investment through public-private partnerships. The integration of 24-Hour Economy Plus initiative into the local economies is expected to expand opportunities for employment and productivity, particularly for youth and women.

The policy also places strong emphasis on popular participation and accountability, recognising citizens as central actors in governance. It institutionalises mechanisms such as town hall meetings, public hearings, and digital feedback platforms to strengthen engagement between local authorities and communities. It further seeks to enhance inclusion by ensuring that women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups are actively represented in decision-making processes, while strengthening social accountability tools to promote transparency and trust.

Across all these reforms, the policy integrates key cross-cutting priorities, including gender equality and social inclusion, technology and innovation, environmental sustainability, safety and security, and mindset change, to ensure that decentralisation delivers inclusive and resilient development outcomes.

Implementation of the framework will be coordinated by the Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee on Decentralisation (IMCCoD), working closely with ministries, regional coordinating councils, MMDAs, civil society, traditional authorities, development partners, and citizens.

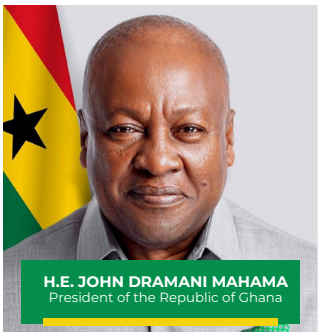
It is the desire of the government that all Ghanaians, including stakeholders in local governance, the media, civil society organisations, the youths, and Traditional Leaders and Development Partners, support the effective implementation of the policy.

The successful rollout of the National Decentralisation Policy and Strategic Framework (2026–2030) is expected to deepen democratic governance, strengthen accountability, and position local authorities as key drivers of Ghana's development transformation by 2030.

STRUCTURE

OF THE IMCCoD

The IMCCoD is the apex body for Decentralisation reforms and it is Chaired by the President or the Vice President. It's composition is as follows:







Hon. Haruna Iddrisu - **Minister for Education**



Hon. Ahmed Ibrahim - **Minister for Local Government, Chieftancy and Religious Affairs**



Hon. Dr. Cassiel Ato Baah Forson - **Minister for Finance**



Hon. Kwabena Mintah Akandoh - **Minister for Health**



Hon. Eric Opoku - **Minister for Food and Agriculture**



Hon. Dr. Agnes Naa Momo Lartey - **Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection**



Hon. Dr. Dominic Ayine Akuritinga - **Attorney-General and Minister for Justice**



Evans Aggrey-Darkoh (PhD) - **Head of Civil Service**



Prof. Lord Mensah - **Head of Local Government Service**



Dr. Nii Moi Thompson - **Chairman of the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC)**

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

FROM POLICY TO ACTION: WHY THE SECTOR WIDE APPROACH TO DECENTRALISATION MATTERS NOW MORE THAN EVER



Dr. Gameli Kewuribe Hoedoafia
Executive Secretary, Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee on Decentralisation (IMCCoD)

The approval of the National Decentralisation Policy and Strategic Framework (NDPS) 2026–2030 by Cabinet marks a significant milestone in Ghana's decentralisation journey. This is more than a policy document; it reflects the government's commitment to deepening democratic governance, strengthening accountability, improving service delivery, and ensuring that development reaches citizens across the country.

For the Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee on Decentralisation (IMCCoD), Cabinet's approval of the Policy signals the beginning of a new and critical phase. The focus now shifts from policy formulation to implementation. The real measure of success will not be the quality of the policy itself, but our collective ability to translate its objectives into tangible improvements that reflect in the lives of citizens.

The National Decentralisation Policy and Strategic Framework (2026–2030) sets out an ambitious agenda centred on six key reform areas: Political Decentralisation, Administrative Decentralisation, Fiscal Decentralisation and Local Financing, Decentralised Planning, Local Economic Development, and Popular Participation and Accountability. Delivering on these reforms will require coordinated action across Government, Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), Development Partners, civil society organisations, traditional authorities, academia, the private sector, and citizens.

This is why the Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) has become more important than ever.

The SWAp provides the strategic framework through which Government and Development Partners can collectively support the implementation of the national decentralisation agenda under a single, Government-led platform.

Rather than relying on fragmented and stand-alone interventions, the SWAp promotes harmonised planning, coordinated financing, joint implementation, common monitoring systems, and shared accountability for results.

At its core, the SWAp strengthens Government ownership of the reform process. It ensures that all interventions are aligned with nationally defined priorities and that resources are directed towards achieving the objectives outlined in the National Decentralisation Policy and Strategic Framework.

The importance of this approach cannot be overstated. Decentralisation reforms are inherently multi-sectoral and involve numerous institutions and stakeholders. Without a coordinated mechanism, there is a risk of duplication, fragmented investments, competing priorities, and inefficient use of resources. The SWAp addresses these challenges by providing a common platform through which stakeholders can align their programmes, investments, and technical support around a shared reform agenda.

One of the most significant contributions of the SWAp is its ability to improve the financing of decentralisation reforms. Historically, decentralisation initiatives have often been constrained by fragmented funding arrangements and unpredictable resource flows. Through the SWAp, Government and Development Partners can work towards more coherent financing mechanisms that support local service delivery, strengthen intergovernmental fiscal transfers, and improve accountability in the management of public resources. By linking financing to agreed reform priorities and performance outcomes, the SWAp creates stronger incentives for effective governance and service delivery at the local level.
The SWAp also provides a framework for strengthening institutional capacity across the decentralised governance system. Effective decentralisation requires capable institutions at both national and local levels. Through coordinated capacity-building interventions, investments can be directed towards strengthening planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation systems, digital transformation, human resource development, and organisational effectiveness. This approach ensures that institutional strengthening efforts are systematic, targeted, and sustainable.

Equally important is the SWAp's role in promoting accountability and results. The National Decentralisation Policy and Strategic Framework is firmly anchored on measurable outcomes. The SWAp supports this objective by establishing common performance indicators, coordinated monitoring mechanisms, regular sector reviews, and evidence-based decision-making processes. These mechanisms enable stakeholders to collectively assess progress, identify implementation challenges, and take corrective actions where necessary.

The SWAp also reinforces one of the fundamental principles of decentralisation: citizen participation. Decentralisation is ultimately about bringing governance closer to the people and creating opportunities for citizens to influence decisions that affect their lives. Through the SWAp framework, civil society organisations, traditional authorities, academia, the private sector, women, youth, persons with disabilities, and local communities can play a more active role in policy dialogue, implementation, monitoring, and accountability processes. This inclusive approach strengthens ownership and contributes to more responsive and people-centred governance.

The newly approved Policy explicitly

recognises the SWAp as a key implementation mechanism. This reflects a clear understanding that the success of decentralisation reforms depends not only on sound policy design but also on effective coordination, partnership, and resource alignment.

As implementation begins, IMCCoD will work closely with Ministries, Departments and Agencies, MMDAs, Development Partners, and other stakeholders to operationalise the SWAp framework in support of the NDPS 2026–2030. Priority attention will be given to strengthening policy dialogue, developing a common results framework, enhancing monitoring and reporting systems, mobilising resources, and supporting reforms in areas such as local economic development, digital governance, climate resilience, local revenue mobilisation, gender and social inclusion, and citizen engagement.

The SWAp presents a unique opportunity to transform the way decentralisation reforms are coordinated, financed, and implemented in Ghana. It offers a practical mechanism for translating policy aspirations into real development outcomes at the local level.

Cabinet has provided the policy direction. The responsibility now rests with all stakeholders to work together to ensure its successful implementation. By fostering stronger partnerships, aligning resources, strengthening accountability, and focusing on results, the SWAp can serve as the principal vehicle to accelerate decentralisation reforms and advance Ghana's vision of responsive, inclusive, and development-oriented local governance.

IMCCoD remains committed to providing leadership, facilitating collaboration, and ensuring that decentralisation continues to serve as a powerful instrument for national development and improved quality of life for all citizens.

THE LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE: ADVANCING THE LEGAL FOUNDATIONS OF DECENTRALISATION IN GHANA

A strong decentralisation system requires more than policy commitments; it requires a legal framework that clearly defines responsibilities, promotes accountability, and supports effective service delivery at the local level. Recognising this imperative, the Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee (IMCC) on Decentralisation established the Legislative Review Committee (LRC) to spearhead the review and reform of laws that underpin Ghana's decentralisation agenda.

The establishment of the LRC represents an important milestone in the country's continuing efforts to deepen local governance and advance the constitutional objective of decentralisation by devolution. The Committee was constituted in response to the growing need to address legal and institutional gaps that have emerged over the years within the decentralisation framework. These include overlaps in mandates, inconsistencies across sectoral legislation, weak enforcement mechanisms, and the need to align existing laws with emerging governance priorities and reform initiatives.
Established pursuant to the mandate of the IMCC under the Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936), the LRC is tasked with reviewing decentralisation-related legislation and proposing reforms that strengthen local governance and support effective service delivery. Its work is also intended to facilitate the implementation of the National Decentralisation Policy and Strategic Framework (NDPS), which provides the overarching framework for decentralisation reforms in Ghana.

Since its establishment, the Legislative Review Committee has played an important role in strengthening the legal framework for decentralisation and local governance in Ghana. Working in collaboration with the Ministry responsible for local Government, the Committee contributed to the development of several important pieces of legislation that continue to support governance and service delivery at both the national and local levels.

Among its notable achievements was its contribution to the development of the Births and Deaths Registry Act, 2020 (Act 1027), which modernised the legal framework for civil registration and strengthened the administration of birth and death registration in Ghana. The Committee also supported the preparation of the Births and Deaths Registry Regulations, 2021 (L.I. 2436), which provided the necessary regulatory framework for the effective implementation of the Act.

In addition, the Committee contributed to the development of the Local

Governance (Consultations) Regulations, 2020. The Regulations strengthened the legal basis for stakeholder engagement and citizen participation in local governance processes, reinforcing the decentralisation principle that governance should be responsive to the needs and aspirations of local communities.

Building on these achievements, the Committee continues to advance a new generation of legislative reforms aimed at addressing emerging challenges within Ghana's decentralisation framework.

One of the Committee's most significant recent achievements has been the preparation of the draft Local Governance Bill, 2026. The proposed Bill seeks to review and update the Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936) to reflect contemporary governance realities and strengthen the legal framework for decentralisation. The draft Bill is expected to contribute to improved institutional coherence and support the effective implementation of decentralisation reforms across the country.

The Committee has also made considerable progress in the area of education sector devolution. Working in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders through a Joint Technical Committee, the LRC has facilitated the preparation of a draft legislative proposal aimed at strengthening the devolution of pre-tertiary education governance and service delivery. The draft Bill is currently undergoing review by the LRC before its submission to the Minister responsible for Education.

Beyond education, the Committee has initiated important discussions on reforms within the roads sector. Through engagements with the leadership of the Ministry of Roads and Highways, the LRC facilitated the establishment of a Joint Technical Committee to undertake a review of legislative and institutional arrangements affecting the devolution of road sector functions. The initiative reflects the Committee's commitment to ensuring that sectoral legislation supports local accountability and responsive service delivery.

Similarly, the Committee has engaged the Ministry of Health on the need to strengthen the legal framework for health sector devolution. These discussions led to the establishment of a Joint Technical Committee mandated to review the Ghana Health Service and Teaching Hospitals Act, 1996 (Act 525), and related legislation to identify provisions that may be inconsistent with decentralisation principles. The review is expected to contribute to ongoing efforts to improve governance and service delivery within the health sector.

The achievements of the LRC demonstrate the importance of collaborative and evidence-informed approaches to decentralisation reform. By bringing together policymakers, sector ministries, technical experts, and governance practitioners, the Committee has created a platform for addressing long-standing legal challenges that affect the effectiveness of local governance.

As Ghana continues to pursue decentralisation as a key instrument for democratic governance and development, the work of the Legislative Review Committee remains critical. Its efforts are laying the legal foundations necessary for stronger local institutions, improved public service delivery, and a more responsive and accountable system of governance. Through these reforms, the IMCC continues to demonstrate its commitment to advancing decentralisation and ensuring that governance is brought closer to the people.

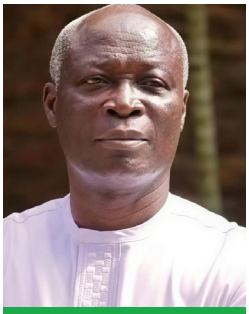
THE LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE:



Prof. Kwamina Ahwoi
Chairman



Dr. Gameli Kewuribe Hoedoafia
Member



Hon. Edwin Nii Lante Vanderpuye
Member



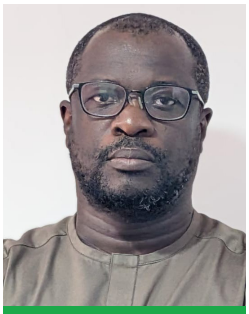
Alhaji Ishaq Alhassan Esq.
Member



Ing. Baah Tetteh
Member



Mr. Joseph Antwi
Member



Dr. George Laryea
Member



Ms. Heidi-Marie Boakye
Member



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Member



Hon. Akua Sena Dansua
Member



Dr. Rainer Akumperigya, Esq
Member



Dr. Nana Opare Djan
Member



Dr. Richard Fiadomor
Member

THE TRIPOD MINISTRY: IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE ON LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

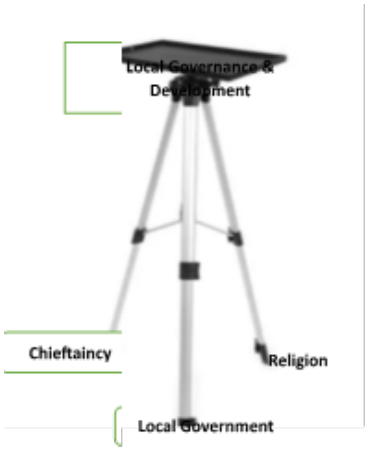
By: Prof. Nicholas Awortwi (PhD)
Director, Institute of Local Government Studies.

Introduction

On 9th January, 2025 the President, acting under the authority granted by section 11(3) of the Civil Service Act, 1993 (P.N.D.C.L. 327), issued an Executive Instrument to prune the number of sector ministries from 30 to 24. This necessitated restructuring and merging of existing ministries and creation of new ones within the Civil Service. The former Ministry of Local Government, Decentralisation and Rural Development (MLGDRD) was merged with the Ministry of Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs (MCRA). A new name 'Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs (MLGCRA) was created to strategically anchor the quest for deepening decentralisation, local governance and development on a tripod of independent institutions. The institutions of Local Government (LGs), Chieftaincy and Religion had always been part of Ghana's local governance system but operated under different state administrative structures. Is this a marriage of convenience or fit for purpose? This paper examines the interface of the tripod, provides an intellectual and conceptual foundation for the polygamous marriage, and draws implications for policy and practice action for local governance and development.

The Tripod Ministry: Local Government, Chieftaincy & Religious Affairs

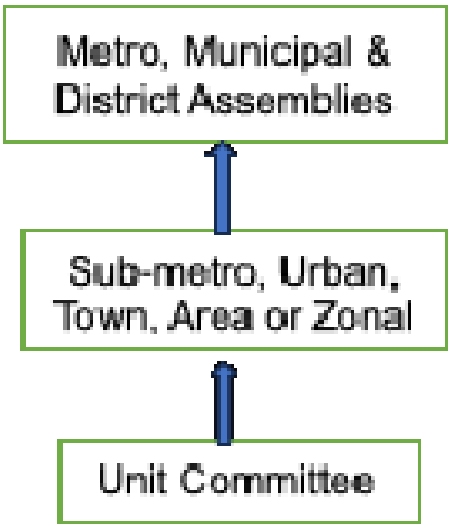
The MLGCRA brings together three autonomous institutions under one umbrella ministry whose raison d'etre is the promotion of local governance and development. The three institutions have distinct rules of engagement, norms and doctrines that are often not compatible with one another but they need to work together to promote the mission of the sector ministry.



The institution of LGs is a state creation while Chieftaincy and Religion are non-state institutions though recognized by the Constitution of Ghana and have rich history and tradition for promoting local governance and development.

The LG institutions comprise of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), sub-district structures (metro, urban, town and area councils) and Unit Committees (see fig.2). These institutions are democratically created with specific jurisdictions of authority, and function on the basis of a defined legal framework. For instance, Chapter 20 of the 1992 Constitution and the Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936) define the mandates, the structures, members, leadership and the rules governing the operations of the LG institutions while LI 1967 also defines the functions of the sub-district structures.

Fig. 2: Structure of LG Institutions



The national decentralisation policy which is formulated and driven by the IMCC per its mandate, complements complements the legal framework for LG institutions by streamlining the relationship between the central and LG institutions on one hand and between the LGs and other non-state institutions on the other hand. The leadership, membership, management and staff that operate within the LG institutions do so on the basis of formal rules that are defined in law and policies, and they are held accountable on the basis of those written rules, code of conduct and protocols. The members of LG institutions are democratically elected by the people or are appointed by legally constituted bodies of the state, hence their authority and legitimacy to act are derived from well-defined state rules and regulations.

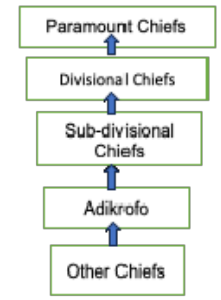
The Chieftaincy institution on the other hand is a traditional system of governance that uses Chiefs and Queen mothers to lead communities or ethnic groups. Leadership positions are not held on the basis of democracy but hereditary, and authority is derived from traditions and customs. The Chieftaincy Act of 2008 (Act 759), provides the legal framework for the chieftaincy institution and its functions. Although historically, chieftaincy institutions had been provided executive, legislative, and judicial functions, contemporary democratic governance reforms seem to have curtailed some of its roles and transferred them to LGs; the chieftaincy institution still constitutes a fundamental part of Ghana's local governance system. Like any established institution, chieftaincy is hierarchically structured according to jurisdiction and functions.



Hon. Ahmed Ibrahim

Minister for Local Government, Chieftancy and Religious Affairs

Fig. 3a: Categories of Chiefs



3b Apex organizations of Chiefs



The Chieftaincy institution continues to inform and influence contemporary social and political decision making in the country. It is responsible for upholding traditional customs and laws, resolving disputes, promoting social cohesion in and among communities and advising government on issues affecting local governance. For instance, in the run up to the 2019 national referendum on the amendment of Article 55(3) of the Constitution, the National House of Chiefs issued a press statement that critique the exercise, considerably contributing to its collapse.

Religious institutions are based on broad range of beliefs, practices, and cultural systems that relate the individual and their associations to a sacred or divine authority. Christianity, Islam, and Traditional African religions are the three dominant religions in Ghana, although according to the 2021 national population census, about 71% of Ghanaians identify themselves as Christians. The constitution guarantees freedom of religion and every Ghanaian community may have a church, mosque or shrine where people go to practice their faith and as a place for the organization of collective action for humanitarian and social services.

Religious institutions play varied roles in social services such as education and health, significantly influencing both formal and informal processes for governance and development. In the formal processes, religious institutions construct and until recently manage education services, and provide opportunities for underprivileged groups and communities in places where the capacity of both the national and LGs is limited. Through informal education, religious institutions advocate moral and ethical behaviours such as honesty, integrity, and respect; and as a foundation for personal and societal development, mediate in conflicts and promote peace, and social cohesion.

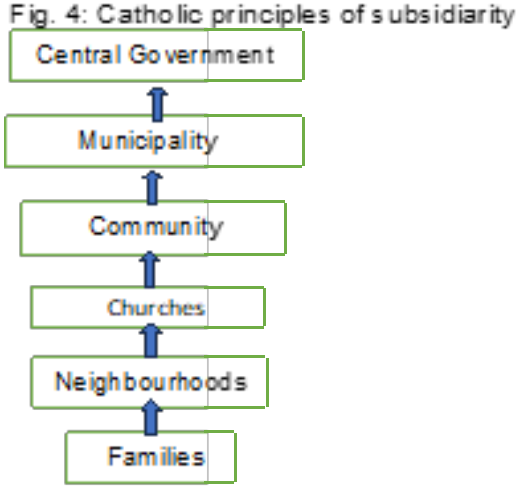
Subsidiarity principle is the Common Denominator of the Tripod

Subsidiarity principle which forms the basis of local governance practices has its origin in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. It states that a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, but rather should support it in case of need and help to coordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1883). The church's social doctrine flows from the recognition that every human being has a life and dignity that society must respect, protect and foster. This is done through community, starting with the family. From the family outward, we develop groups, associations, relationships and institutions that make it possible to achieve social order.

That means always looking first to families to help their own, then to neighbourhood, churches and other community organizations (fig.4). If it is necessary to turn to government,

go first to sub-municipal government, then to municipal, and only then to central government offices. These are the catholic principles of subsidiarity in solving social problems.

Fig. 4: Catholic principles of subsidiarity



Subsidiarity holds that where families, neighbourhoods, churches, or community groups can effectively address a given problem, they should. In other words, the smallest, lowest level of competent authority or institution must handle decisions that affect the people at that level unless there are convincing arguments that a higher-level authority is preferred to solving local problems. Subsidiarity principle calls for social problems to be addressed from the bottom up, rather than from the top down. Only the residual should be passed on to a higher-level institution to solve.

The recognition of this fundamental principle makes LG authorities instead of the CG in charge of local development. It is on the same basis that LG institutions have been designated to provide localized services such as sanitation and solid waste collection, basic education and health care. Only when the responsibility for providing these services go beyond the capacity of LGs to handle that the central government is required to assist.

The subsidiarity principle finds expressions also in the institution of Chieftaincy. Its decision-making processes have been traditionally structured along subsidiarity principles as seen in fig. 3. Decision making in small communities are made by the Odikro (community chief) and rises to sub-divisional and divisional chiefs until the Paramountcy when they are beyond the capacity of lower chiefs to handle.

Given the nature of the common good espoused by religion, some LG roles in the pursuit of local governance and development are inevitably align with religion, hence their marriage is fit for purpose. LGs are at the front and centre of the work of providing common goods and services. Another important service that religious institutions offer for which LGs are weak at providing is empathy and social support system that can be described as social capital. The teachings of religious institutions on faith enable people to hold on to life, persevere through difficult social and economic conditions, forestalling

depression and mental health, and essentially enabling people to cling on to hope and determination when faced with life challenges and hopelessness.

Implications of the Tripod for Policy & Practice Actions

The MLGCRA presents an opportunity to revitalize the foundations for local governance and development that had been weakened in the name of modernity and democratisation. Below we highlight some of the policy and practice implications that have to change to reflect the tripod:

National Decentralisation Policy and Strategic Framework must reflect the role of the tripod

Subsidiarity principles is expressly equated with devolution, which Ghana seeks to achieve through the objective of deepening decentralisation or giving power to the people and their local institutions to decide on issues that directly affect their lives. The subsidiarity principle that is based on local problems, local solutions empower individuals, families, and voluntary associations including religious institutions to act more efficaciously in the provision of social and humanitarian services. It would mean reallocation of some social, political, economic, and fiscal functions from the MMDAs to sub-district structures, or from LG to non-government entities (traditional authorities, religious bodies, CBOs, etc.). The new decentralisation policy must not only acknowledge the tripod but must subsequently hive off some roles and responsibilities in local governance and development to these new institutions and actors that are part of the sector

Decentralisation and localisation of the Tripod

The tripod should not manifest only at the CG Ministry in Accra but must have expressions also at the MMDA level, otherwise its impact on local governance and local development will be cosmetic. The Ministry and the OHLGS may consider creating a Unit at the MMDAs to coordinate the activities of Chieftaincy and Religious affair, and avoid each of the chieftaincy and religious institutions coming directly to Accra to report their concerns to the sector minister.

Reconfiguration of chieftaincy and religious institutions for effective local governance

With the integration of chieftaincy and religious institutions into the formal structure of the sector Ministry, it may be imperative to redefine and clarify the contemporary roles of chieftaincy and religious institutions within the nexus of effective and efficient local governance system. Given that the tripod institutions work on the basis of subsidiarity principle, it is far easier to foster cooperation, collaboration and synergy at the local level for local governance but it's also important that we define these collaborations and identify each institution's roles. For instance, the role of chiefs in community mobilisation for collective action (clean up exercise, adjudication in communal conflict, civic education, support to property rate collection and revenue mobilisation, support to community birth and death registry, etc.) should be documented and used to justify payment of monthly allowances to chiefs instead of the allowance being seen as entitlement.

So, under the tripod, the developmental role of chiefs must be stressed in two directions:

- Chiefs must be seen as local development brokers or as intermediaries that work to bring inflows from external sources to promote community development.

- The mobilisation of people for communal work. There is need to bring back the TDC that is led by chiefs to increase community participation in communal projects. The TDC could be integrated into Unit Committees in the long-term and to be headed by Chiefs.

The synergy among MMDA's town hall meetings, TDCs led by Chiefs and Queen mothers and the gathering of religious faithful provide an opportunity to build mass mobilisation for collective action.

At the MMDA and the sub-district level, structured forums could be established where Assembly members can engage with traditional leaders to discuss policies, address concerns, and build a shared understanding of the goals of local governance. Formalizing this collaboration can help balance respect for traditional authority with the autonomy required by Assembly members.

Promoting ethical local governance policy

As a secular state, Ghana maintains a clear separation between religion and government, ensuring that laws and policies are made based on secular reasoning rather than religious doctrine. However, ethical values and moral behaviour are the foundation for good local governance. Given the integration of the two key institutions that are the custodians of moral and ethical behaviour, it will be imperative that chieftaincy and religious institutions support the introduction of an ethical local governance policy to check corruption and social decadence.

In addition, unlike the two pillars of the tripod that have statutes (Acts of Parliament) that regulate the structure, standard operating procedures and leadership, religion has no such legal rules, regulation or statutes. Religious doctrine and practices are based on faith. A religious policy has been in draft for some time and there is no timeline when that policy will see the light of the day. So, currently there is no framework that the MLGCRA can use to work with religious institutions. The tripod therefore presents a fresh opportunity for the ministry to build consensus on the completion of the religious policy.

Effective representation of Chieftaincy and Religion at the MMDAs

The representation of chiefs at the DAs has dwindled with time as members of the ruling political party hijack the 30% representation, despite Article 242(d) of the Constitution requiring the president to appoint Assembly members in consultation with 'traditional authorities' and other interest groups. It is expected that the next appointment of the 30% Assembly Members would have strong representation of chiefs and religious leaders now that both institutions form an integral part of the Ministry. In 1992, chiefs constituted 1/5 of all government appointees, today they are far too few.

Training and Capacity Building

The ILGS needs to organize training specifically for traditional authorities to enhance their understanding of contemporary local governance processes, the new roles of chiefs within the tripod framework, and the importance of collaborative decision-making. This would create a shared knowledge base, promoting mutual respect and alignment of traditional authorities to the developmental objectives of the MLGCRA. The creation of MLGCRA provides more exciting, institutionally enabling, and contextually imperative to formalise the training of Chiefs and Queen mothers on developmental

local governance through the Royal Academy at ILGS.

Conclusion

The creation of the MLGCRA is not just a new institutional label but has a foundation in subsidiarity principle which is also the basis of decentralisation and local governance. While we acknowledge the institutional convergence in the tripod, their governance differences are also obvious, requiring careful navigation of legal frameworks and policy environments. Chiefs have in the past complained about being side-lined by the formal local government system, though they have hesitated to come directly to the Minister of LG to demand specific local governance dispensation. With the tripod operating in a single sector, Chiefs will not hesitate now because they are a critical pillar of the tripod. They will demand major influence in both statutory and non-statutory functions. The statutory functions are defined in the 1992 constitution (Article 272), but much of their demand will come from non-statutory functions that are carried over from the past and which are not easy to define. Religious institutions on the other hand may not be demanding too much from the sector given that they had in the past opposed to any policy coordination or regulation of their activities with the government but the tripod presents an opportunity to complete the draft religious policy. The policy will draw new attention to the institution and their roles in the promotion of ethical local governance.

In conclusion, the tripod should aim at fostering the collective action and vitality to deepen decentralization and subsidiarity principles, structures and institutions that make local governance thick for improved decentralised public goods and services delivery.

GOVERNMENT REVIVES HEALTH SECTOR DEVOLUTION AGENDA



Efforts to strengthen decentralised governance in Ghana's health sector have gained renewed momentum following a high-level engagement between the Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee on Decentralisation (IMCCoD) and the Ministry of Health. The engagement represents a key step in revisiting the long-standing agenda of devolving selected primary healthcare functions to Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs).

This development sits within the broader national decentralisation reform programme, where health sector devolution has re-emerged as a priority

under Ghana's National Decentralisation Policy and Strategic Framework (2026–2030). The framework places emphasis on improving coherence between local governance structures and public service delivery, reflecting an increasing policy recognition that effective primary healthcare depends not only on local resources, but also on a clearer allocation of institutional authority across levels of government.

The current policy direction is grounded in a complex reform historycharacterised by alternating phases of decentralisation and recentralisation. Early constitutional provisions under the 1957 Independence Constitution envisaged the transfer of selected functions, including health, to regional-level governance structures. This arrangement was discontinued in 1958 following the abolition of Regional Assemblies. Subsequent reforms under the Local Government Law, 1988 (PNDCL 207) and the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462) reintroduced aspects of decentralisation in health administration through district-level structures, including District Health Departments within Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies.

However, the enactment of the Ghana Health Service and Teaching Hospitals Act, 1995 (Act 525), recentralised health service delivery under a national institutional framework. This shift was reinforced by the Local Government Service Act, 2003 (Act 656), which removed District Health Departments from the formal list of devolved functions under Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies. Although later reforms, including the National Decentralisation Policy Framework (2010–2014), attempted to revive the devolution agenda and produced a draft Health Bill in 2015, implementation remained incomplete.

Against this backdrop, reform efforts are once again gaining traction as the IMCC seeks to translate long-standing policy aspirations into practical institutional reforms. Discussions during the engagement highlighted a governance concern that cuts across critical public service sectors. Health and education were identified as areas where decision-making structures should be closely aligned with the communities they serve. Emphasising this principle, the Executive Secretary of the IMCC, Dr. Gameli Kewuribe Hoedoafia, noted that "where decisions and issues affect people the most should be where decisions about those services are made." He further underscored the importance of aligning decision-making authority with service delivery responsibilities, particularly in sectors that directly affect citizens' welfare.

The discussions also reaffirmed the constitutional and legislative foundations of decentralisation, including Article 35(6)(d) of the 1992 Constitution and the Local Government Act, 2016 (Act 936), while recognising that sector specific legal frameworks have not fully evolved in line with these constitutional aspirations. In this regard, the work of a Legislative Review Committee chaired by Prof. Kwamina Ahwoi continues to provide an important platform for reviewing legislation and supporting reforms across priority sectors, including health.

Within the health sector, the Ministry of Health acknowledged that elements of decentralisation are already being operationalised through district level participation in recruitment and posting processes for health professionals. These measures are intended to improve staff retention and enhance responsiveness in service delivery at the local level.

Reaffirming the Ministry's commitment to the process, the Minister for Health, Hon. Kwabena Mintah Akandoh, described the initiative as "a constructive step towards strengthening efficiency, responsiveness and accountability in primary healthcare delivery" and expressed the Ministry's readiness to collaborate with the IMCC to advance decentralisation within the sector.

CHIEF OF STAFF RALLIES DP SUPPORT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NDPS 2026-2030



The successful implementation of Ghana's newly approved National Decentralisation Policy and Strategic Framework (NDPS) 2026–2030 will depend on strong partnerships, coordinated action, and sustained investment. In line with this, Government has engaged Development Partners to align priorities, discuss implementation needs, and explore opportunities for collaboration over the next five years of Ghana's decentralisation reforms.

The policy, which provides the strategic direction for Ghana's decentralisation agenda over the next five years, seeks to strengthen local governance institutions, improve service delivery, deepen citizen participation, promote local economic development, and enhance accountability at all levels of government.

As implementation preparations gather momentum, Government continues to engage Development Partners to ensure alignment of support, coordination of interventions, and effective mobilisation of technical and financial resources required to deliver on the policy's objectives.



The high-level engagement, convened by the Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee on Decentralisation (IMCCoD) Secretariat under the Office of the President, brought together representatives of Development Partners, Ministries, Departments and Agencies, and other key stakeholders committed to advancing decentralisation reforms in Ghana.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief of Staff, Hon. Julius Debrah, reaffirmed Government's commitment to implementing the approved policy and ensuring that decentralisation remains a central pillar of national development. He noted that strengthening local governance institutions is essential for improving public service delivery, promoting accountability, and ensuring that development reaches communities across the country.

According to him, the new policy reflects Government's determination to build stronger and more responsive local governance systems, improve inter-governmental coordination, deepen fiscal decentralisation, and strengthen the capacity of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to deliver services effectively.

A major component of the reform agenda is the continued expansion of fiscal decentralisation. The Chief of Staff highlighted Government's decision to transfer more than 80 per cent of the District Assemblies Common Fund directly to MMDAs, a measure intended to enhance local autonomy and accelerate development at the grassroots level.

The engagement also highlighted the critical role of partnerships in delivering the policy's objectives. Development Partners have been longstanding contributors to Ghana's decentralisation journey through policy support, institutional strengthening, technical assistance, and financing interventions. Their continued involvement is expected to play an important role in supporting implementation over the next five years.

Welcoming participants, the Executive Secretary of the IMCC Secretariat, Dr. Gameli Kewuribe Hoedoafia, acknowledged the contributions of Development Partners to the formulation of the NDPS 2026–2030. He noted that their technical reviews, consultations, and policy inputs helped shape a practical framework to address emerging governance and development challenges.

He stressed that while the policy's approval represents a significant achievement, the true measure

of success will be reflected in implementation outcomes and the extent to which reforms improve governance and citizens' lives. He therefore called for sustained collaboration among all stakeholders to ensure effective implementation.

The Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs, Hon. Ahmed Ibrahim, described the policy as a new chapter in Ghana's decentralisation journey. He explained that the reforms seek to reposition decentralisation as a vehicle for accountable governance, efficient service delivery, and inclusive local development.

Among the key reforms under the policy is the pursuit of political decentralisation, including efforts to create a more democratic process for selecting Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs). The reform is expected to deepen citizen participation and strengthen local democracy by expanding the role of citizens in local governance.

Participants were also taken through the strategic priorities, implementation arrangements, and expected outcomes of the approved policy. Discussions further focused on the Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) to decentralisation, which is expected to serve as the primary coordination framework for aligning stakeholder interventions, mobilising resources, and tracking progress during implementation.

Speaking on behalf of Development Partners, H.E. Janine Walz, Deputy Ambassador of Switzerland to Ghana and Chargé d'Affaires, congratulated Government on the approval of the policy and reaffirmed Development Partners' commitment to supporting its implementation. She commended the IMCC Secretariat for its leadership throughout the policy development process and stressed the importance of maintaining strong coordination among institutions responsible for implementing the reforms.

She further noted that while Ghana has made significant progress in advancing decentralisation and increasing resource transfers to local governments, continued efforts will be required to strengthen accountability systems, citizen participation, and the financial sustainability of local authorities.

The engagement concluded with a shared commitment by the Government and Development Partners to work together to implement the National Decentralisation Policy and Strategic Framework (2026–2030). The discussions reinforced the importance of partnership, coordination, and collective action in achieving the policy's vision of responsive local governance, improved service delivery, and sustainable local development across Ghana.

As implementation begins, the NDPS 2026–2030 is expected to serve as the principal framework guiding decentralisation reforms and strengthening the role of local governments in driving national development over the next five years.



DEEPENING MEDIA UNDERSTANDING TO DRIVE DECENTRALISATION REFORMS



The IMCC Secretariat has intensified efforts to strengthen public understanding and support for Ghana's decentralisation agenda through a targeted engagement with media practitioners. A Sensitisation and Policy Orientation Workshop organised by the IMCC Secretariat brought together journalists from major media houses to enhance awareness and build capacity for effective reporting on the National Decentralisation Policy and Strategic Framework (NDPS 2026–2030).

Held as part of broader efforts to improve policy communication and citizen engagement, the workshop underscored the media's critical role in shaping public discourse, promoting accountability in local governance, and supporting informed, solution-oriented dialogue that reflects citizens' development needs. Participants were taken through key aspects of the NDPS 2026–2030, including its vision, thematic priorities, implementation framework, and the principles underpinning decentralisation and local governance in Ghana.

In his opening remarks, the Executive Secretary of the IMCC Secretariat, Dr Gameli K. Hoedoafia, emphasised the strategic importance of the media as a partner in advancing decentralisation reforms. He noted that effective decentralisation remains central to promoting democratic participation, accountability, and improved service delivery.

A key presentation on the NDPS 2026–2030 highlighted the evolution of Ghana's decentralisation system and the need for a renewed framework to address emerging challenges, including uneven development outcomes, rising service delivery demands, and global trends such as climate change and technological advancement. The policy is designed to reset democratic decentralisation by strengthening local governance systems, enhancing institutional capacity, and promoting inclusive development across all districts.

The framework is anchored on six thematic pillars—political, administrative, and fiscal decentralisation; decentralised planning; local economic development; and popular participation and

accountability. It also integrates cross-cutting priorities such as gender inclusion, innovation, climate resilience, and ethical governance, reflecting a holistic approach to sustainable development.



Experts at the workshop emphasised that successful implementation of the policy will require the active participation of multiple stakeholders, including government institutions, civil society, development partners, and the media. The media was particularly identified as a key actor responsible for educating the public, amplifying citizen voices, promoting transparency, and holding institutions accountable.

Discussions also explored the broader concepts and challenges of decentralisation in Ghana, including the need to balance local autonomy with effective central coordination, address fiscal constraints, and strengthen institutional capacity at the local level. Participants highlighted the importance of citizen engagement, equitable resource distribution, and the role of local governments in driving economic development.

Despite progress in decentralisation reforms, the workshop identified several challenges, including limited public awareness of decentralisation policies, insufficient depth in media coverage, capacity gaps among journalists, weak coordination between media and public institutions, and the technical nature of policy frameworks, which can hinder effective communication to the general public.

To address these challenges, participants recommended sustained engagement between the IMCC Secretariat and the media through regular training programmes, the development of simplified communication materials, and the strengthening of institutional partnerships. Media houses were also encouraged to establish dedicated desks for governance reporting to improve the consistency and quality of coverage.

The workshop concluded with a renewed commitment to deepening collaboration between the IMCC and the media to support the implementation of the NDPS 2026–2030. Moving forward, continuous capacity-building initiatives and public education campaigns are expected to enhance citizen participation, transparency, and accountability in Ghana's decentralised governance system.











BRINGING ROAD GOVERNANCE CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE





Road infrastructure remains one of the most visible indicators of development and one of the public services that most directly affects the daily lives of citizens. Yet decisions on the planning, maintenance and management of roads have largely remained concentrated at the centre, often creating gaps between local needs and service delivery. As Ghana intensifies efforts to deepen decentralisation and bring governance closer to the people, the Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee on Decentralisation (IMCC) and the Ministry of Roads and Highways have begun discussions on a transformative shift in the management of road infrastructure.

The engagement seeks to strengthen the role of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in road sector governance, ensuring that communities have greater influence over the infrastructure that drives their social and economic development. The discussions form part of broader efforts to implement the National Decentralisation Policy and Strategic Framework (2026–2030) and build a more responsive, accountable and locally driven system of service delivery.

In furtherance of this objective, the IMCC has initiated consultations with the Ministry of Roads and Highways to strengthen the functional integration and operational effectiveness of road sector responsibilities within MMDAs.
The engagement is anchored in Ghana's broader decentralisation framework and is intended to deepen the operationalisation of devolved departments at the local level. In particular, the consultation sought to clarify functional assignments, streamline institutional arrangements, and reinforce coherence between central sector agencies and local government structures, consistent with the legal and policy architecture governing decentralisation reforms in Ghana.

The initiative represents a deliberate policy effort to enhance downward accountability, promote subsidiarity, and improve the responsiveness of road infrastructure planning, implementation

and maintenance to local development priorities. Ultimately, it aims to ensure that road sector management at the sub-national level is systematically embedded within the broader local governance system, thereby strengthening service delivery and territorial development outcomes. This included discussions on how selected road functions could be devolved to the Assemblies based on agreed road classifications, while ensuring they have the capacity and resources to manage and maintain their road infrastructure effectively.

The Executive Secretary of the IMCC, Dr. Gameli Kewuribe Hoedoafia, described the road sector as central to the success of Ghana's decentralisation agenda. He said the country had struggled with some of the structural issues in local governance for years, noting that recent reforms were intended to correct long-standing institutional gaps.

He stated that, to better serve the people, the National Decentralisation Policy and Strategic Framework 2026–2030 has proposed that every district have a roads department. This represents a departure from the current arrangement of separate feeder roads and urban roads departments. "Every Ghanaian lives within a local government area, so there is value in allowing the levels where the issues impact the people the most to be able to deal with them," he said. According to him, local authorities are better placed to respond because they have direct knowledge of community needs, information that national-level actors may not always have.

Dr. Hoedoafia added that while the Ministry would continue to handle policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation, implementation should not be overly centralised. He said the President remains a champion of decentralisation because it promotes equitable development, local ownership of priorities and more efficient service delivery. Therefore, he questioned why some decisions that directly affect local communities continue to be taken at the centre.



Addressing the meeting, the Minister for Roads and Highways, Hon. Kwame Governs Agbodza, welcomed the engagement and described the conversation as long overdue. He noted that although urban roads were placed under local government years ago, there has been no comprehensive evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the arrangement.

He observed that many functions that should be performed locally are still being carried out at the national level. The Minister also pointed out that road agencies lack the full technical complement required to execute their mandates effectively, including design functions.

The meeting underscored the shared commitment of both institutions to strengthening decentralisation and improving infrastructure delivery across the country. As part of the way forward, the Ministry and the IMCC agreed to each nominate five representatives to form a ten-member joint committee that will commence technical work on strengthening the devolved roads departments within MMDAs.

The session was also attended by the Deputy Minister for Roads and Highways, Hon. Alhassan Suhuyin; Chairman of the Legislative Review Committee, Prof. Kwamena Ahwoi; the Chief Director of the Ministry of Roads and Highways, Ing. Samuel Kwasi Akuako; officials from the IMCC; representatives of the Ghana Road Fund; and Directors of key road agencies under the Ministry.



BIG PUSH

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS ADVANCING ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Ghana's flagship infrastructure programme, the Big Push Initiative, is making steady progress across the country as government accelerates efforts to modernise the nation's road network, improve connectivity, and stimulate economic growth.

Launched in 2025 as part of the US$10 billion National Development Infrastructure Programme, the Big Push Initiative represents one of the most ambitious infrastructure investments in Ghana's history. The programme seeks to address longstanding infrastructure deficits while creating jobs, supporting local industries, and laying the foundation for the successful implementation of the government's 24-Hour Economy agenda.

The roads sector remains at the heart of the initiative. For decades, inadequate road infrastructure, deteriorating feeder roads, traffic congestion in urban centres, and limited access to markets have constrained economic productivity and service delivery. The Big Push Initiative is designed to reverse this trend through strategic investments in trunk roads, highways, district road networks, and economic corridors across all sixteen regions.



Under the programme, several major



road projects are currently progressing at various stages of implementation. Thes include the dualisation of the Adenta–Dodowa Road, the rehabilitation of the Hohoe–Jasikan Road, the reconstruction of the Takoradi–Agona Nkwanta Road, the upgrading of sections of the Eastern Corridor Road, and improvement works on critical feeder roads that connect farming communities to major markets. Government is also prioritising roads that link regional and district capitals as well as strategic industrial and agricultural production zones.

The road component of the initiative is being implemented in phases. The first phase focuses on strengthening connectivity between regional capitals to improve mobility and trade. The second phase seeks to ensure that all district capitals are connected through reliable road networks, while the third phase concentrates on developing economic corridors that support agriculture, industry, mining, and commerce.

To support implementation, government allocated GH¢13.9 billion to the roads component in 2025 and has projected a substantial increase to GH¢30.8 billion in 2026. The investment is expected to accelerate ongoing projects and facilitate the commencement of new strategic infrastructure works across the country.

As construction activities continue nationwide, the Minister for Roads and Highways, Hon. Kwame Governs Agbodza, has been undertaking inspections of project sites to assess progress and ensure compliance with approved specifications, timelines, and quality standards. The visits form part of government's broader accountability framework aimed at ensuring that public resources deliver maximum value.

During interactions with contractors, consultants, and engineers, the Minister stressed that quality assurance remains a non-negotiable requirement under the Big Push Initiative. He noted that government is determined to eliminate

the culture of poorly executed projects and has introduced stricter monitoring measures to safeguard public investment.

One of the measures introduced requires contractors and consultants participating in the programme to secure comprehensive insurance coverage for projects under their supervision. According to the Minister, this arrangement will provide an additional layer of accountability and protect public resources in the event of project failures.

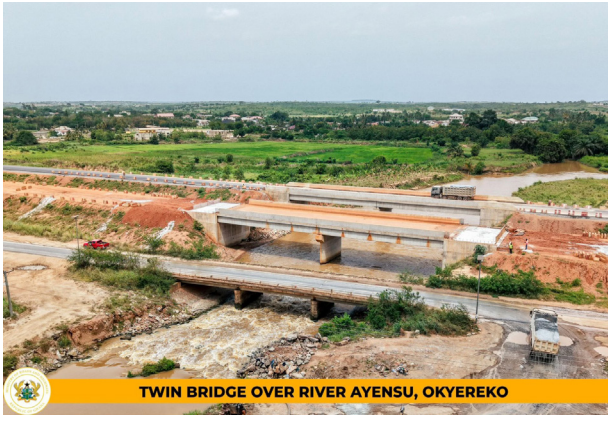
The Minister also announced that contractors who deliver quality projects on schedule and within budget will be recognised and rewarded, reinforcing government's commitment to performance, efficiency, and excellence in project execution.

Beyond infrastructure development, the Big Push Initiative is expected to generate over one million sustainable jobs nationwide. Government has therefore encouraged greater participation of Ghanaian-owned construction firms while also urging contractors to create apprenticeship and training opportunities for young engineers, technicians, and graduates entering the sector.

The programme is expected to deliver far-reaching economic benefits. Improved road infrastructure will reduce travel times, lower transportation costs, facilitate the movement of agricultural produce, improve access to social services, and support industrial growth. It will also strengthen trade linkages between regions and unlock economic opportunities in previously underserved communities.

As implementation gains momentum, the Big Push Initiative is increasingly emerging as a cornerstone of Ghana's development strategy. By investing in critical infrastructure today, government seeks to create the conditions for sustained economic growth, job creation, and improved living standards for millions of Ghanaians.

The progress recorded so far demonstrates that the initiative is moving beyond policy commitments into visible development outcomes. If sustained, the programme has the potential to transform Ghana's infrastructure landscape and serve as a catalyst for inclusive national development for decades to come. ecades to come.





TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FUND TO ADVANCE GHANA'S DECENTRALISATION REFORMS UNDER THE NDPS 2026–2030.



With the approval of Ghana's National Decentralisation Policy and Strategic Framework (NDPS) 2026–2030, efforts are intensifying to ensure that the institutions responsible for driving the reforms have the technical capacity and support needed to deliver results.

One of the key mechanisms to support implementation is a proposed Technical Assistance Fund by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). The fund is expected to provide targeted technical expertise, institutional strengthening, policy support, and capacity-building interventions to help translate the objectives of the newly approved policy into tangible outcomes for citizens across the country.

The NDPS 2026–2030, recently approved by Cabinet, provides the strategic roadmap for the next phase of Ghana's decentralisation reforms. The policy seeks to strengthen local governance systems, improve service delivery, deepen citizen participation, promote local economic development, and enhance the effectiveness of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs).

As government moves from policy formulation to implementation, attention is increasingly shifting towards the systems, resources, and institutional capacities required to ensure the successful delivery of the policy's objectives. It is within this context that the proposed Technical Assistance Fund is emerging as a critical implementation support mechanism.

The fund was the focus of discussions during a recent engagement between the Technical Committee of the Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee (IMCC) and a delegation from the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), led by the Deputy Ambassador of Switzerland to Ghana, H.E. Janine Walz.

The engagement brought together Chief Directors from IMCC member institutions to explore how the fund can support priority reforms under the newly approved policy and strengthen coordination among institutions responsible for its implementation.

Speaking at the meeting, the Executive Secretary of the IMCC Secretariat, Dr. Gameli Kewuribe Hoedoafia, commended members of the Technical Committee for their contributions to the development of the NDPS 2026–2030

and noted that the policy's approval marks the beginning of a new phase in Ghana's decentralisation journey.

He also acknowledged Switzerland's longstanding support to Ghana's decentralisation reforms through SECO and GIZ, highlighting the Swiss Government's contribution of 12 million Swiss francs to the District Assemblies Common Fund – Responsiveness Factor Grant (DACF-RFG) programme.

With an indicative commitment of approximately 500,000 Swiss francs, the proposed Technical Assistance Fund is expected to provide flexible and demand-driven support for policy implementation. Areas of support are expected to include legislative drafting, institutional diagnostics, reform implementation roadmaps, analytical studies, capacity development programmes, and the development of operational tools aligned with the thematic pillars of the NDPS.

The initiative is expected to strengthen the capacity of institutions leading Ghana's decentralisation reforms and accelerate the implementation of key policy interventions in administrative decentralisation, political decentralisation, decentralised planning, local economic development, and citizen participation and accountability.

As Ghana enters a new phase of decentralisation reform, the proposed Technical Assistance Fund has the potential to play a pivotal role in ensuring that the goals of the NDPS 2026–2030 are translated into measurable improvements in governance, service delivery, and local development outcomes nationwide.

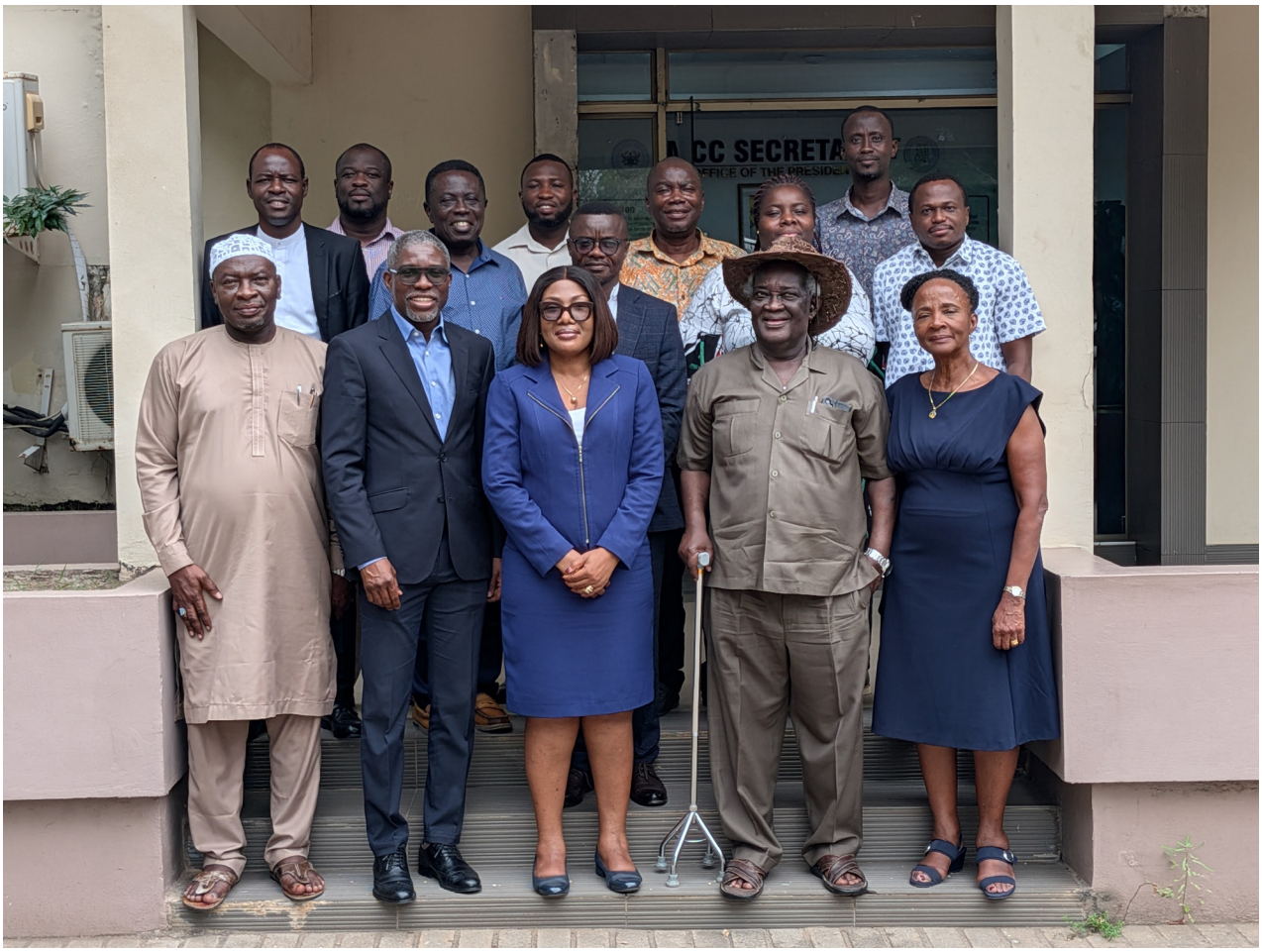








DEVOLUTION OF EDUCATION IN GHANA



Education remains one of the most important public services through which governments influence national development and improve citizens' well-being. The quality of educational governance affects not only learning outcomes but also social equity, local development, and national competitiveness. In Ghana, efforts to strengthen the management and delivery of education services have long been linked to the broader national agenda of decentralisation, which seeks to bring governance and public services closer to the people.

Since the introduction of Ghana's decentralisation reforms in 1988 and the subsequent constitutional commitment to local governance under the 1992 Constitution, successive governments have pursued the objective of transferring appropriate functions, powers, and responsibilities from the centre to local authorities. The expectation was that key service delivery sectors, including education, health, agriculture, and social welfare, would gradually become more responsive to local needs through decentralised administration and decision-making.

While significant progress has been made in several aspects of local governance, the devolution of education has remained one of the most complex and challenging areas of reform. Over the years, various initiatives have sought to strengthen the role of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in education management. However, many of the core functions of educational administration have continued to be exercised through centralised structures and deconcentrated arrangements under the Ministry of Education and its agencies. As a result, local authorities have often had limited influence over key decisions affecting the schools and communities within their jurisdictions.

The difficulties associated with education sector devolution are understandable. Education is a highly specialised sector that requires the maintenance of national standards, equitable distribution of resources, and consistent policy direction across the country. Decisions relating to curriculum development, teacher management, quality assurance, and educational regulation have traditionally been regarded as matters requiring strong national oversight. At the same time, the realities experienced by schools and communities vary considerably across districts, creating a compelling case for greater local involvement in planning, management, and accountability.

This balance between national coordination and local responsiveness has shaped the debate on education sector devolution for many years. Although earlier reform efforts generated important discussions and policy proposals, full implementation was not achieved. Consequently, the question of how best to decentralise education while preserving national standards has remained an important issue within Ghana's governance reform agenda.

Recent developments, however, suggest that the country may be entering a new phase in this long-standing reform process. Ghana's efforts to deepen decentralised governance and strengthen local participation in educational administration have gained renewed momentum following the President's unwavering commitment towards effective local service delivery. This was followed by the decision of the Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee (IMCC) on Decentralisation and the Ministry of Education to commence preparations for a new legislative framework to support the devolution of the education sector.

The initiative represents an important step towards addressing longstanding institutional and operational challenges that have affected the implementation of education sector decentralisation. It also reflects a growing recognition that effective educational service delivery requires stronger collaboration between national institutions and local authorities.

The process formally commenced in February 2026 when the IMCC convened a strategic policy engagement involving officials from the Ministry of Education, members of the IMCC Legislative Review Committee, and technical experts. The engagement focused on defining the scope of work and agreeing on the Terms of Reference for a Joint Working Committee tasked with leading the reform process.

At the centre of the initiative is the preparation of a new Pre-Tertiary Education Bill. The proposed legislation is expected to provide a clearer legal and institutional framework for the transfer of appropriate education sector functions to local government authorities. It is also intended to align educational governance more closely with the objectives of Ghana's decentralisation policy by clarifying institutional mandates, reducing overlaps in responsibilities, and strengthening accountability mechanisms at the local level.

The significance of this effort extends beyond legislative reform. Successful devolution within the education sector has the potential to improve the responsiveness of educational administration to local realities and priorities. MMDAs are often the public institutions closest to communities and therefore possess valuable knowledge about local needs, infrastructure challenges, demographic trends, and development priorities. Greater involvement of local authorities in educational planning and management could contribute to more informed decision-making and more effective service delivery.

Education sector devolution could also strengthen accountability by creating clearer links between decision-makers and the communities they serve. Citizens are generally better positioned to engage with local authorities than with distant central institutions. Bringing certain aspects of educational governance closer to communities may therefore create additional opportunities for public participation, oversight, and feedback.

For the IMCC, the initiative reflects its continuing role in promoting policy coherence, inter-sectoral collaboration, and institutional reforms within Ghana's decentralisation framework. By facilitating dialogue between key stakeholders and supporting the development of appropriate legal instruments, the institution continues to contribute to the broader objective of strengthening local governance and improving public service delivery.

The ongoing collaboration between the IMCC and the Ministry of Education demonstrates the importance of partnership in advancing complex national reforms. Education sector devolution is not simply a legal exercise; it is a process that requires careful consultation, technical analysis, and consensus-building among multiple institutions and stakeholders. The establishment of the Joint Working Committee provides a platform through which these issues can be examined comprehensively and practical solutions developed.

As Ghana continues its decentralisation journey, the renewed focus on education sector devolution offers an opportunity to revisit unfinished reforms and chart a path towards more responsive and accountable educational governance. While important questions remain regarding the scope and pace of implementation, the current initiative signals a clear commitment to advancing a reform that has been discussed for decades but has yet to be fully realised.







SECTORWIDE APPROACH(SWAp) TO DECENTRALISATION IN GHANA

DRIVING GHANA'S NEXT PHASE OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE REFORM



The implementation of Ghana's National Decentralisation Policy and Strategy Framework (2026–2030) is expected to usher in a new era of responsive, accountable and citizen-centred local governance. However, achieving the ambitious goals outlined in the policy requires more than strong political commitment. It requires a coordinated system that brings together government institutions, development partners, local authorities and citizens behind a shared reform agenda.

This is where the Decentralisation Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) becomes critically important.

The SWAp serves as a strategic framework through which the Government of Ghana and its development partners can jointly support the implementation of decentralisation reforms under a single, government-led platform. Rather than allowing projects and programmes to operate in isolation, the SWAp promotes coordination, alignment and collective accountability around nationally defined priorities.

The framework is supported by twelve key development partners: the Governments of Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan through JICA, Switzerland, the European Union, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, USAID and the World Bank.

The partnership reflects a shared commitment to strengthening local governance and improving service delivery across the country.

One of the major strengths of the SWAp is its ability to align multiple stakeholders around a common reform agenda. The National Decentralisation Policy and Strategy Framework outlines priorities ranging from governance and service delivery to fiscal decentralisation, local economic development, citizen participation and institutional strengthening. Delivering on these priorities requires collaboration among Ministries, Departments and Agencies, Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), development partners, civil society organisations and other stakeholders.

Through the SWAp, these actors are able to coordinate their programmes, investments and technical support in a manner that advances common national objectives.

The approach also reinforces government ownership of the decentralisation process. Through the Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee on Decentralisation (IMCCoD), the government provides strategic leadership, coordinates sector actors, monitors implementation progress and ensures that interventions remain aligned with nati onal priorities. This arrangement helps ensure that reforms are driven by Ghana's development needs and policy objectives.



Financing remains one of the most significant challenges facing decentralisation reforms. Over the years, fragmented funding arrangements and unpredictable resource flows have often affected implementation efforts. The SWAp seeks to address this challenge by promoting more coherent financing mechanisms that support decentralised service delivery, strengthen intergovernmental fiscal transfers and improve accountability in the management of public resources.

By linking financing to agreed reform milestones and performance targets, the framework creates incentives for improved governance and stronger service delivery outcomes at the local level.

Institutional capacity development is another area where the SWAp is expected to make a significant impact. Effective decentralisation depends on strong institutions with the skills, systems and resources needed to perform their functions efficiently. The SWAp provides a coordinated framework for capacity-building interventions that focus on identified institutional needs rather than isolated training activities.

This allows investments in planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, digital transformation, human resource development and systems strengthening to be undertaken in a more strategic and sustainable manner.

The framework also places strong emphasis on accountability and measurable results. The National

Decentralisation Policy and Strategy Framework adopt a results-based approach to reform implementation, and the SWAp supports this through common performance indicators, monitoring mechanisms and periodic sector reviews.

These processes enable stakeholders to collectively assess progress, identify implementation bottlenecks and make evidence-based decisions to improve performance. The result is greater transparency, stronger accountability and improved outcomes for citizens.

Equally important is the SWAp's commitment to inclusive participation. Decentralisation is fundamentally about bringing governance closer to the people. The framework therefore creates opportunities for civil society organisations, traditional authorities, academia, the private sector and citizens to contribute to policy dialogue, implementation and monitoring processes.

This broad-based participation helps strengthen local ownership of reforms while ensuring that governance systems remain responsive to the needs and aspirations of communities.

As Ghana embarks on the implementation of the National Decentralisation Policy and Strategy Framework (2026–2030), the Decentralisation SWAp is positioned to play a central role in translating policy objectives into meaningful development outcomes. By aligning stakeholders, coordinating resources, strengthening institutions and promoting accountability, the framework provides a practical pathway for accelerating decentralisation reforms.

Ultimately, the success of the SWAp will be measured by its ability to improve governance, enhance service delivery and empower local authorities and communities to drive their own development. If effectively implemented, it could become one of the most important instruments for advancing Ghana's vision of inclusive, responsive and development-oriented local governance.





NDPC, UNICEF FORUM CALLS FOR STRONGER MULTI-SECTORAL ACTION FOR CHILDREN



The Director General of the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), Dr Audrey Smock Amoah, has called for stronger policy coherence and coordinated action to improve outcomes for children and adolescents, stressing that their well-being is fundamental to Ghana's sustainable development.

Speaking at the close of the Government of Ghana and UNICEF Strategic Planning Retreat held in Akosombo, Dr. Amoah said the retreat reaffirmed that investing in children is both a constitutional obligation and a critical development imperative.

She noted that participants identified priority areas requiring accelerated action, including the reduction of maternal, child and neonatal mortality; tackling stunting, anaemia and open defecation; improving foundational learning outcomes; addressing child labour and young people not in education, employment or training; ending child marriage and adolescent pregnancy; achieving universal birth registration; and strengthening social protection systems.

She emphasised that progress in these areas cannot be achieved through fragmented interventions but requires coordinated, multi-sectoral approaches aligned with national development priorities under the Resetting Ghana Agenda.

Dr. Amoah reaffirmed the NDPC's commitment to providing leadership in planning, coordination and monitoring to ensure that the outcomes of the retreat translate into measurable and sustainable results.

She added that investing in children and adolescents is an investment in Ghana's future productivity, equity, and stability, and urged all stakeholders to act collectively to ensure that no child is left behind.

A key outcome of the engagement was the establishment of a 12 member Technical Committee comprising representatives from the IMCC Secretariat, the Ministry of Health, and relevant sector agencies. The Committee has been tasked with developing proposals for a legislative framework that will guide the devolution of selected health sector functions to Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies. Its recommendations are expected to be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

Taken together, these developments signal a gradual but deliberate shift in Ghana's approach to health sector governance. The focus is increasingly moving from policy aspiration to structured institutional reform. Whether this momentum translates into substantive change will depend on the ability of stakeholders to reconcile long standing institutional arrangements with the evolving demands of devolved service delivery.

Addressing the meeting, the Executive Secretary of IMCC, Dr. Gameli Kewuribe Hoedoafia, recalled that substantial progress had been made between 2015 and 2016 towards devolving health services under the previous Mahama administration, although the process could not be fully completed before the end of the administration's tenure.

He emphasised that health and education remain the most critical public services affecting citizens at the grassroots level and therefore require decision-making structures that are closer to the people.

"Where decisions and issues affect people the most, should be where decisions about those services are made," he stated.

Dr. Hoedoafia further noted that local governments already invest significant resources into healthcare delivery through CHPS compounds and other community-based interventions, reinforcing the need to empower local authorities with greater responsibility over health administration and service delivery.

He also cited Article 35(6d) of the 1992 Constitution, which mandates the decentralisation of administrative and financial authority to local governments to promote balanced national development.

According to him, although Ghana has established a strong legal foundation for decentralisation through the Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936), sector-specific legislation, particularly within the health sector, must be reviewed to align with the broader devolution agenda.

To support this process, Dr. Hoedoafia disclosed that a Legislative Review Committee chaired by renowned decentralisation expert, Prof. Kwamina Ahwoi, has already been constituted to oversee reforms across key sectors, with health identified as a major priority area.

Responding to the proposal, the Minister for Health, Hon. Kwabena Mintah Akandoh, welcomed the initiative and reaffirmed the Ministry's commitment to supporting the government's decentralisation agenda.

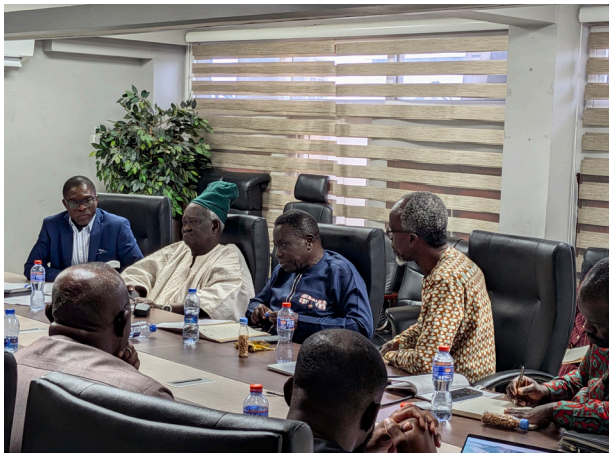
The Minister revealed that the Ministry had already begun implementing elements of decentralisation, particularly in the recruitment and posting of health professionals.

"We are moving recruitment to the district level. Instead of centralised interviewing and posting, interview panels are being constituted at the district level. This ensures that those who apply are more likely to accept postings within those areas," he explained.

Describing the proposal as "a fantastic concept," the Minister pledged the Ministry's full collaboration towards achieving a more decentralised and efficient healthcare delivery system, especially within primary healthcare provision.

ADDRESSING DISTRICT REVENUE GAPS TO BOOST LOCAL DEVELOPMENT





For many District Assemblies across Ghana, one of the greatest challenges to local development is not the absence of plans or programmes, but the limited financial resources needed to implement them. Although Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) are mandated by law to generate revenue through taxes, fees and levies to support service delivery and local development, many continue to face difficulties in mobilising revenue effectively, particularly within the informal sector. Revenue leakages, weak compliance and limited access to reliable taxpayer data have further constrained their ability to raise adequate Internally Generated Funds (IGF).

Recognising that stronger local economies require stronger local revenue systems, the Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee on Decentralisation (IMCC) has intensified efforts to strengthen district-level revenue mobilisation across the country. As part of this agenda, the Committee recently engaged the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) to explore practical ways of improving revenue collection, expanding the tax base and enhancing collaboration between national and local institutions responsible for tax administration.

The engagement forms part of broader efforts to deepen decentralisation reforms and ensure that District Assemblies have the financial capacity to drive development within their jurisdictions. The meeting brought together a high-level IMCC delegation led by its Executive Secretary, Dr. Gameli Kewuribe Hoedoafia, and included the Chairman of the Legislative Review Committee, Prof. Kwamina Ahwoi. The delegation was received by the Deputy Commissioner of the GRA and Acting Commissioner of the Domestic Tax Revenue Division (DTRD), Dr. Martin Kolbil Yamborigya, on behalf of the Commissioner-General.

Speaking during the meeting, Dr. Yamborigya underscored the importance of stronger institutional collaboration in building an efficient and responsive tax system. He identified property taxation as one of Ghana's most underutilised revenue sources and noted that improved compliance and administration could significantly increase both national and local revenues.

According to him, taxation remains a shared civic responsibility that enables government at all levels to provide public services and invest in development. He observed that many taxable properties and businesses remain outside the tax net, making stronger enforcement and better coordination among public institutions necessary to improve compliance.

For the IMCC, the discussions reflected a broader commitment to repositioning decentralisation as a practical tool for development. Dr. Hoedoafia noted that the success of Ghana's decentralisation agenda depends largely on the fiscal strength of local governments.

He explained that the country's 261 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies represent 261 local economies whose collective performance contributes significantly to national economic growth. However, he cautioned that these local economies cannot realise their full potential without effective revenue mobilisation systems capable of generating sustainable local resources.

"Local governments must have the financial capacity to respond to the needs of their communities," he stressed. "As pressure on national resources continues to increase, strengthening local revenue generation has become more important than ever."

Dr. Hoedoafia further highlighted the growing need to reconnect citizens with local governance structures. He observed that many citizens remain unaware of how district assemblies impact their daily lives and therefore have limited engagement with local governance processes. Strengthening accountability, transparency and citizen participation, he noted, is essential for building trust and improving local service delivery.

The discussions were grounded in the provisions of the Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936), particularly Sections 141 and 142, which provide the legal framework for district revenue mobilisation. These provisions empower District Assemblies to collect specified taxes and fees and also allow for collaboration with public institutions such as the GRA to improve efficiency in revenue administration.

The IMCC believes that stronger collaboration between the GRA and District Assemblies can significantly improve revenue collection, especially within the informal sector, where administrative and data challenges continue to limit performance.

The meeting also highlighted innovative approaches already showing positive results. Among these are the District Local Revenue Mobilisation (DLRev) tool and the rent tax application model, both of which have demonstrated the potential of technology and integrated systems to improve collection efficiency and accountability.

A major area of focus was the importance of data sharing. Participants noted that District Assemblies possess valuable community-level information that could support tax administration, particularly in identifying economic activities and taxpayers operating within the informal sector.

One of the key outcomes of the engagement was the decision to explore collaboration under Section 142(2) of Act 936, which allows designated public bodies to undertake tax collection functions on behalf of District Assemblies. Discussions included proposals for selected assembly staff to

receive training from the GRA to support revenue collection activities within their jurisdictions.

To advance these efforts, both institutions agreed to establish a joint committee to develop practical mechanisms for collaboration and review relevant provisions of the Twelfth Schedule of Act 936 as part of the ongoing legislative review process.

The meeting also considered broader revenue reform initiatives, including discussions of provisions in the Customs and Excise (Amendment) Act, 2003 (Act 863), and proposals to establish a waste recycling fund.

The collaboration between the IMCC and GRA represents an important step towards strengthening local fiscal autonomy and ensuring that District Assemblies are better equipped to finance development initiatives within their communities. By improving revenue collection systems, closing loopholes and expanding the tax base, the partnership is expected to enhance IGF performance across the country and contribute significantly to Ghana's decentralisation and local governance agenda.

As Ghana advances the implementation of its decentralisation reforms, such partnerships are expected to play a critical role in building resilient local economies, improving service delivery and bringing governance closer to the people.







REWARDING DISTRICT LEVEL PERFORMANCE & RESPONSIVENESS WITH THE DACF-RFG

Driving Accountability and Development in Ghana's Local Governance



In Ghana's pursuit of stronger local governance, the District Assemblies Common Fund – Responsive Factor Grant (DACF-RFG) Programme is redefining resource allocation by linking funding to performance and transforming communities nationwide.

Since 2018, the Government of Ghana has implemented the DACF-RFG Programme in collaboration with Development Partners and key stakeholders. The Programme assesses the performance of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) using the District Assemblies Performance Assessment Tool (DPAT), as part of efforts to strengthen efficiency, accountability and the delivery of basic community services.

Assemblies that perform satisfactorily are financially rewarded to implement their Medium-Term Development Plans (MTDPs) and Annual Action Plans (AAPs), thereby contributing to socio-economic development and improved service delivery for citizens.

The Programme is jointly funded by the Government of Ghana and Development Partners, particularly the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the KfW Development Bank of Germany.

Performance Assessment Mechanism

The Programme utilises the District Assemblies Performance Assessment Tool (DPAT) to annually assess Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies based on clearly defined indicators, namely Compliance Indicators (CIs), Service Delivery Indicators (SDIs), and Performance Indicators (PIs). To enhance transparency, sustainability and the overall integrity of the system, the assessment process is being integrated into the District Development Data Platform (DDDP), a web-based monitoring and evaluation tool that strengthens data-driven decision-making and performance tracking.

The DACF-RFG Grant is structured into three complementary components designed to reward performance while

addressing capacity gaps within local government institutions. The Basic Grant (20%) is allocated equally to all MMDAs that meet all Compliance Indicators. The Performance Grant (70%) is distributed proportionally based on each Assembly's final performance score from the assessment process. The Capacity Building Grant (10%) is allocated to implementing MDAs and all MMDAs to address identified capacity needs and implement recommendations arising from the performance assessment.
The Programme benefits all 261 MMDAs and provides support to key national institutions, including Ministry of Local Government Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs and the Institute of Local Government Studies.



Key Milestones and Achievements

Since its inception in 2018, the DACF-RFG Programme has generated significant impact by providing sustained financial support for local infrastructure development and institutional strengthening across Ghana. Over the period, eight cycles of the performance-based assessment have been successfully completed for Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies nationwide, spanning DPAT I to DPAT VIII. The most recent cycle, DPAT IX (FY 2024), marked a major milestone with the successful deployment of the District Development Data Platform (DDDP), strengthening data-driven monitoring and evaluation of local development outcomes.

In terms of infrastructure investment, a total of GH₵980,732,648.00 (approximately USD 62 million) has been disbursed under the Programme's investment component. This has supported the implementation of over 8,000 priority projects across key socio-economic sectors, including health infrastructure such as facilities and staff accommodation, education infrastructure including school blocks and furniture, water supply systems such as boreholes and small-town systems, electricity extensions, local economic infrastructure including markets and lorry terminals, as well as justice and security facilities such as police posts and courts.

In addition, a total of GH₵42,935,328.00 (approximately USD 6 million) has been allocated for capacity building interventions and the procurement of logistics for Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies. These investments have significantly strengthened institutional capacity, improved operational efficiency, and enhanced the ability of local authorities to plan, implement and monitor development interventions effectively.

The impact of the DACF-RFG Programme was reaffirmed during a joint monitoring mission to the Volta, Bono and Ahafo Regions led by the Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs, Hon. Ahmed Ibrahim, together with representatives of SECO and KfW.

The mission inspected ongoing projects, reviewed implementation progress and engaged stakeholders on service delivery and sustainability. Participants included Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives, Regional Coordinating Councils, Regional Planning Coordinating Units, heads of decentralised departments and the media.

The Minister reiterated Government's commitment to deepening decentralisation and strengthening fiscal

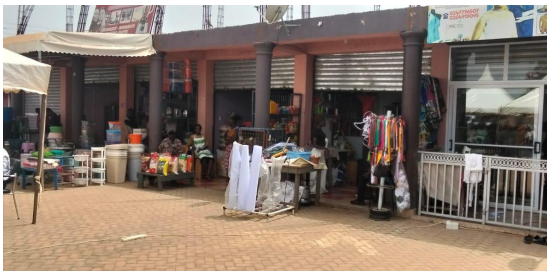
discipline for sustainable development. He noted that the visit provided an opportunity to review programme implementation, assess progress and identify areas for improvement.

He further highlighted that over the past eight years, GH₵980,732,648 had been invested in infrastructure and GH₵42,935,328 in capacity building under the DACF-RFG Programme. These investments have supported the delivery of schools, health facilities, CHPS compounds, markets, roads, water systems, sanitation infrastructure, electricity extensions and police posts across the country.

SECO and KfW commended Government for progress made under the Programme and reaffirmed their commitment to continued collaboration, emphasizing transparency, accountability and effective implementation as critical to sustaining results.

Linking Resources to Results

The DACF-RFG Programme demonstrates how performance-based financing can strengthen local governance and improve service delivery. By linking resources to results, it continues to empower MMDAs to deliver tangible development outcomes and improve the lives of citizens across Ghana.

























ENHANCING COMPOSITE BUDGET MONITORING ACROSS MMDAs


Hon. Dr. Cassiel Ato Forson
Minister for Finance.

The Fiscal Decentralisation Unit (FDU) is responsible for overseeing fiscal decentralisation processes, including monitoring the planning, budgeting, and implementation of Composite Budgets by the 261 Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) across Ghana's sixteen (16) regions. The FDU is mandated to monitor, evaluate, and report on budget implementation across government entities to inform fiscal policy decisions and promote accountability and efficiency in public financial management.

As part of its core mandate, the FDU conducts annual Composite Budget Monitoring exercises across all MMDAs. The monitoring assesses MMDA performance against a set of fiscal, planning, budget credibility, and implementation indicators, covering the previous financial year and the first quarter of the current year. The findings and recommendations from these exercises are compiled into regional and national reports and subsequently transmitted to the Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs) for onward dissemination to the MMDAs for implementation.

A host of challenges have undermined the effectiveness and impact of the Composite Budget Monitoring exercise over the years, thereby reducing its ability to promote accountability, learning, and improvements in decentralized fiscal management.

However, with the collaboration and support of UNICEF, the Fiscal Decentralization Unit have successfully undertaken a comprehensive review and redesign of the Composite Budget Monitoring framework to improve upon this all-important exercise for the 261 MMDAs. This includes improvements in the monitoring and evaluation indicators, methodology, reporting tools, and follow-up mechanisms. The revised framework has also provided practical strategies to ensure the systematic implementation and tracking of recommendations arising from the annual monitoring exercise, benefiting all MMDAs.

The revised monitoring framework will be implemented in the second quarter of the 2026 fiscal year to enhance the effectiveness, relevance, and impact of the Composite Budget Monitoring exercise, with the aim of improving fiscal discipline, service delivery outcomes, and accountability at the sub-national level across all 261 MMDAs.

SPATIAL PLANNING MANUALS UPDATED FOR EFFECTIVE DECENTRALISED PLANNING

Effective decentralisation depends not only on the transfer of responsibilities to local authorities but also on the availability of practical tools that enable them to plan and manage development efficiently. As Ghana continues to pursue orderly urban growth, sustainable land use, and improved local governance, spatial planning remains an essential component of the country's decentralisation agenda.

In a significant step towards strengthening planning and development management at the local level, the Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs (MLGCRA), in collaboration with the Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority (LUSPA), has launched the revised Manual for Preparation of Spatial Plans and the revised Zoning Guidelines and Planning Standards. The revised documents are expected to provide Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) and all actors within the spatial framework with updated guidance to support evidence-based planning and the effective management of human settlements across the country.



The initiative reflects the Government's continuing commitment to promoting orderly, inclusive, and sustainable development. As Ghana experiences rapid urbanisation and increasing demand for infrastructure, housing, transportation, and public services, the need for coordinated spatial planning has become more important than ever. Well-planned settlements contribute not only to economic







growth but also to environmental sustainability, public safety, and improved quality of life for citizens.

The revised documents arrive at a critical moment in Ghana's decentralisation journey. Over the years, MMDAs have assumed increasing responsibilities for local development planning and service delivery. To perform these functions effectively, local authorities require clear planning frameworks that can guide land-use decisions, infrastructure development, and settlement expansion in a consistent and coordinated manner.

The revision process was undertaken to align existing planning tools with Ghana's evolving legal and institutional framework. The original manual and guidelines were developed in 2011 under the then Town and Country Planning Department. However, subsequent

reforms, including the enactment of the Land Use and Spatial Planning Act, 2016 (Act 925), the Land Use and Spatial Planning Regulations, 2019 (L.I. 2384), and the Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936), created the need for updated guidance that reflects current policy directions and development realities.

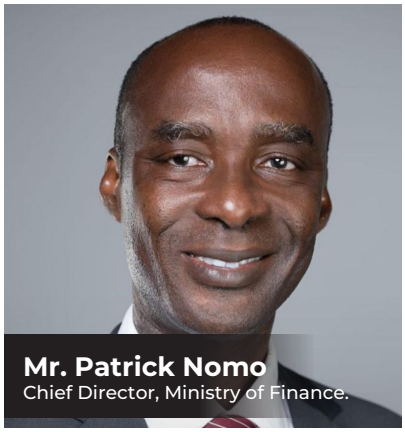
By incorporating these legislative and institutional changes, the revised documents provide a more coherent framework for planning and development management. They are expected to support stronger coordination among national institutions, Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs), MMDAs, traditional authorities, and other stakeholders involved in land-use planning and development control.

The revised manual and guidelines also reinforce the principle that effective decentralised planning requires collaboration. Spatial planning affects a wide range of sectors, including housing, transportation, agriculture, environmental management, and infrastructure development. A shared planning framework helps ensure that development decisions are harmonised and aligned with broader national and local development objectives.

Beyond their technical value, the revised documents represent an important investment in the capacity of local governments to fulfil their planning responsibilities. By providing clearer procedures, standards, and planning requirements, they equip local authorities with practical tools to make informed decisions and respond more effectively to emerging development challenges.

The launch of the revised Manual for Preparation of Spatial Plans and the revised Zoning Guidelines and Planning Standards therefore marks an important milestone in Ghana's efforts to strengthen decentralised governance and promote sustainable development. As implementation progresses, the documents are expected to support the creation of safer, more resilient, and better-planned communities while enhancing the ability of local authorities to guide development in ways that reflect the needs and aspirations of the people they serve.

IMPROVING LOCAL GOVERNMENT FISCAL REPORTING FRAMEWORK



The concept of Fiscal decentralization is a central pillar of Ghana's local governance reform agenda, designed to empower Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to effectively manage resources and deliver essential services at the local level. Under this framework, MMDAs are granted the authority to mobilise and retain Internally Generated Funds (IGF), prepare budgets, and implement developmental projects and programs at the local government level.

The Ministry of Finance's Budget Office, through the Fiscal Decentralisation Unit (FDU), is mandated to coordinate fiscal transfers, monitor the financial performance of MMDAs, and support capacity development for all MMDAs. However, a major constraint to fulfilling this mandate is the lack of a harmonised system for capturing and reporting sub-national fiscal data.

Currently, MMDAs submit fiscal reports in varied formats to different local government stakeholders, including MoF, MLGCRA, NDPC, DACF Secretariat and Development Partners (DPs) and this often leads to data inconsistencies, delayed validations, and fragmentation of national fiscal data. This impairs evidence-based policymaking, hinders efficient resource allocation, and weakens accountability in public financial management.

To address the above highlighted structural challenges, the Fiscal Decentralization Unit (FDU) has embarked on a local government fiscal data management reform program to develop a comprehensive sub-national fiscal reporting framework that will subsequently be configured and deployed through the Oracle Hyperion budget preparation and reporting system. This approach will ensure system coherence by leveraging existing platforms and avoiding duplication of efforts in fiscal data reporting. This framework will serve as a reliable source for local government-level fiscal data and as the primary tool for coordinating all fiscal reporting among key stakeholders with the view of ensuring standardised and real-time reporting.

The processes are ongoing to roll out the Oracle Hyperion budget preparation and reporting system for the preparation of the 2027 budget for all 261 MMDAs and sixteen (16) Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs) across the country.



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HARNESSING TECH TO TRANSFORM SERVICE DELIVERY

The effectiveness and efficiency of local government service delivery are inextricably linked to the competence and capacity of its workforce, a concern that has garnered significant attention from governance experts and local government stakeholders. The increasingly complex and dynamic nature of local governance, coupled with escalating citizen demands for quality services and the concomitant resource constraints, has underscored the imperative for capacity development in local government institutions.

To remain responsive, local governments worldwide are implementing targeted measures to address capacity gaps, ranging from short-term interventions to long-term strategic investments. In Ghana, the Local Government Service (LGS) comprises a workforce of more than 34,500 personnel who are responsible for delivering essential public services across the country's 261 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs).

Notwithstanding its critical mandate, capacity development within the Local Government Service (LGS) is constrained

by resource limitations and a substantial dependence on development partner support, which has at times been characterised by fragmentation, short-termism, and concerns about national ownership, sustainability, and the continuity of interventions.

To mitigate these challenges, the LGS is strategically leveraging technology and internal expertise to establish an e-Learning Management Platform and a Local Government Service Community of Practice (LGS-CoP). This innovative approach seeks to create a self-sustaining capacity-building ecosystem, fostering collaboration, co-creation and knowledge sharing to enhance service delivery and responsiveness to citizen needs.

This innovative approach leverages internal expertise, experience, motivation, and facilitation capacity within the Local Government Service to foster a culture of peer learning, mentorship, and continuous professional development across various job classifications. The initiative presents several advantages, including cost-effectiveness, inclusiveness, scalability, and the delivery of tailored capacity-building interventions, thereby strengthening institutional ownership and long-term sustainability.

Key activities will include structured capacity-building sessions, the development and refinement of policies and training manuals, and cross-functional learning initiatives. Collectively, these are designed to nurture a more professional, responsive, and motivated workforce capable of delivering improved services to citizens, while contributing to a more effective and resilient decentralised governance system.

This approach aligns with the broader vision of establishing a sustainable, internally driven capacity development framework that is adaptive to the evolving needs of Ghana's local governance architecture. In this regard, the Office of the Head of the Local Government Service (OHLGS) continues to engage relevant stakeholders and development partners to explore collaborative and financing opportunities, underscoring its commitment to institutionalising this reform agenda.

THE LONG WALK TO EQUITY

The story of Affirmative Action in Ghana is not one of overnight success, but of a relentless, decades-long marathon. While the 1992 Constitution of Ghana explicitly prohibits discrimination based on gender, the reality for women in decision-making spaces often lags behind the law

The seeds were sown as far back as 1960 with the Representation of the People Act, which allowed 10 women to join the National Assembly. However, meaningful systemic change remained elusive. The formal legislative push began in early 1998, when the first Affirmative Action Guidelines were drafted. Yet, for over twenty years, the Bill faced a turbulent existence, bouncing between Cabinet and Parliament, undergoing numerous revisions, and suffering repeated withdrawals.

Through it all, the Affirmative Action Bill Coalition; a dedicated group of Civil Society Organisations and gender advocates, kept the flame alive. They argued that without a binding law, Ghana's goal of gender parity would remain a mirage. Their advocacy reached a higher pitch in the early 2020s, demanding that the state move beyond voluntary quotas to mandatory legal enforcement.







The Breakthrough (2024)

The turning point finally arrived in July 2024. In a historic session on July 30th, the Parliament of Ghana unanimously passed the Affirmative Action (Gender Equity) Bill, 2024. It received Presidential Assent shortly after in September, officially entering the statute books as Act 1121.

This was more than just a paper; it was a social contract. The Act mandates a progressive increase in the representation of women in key decision-making roles across the public service, security agencies, and the private sector. It provides the legal teeth needed to challenge the systemic exclusion of women, transforming gender equity from a "favour" into a statutory obligation.

Turning Law into Action (The 2025 Agenda)

As 2025 dawned, the focus of the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection (MoGCSP) shifted from advocacy to operationalisation. Passing the law was the first hurdle; ensuring stakeholders understood and respected it was the next.

The Ministry, through the Department of Gender and supported by UNFPA Ghana, convened a critical Sensitisation Workshop in Accra. This event was designed to demystify the new law for key stakeholders and outline the practical steps for its enforcement.

During this session, the Ministry unveiled the definitive roadmap for compliance, setting aggressive but necessary targets for women's representation in governance and leadership positions:

- The Immediate Target (2024–2026): Achieving a minimum of 30% women representation.
- The Medium-Term Target (2027–2028): Increasing this threshold to 35%.
- The Long-Term Vision (By 2034): Achieving gender parity with 50% women representation.

Harmonising the Effort

The story of 2025 was also one of coordination. The Ministry recognised that a law acts best when supported by a strong institutional framework. Consequently, on 13th August 2025, just a week after the sensitisation workshop, the Ministry held a validation meeting for the National Framework for Coordination of Gender Equality. This framework aims to eliminate the "silo approach," ensuring that gender interventions across different sectors such as education, health, and governance are harmonised and trackable.

Furthermore, the commitment extended beyond Ghana's borders. In September 2025, the Minister for Gender, Hon. Dr. Agnes Naa Momo Lartey, participated in regional consultations on a Draft Model Law on Gender Equality and Equity for African Union Member States. The move signalled Ghana's readiness not only to implement its own laws but also to align with continental standards, such as the Maputo Protocol, serving as a beacon for other African nations.

From the initial guidelines of 1998 to the sensitisation workshops of August 2025, Ghana's journey toward Affirmative Action has been defined by resilience. The events of 2025 represent the critical "implementation phase," in which the legal victories of 2024 are being translated into concrete administrative actions, ensuring that the target of 50% representation by 2034 becomes a reality, not just a statute.

PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST:

INVESTING IN LOCALLY LED CLIMATE-SMART SOLUTIONS IN GHANA



Mary Ocansey is a climate-smart smallholder farmer based just outside Accra, Ghana's capital, in Ada East District. She used to struggle to make a living out of her dwindling and pest-vulnerable tomato crop and would despair that chemical fertilisers and pesticides, too expensive for her limited means, might be her only solution. But that changed after she took part in a local government initiative, backed by UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), that embraced regenerative farming techniques, increasing her production and income.

A mother of seven, Ocansey wanted the hours she spent tending her 10,000 square mile farm by hand to bring a better return for her family, so she took part in a locally devised training course

run by her local authority for the district's smallholder farmers. She learned how to use natural products to make environmentally friendly repellents for vermin and bugs. She applies fertiliser to her soil, making it herself from natural by-products and waste. And she rotates her crops to maximise biodiversity and restore the soil.

"I have acquired adequate skills in pesticide preparation and pest control. I have applied this skill in my one-hectare vegetable farm," said Ocansey, standing on her farm, where she now grows a mix of produce to limit pest proliferation and reduce nutrient depletion of the soil. "I have also adopted the intercropping technique during the planting season and recorded higher yields than before."

"With the reduced cost of farming and yield maximisation, most households and smallholder farmers in my community have good yield, food sufficiency, and [say they have] improved living standards," she added.

Locally led solutions scale impact nationally

Ms Ocansey is one of over a million people in Ghana living in one of 13 local authorities benefiting from UNCDF-backed resilience-building actions. Of these local authorities, six received funds allocated by Norway to UNCDF for climate-smart investments, such as regenerative farming initiatives in Ada East District. In all 13 districts, funds are channelled to the local government through the Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility (LoCAL), a UNCDF-designed mechanism for locally led adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

UNCDF channels Performance-Based Climate Resilience Grants to local governments using national fiscal transfer systems. This, in turn, strengthens their national accounting and compliance procedures. Adherence to process and positive results are needed to unlock additional funding cycles, thereby incentivising strong results and rewarding the best-performing local authorities with larger grants. This UNCDF approach is designed to build capacities over time, strengthening local governments' ability to take a leading role in efforts to respond to climate change and make a meaningful contribution to national climate strategies, including Ghana's National Adaptation Plan (NAP). The NAP process, part of the 2016 Paris Agreement to tackle climate change, seeks to identify medium and long-term adaptation needs, reduce vulnerability to climate change and integrate adaptation into development planning.

As part of this commitment to support local governments like Ada East District and build their capacities at the subnational level, communities participate in inclusive consultations with their local authority to identify climate investments that will benefit the most people. The approach, developed and refined over more than ten years, is now widely recognised. UNCDF and partner countries' experience in implementing this inclusive and locally led approach provides the basis for an international standard: ISO 14930, which provides frameworks for best practices across many industries and sectors. Thanks to Norway's support, UNCDF was able to implement the Local Facility, and advance circular economy approaches and build climate-smart agricultural practices in six Ghanaian districts. Funds of $1.3 million were channelled to three districts as part of an initial pilot phase in Effutu Municipal, Fanteakwa North and Ada East District. They are known nationally as LoCAL-ACE.

Smallholder farmers are central to Ghana's economy

The needs are great. Over half of the Ghanaian labour force is engaged in the agricultural sector, and over 60 per cent of their farms, like Ms Ocansey's, are less than 1.2 hectares in size. Smallholder farmers are central to the national

economy. But rising temperatures, fluctuating rainfall and shock weather events linked to climate change mean traditional techniques and practices are increasingly failing to deliver the yields producers might expect for their efforts. Farmers spend hours toiling to produce crops, only to watch the fruits of their labour wither in the fields or be decimated by pests, leaving them struggling to feed their families or meet household costs.

LoCAL-ACE builds on the successes of the 'Boosting Green Employment and Enterprise Opportunities in Ghana', also known as the GrEEn Project, which was funded by the European Union and closed in 2024. Both GrEEn and LoCAL-ACE use the UNCDF-designed LoCAL Facility to work with communities to identify and finance investments that strengthen local resilience to the impacts of climate change. In Ghana, 1.3 million men, women and children have directly benefitted from transformative projects including sustainable water infrastructure facilities, climate resilient bridges and improved agricultural techniques, among others.

Building better farming systems, one community at a time

In Ocansey's village in the Greater Accra Region, residents worked with their local government to develop locally appropriate and climate smart agricultural techniques that build the communities' economic base: smallholder farms. The farmers learned how to make fertilizers and pest repellents from locally available and natural ingredients. Farmers also trained in soil regeneration practices. This includes a process called mixed cropping, which involves planting two or more different crops in the same field simultaneously to improve biodiversity and the improve soil health.

"Communities are living with the impacts of climate change every day and are best placed, with the involvement of their local authorities, to identify the solutions they need to build their resilience and ability to adapt," said Angela Yayra Kwashie, Technical Specialist at UNCDF. "What excites me personally, is that this is an investment in the future. Ada East District is a coastal area rich in diverse flora, fauna, and birds. With investments such as these, we are enabling the community to protect and maintain that biodiversity for future generations while supporting climate-smart economic development."



GOVERNMENT MOVES TO IMPROVE URBAN TRANSPORT



For many Ghanaians, getting to work, school, or the market has become increasingly difficult. Across major cities, particularly Accra, long queues at bus stops and lorry stations have become a common sight as commuters wait for buses and trotros that often arrive late or are too few to meet demand.

The situation has affected the daily lives of thousands of people. Workers struggle to arrive at their offices on time, traders lose valuable business hours, and students face challenges getting to school. For many families, the transport difficulties have added stress and uncertainty to already busy days.

Recognising the growing concern, the government has begun taking steps to improve public transportation and make commuting easier for citizens.

The Vice President visited the Ministry of Transport to engage stakeholders on the challenges facing the sector. Discussions focused on the causes of the transport shortages, including the limited number of buses, operational difficulties, and rising costs of providing transport services.

The Vice President also visited Metro Mass Transit, one of Ghana's largest public transport operators, to gain first-hand knowledge of the challenges affecting its operations. Management highlighted issues such as ageing buses, maintenance constraints, and difficulties in expanding services to meet increasing demand.

The visit sent a strong signal that the government is paying close attention to commuters' concerns and is committed to finding practical solutions. For many citizens, the focus on Metro Mass Transit offers hope that public transportation can become more reliable and accessible.

While these immediate interventions are important, Government is also looking at long-term solutions to improve urban mobility.

A major step in that direction came on 14 April 2026, when the Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs, Hon. Ahmed Ibrahim, inaugurated the 4th Executive Council of the Greater Accra Passenger Transport Executive (GAPTE).

The Minister noted that transportation remains one of the biggest challenges facing residents of the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area. Heavy traffic congestion, long travel times, and gaps in public transport services continue to affect productivity and the quality of life of many people.

He explained that GAPTE has an important responsibility to improve transport planning, coordinate services, and help build a more efficient and reliable transport system for the capital city.

Hon. Ahmed Ibrahim also stressed the need for stronger collaboration among Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies to address transport challenges in a coordinated manner. He called for innovative approaches that will modernise public transportation and better serve the growing urban population.

Particular attention was given to the Aayalolo bus service, which was introduced to provide a modern and affordable transport option for commuters. The Minister expressed the need to revitalise the service and restore public confidence in it.

He further urged the newly inaugurated Council to support the Government's 24-Hour Economy Policy by ensuring that transportation systems are able to support economic activities beyond traditional working hours.

Beyond efficiency, the Minister emphasised the importance of safety and environmental sustainability, encouraging the adoption of transport solutions that are safe, reliable, and environmentally friendly.

Reliable transportation is not only about moving people from one place to another; it affects livelihoods, productivity, education, and overall quality of life.

As Government continues to strengthen institutions such as GAPTE and support services like Metro Mass Transit and Aayalolo, there is growing optimism that Ghana's public transport system can become more dependable and responsive to the needs of citizens.

The challenges remain, but so does the determination to address them. For the thousands of commuters who spend hours waiting for transport each day, the hope is that these interventions will soon translate into shorter queues, more reliable services, and smoother journeys.



NDPC PRESENTS MEDIUM-TERM NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY FRAMEWORK (2026–2029) TO THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE



The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) has presented the Medium-Term National Development Policy Framework (2026–2029) to the Ministry of Finance as part of efforts to guide Ghana's development agenda over the next four years.

The framework articulates the Government's vision for the period, focusing on resetting Ghana's development agenda, creating employment opportunities, strengthening accountability, and promoting shared prosperity.

Leading the delegation, the Director-General of NDPC, Dr. Audrey Smock Amoah, commended the Ministry of Finance for its role in the certification process. She highlighted the Ministry's effective interventions during budget hearings, which ensured improved compliance by Ministries in the submission of their plans.

Dr. Smock Amoah explained that the policy framework serves as the primary guide, alongside official planning guidelines, for institutions at all levels in the preparation of development plans. She noted that the NDPC welcomed the opportunity to present the framework, given its importance in promoting coordinated and coherent national planning.

The Coordinating Director (Technical) at the Ministry of Finance, Mr. Samuel D. Arkhurst, emphasised the importance of continuous engagements between

the Ministry and NDPC in shaping national development priorities. He further stressed the need for sustained prioritisation to ensure that critical interventions are implemented to drive economic growth.

Presenting the technical details, Principal Planning Analyst at NDPC, Mr. Daniel Amofa, outlined the structure of the framework, which is built around five broad dimensions: economic development; social development; environment, infrastructure and spatial development; governance and institutional development; and international relations.

He referenced Article 36 of the Constitution, which emphasises effective economic management to enable citizens to realise their full potential. He explained that the President's Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development is translated into the policy framework to guide national development implementation.

The framework is informed by Ghana's current economic realities, international obligations, and key domestic challenges, including high youth unemployment, illegal mining (galamsey), and persistent sanitation deficits. While progress has been made in access to water, sanitation remains a major concern requiring targeted policy interventions.

Ghana's international commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Agenda 2063, ECOWAS Vision 2050, and the Paris Agreement, have been fully integrated into the framework, clearly demonstrating how each policy objective and strategy aligns with global development agendas.

The presentation also underscored the urgency of addressing macroeconomic challenges, including high inflation, fiscal overruns, and exchange rate pressures. It further stressed the need for moderate and sustainable fiscal management guided by the principle of spending within domestic revenue limits.

Key priority areas highlighted include addressing illegal mining, resolving energy debts, enhancing education and health services, and reforming the judiciary, among others.

The NDPC emphasised that the successful implementation of the framework will require strong collaboration among all stakeholders to achieve the vision of a just, inclusive, and prosperous Ghana.





THE DISTRICT CORNER: KORLE KLOTTEY MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY

A STORY OF TRANSFORMATION, INNOVATION AND GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS





Hon. Alfred Gaisie.
Municipal Chief Executive

At the heart of Ghana's capital city, Accra, lies the vibrant and dynamic municipality of Korle Klottey, a place where commerce, diplomacy, tourism, innovation, and governance converge. Established in 2019 under Legislative Instrument (L.I.) 2365 after being carved out of the former Accra Metropolitan Assembly, the Korle Klottey Municipal Assembly (KoKMA) has rapidly emerged as one of Ghana's most strategic and economically significant local authorities. Occupying approximately 12 square kilometres and encompassing communities such as Osu, Tudu, Tema Station, North Ridge, and Adabraka, KoKMA has positioned itself as a premier destination for investment, business growth, tourism, and sustainable urban development.

Guided by the vision of becoming a world-class city with modern infrastructure, quality social services, a resilient environment, and an investor-friendly destination, KoKMA continues to pursue sustainable socio-economic development through effective resource mobilization and strong stakeholder collaboration. Under the leadership of Municipal Chief Executive Alfred Allotey-Gaisie, the municipality is implementing an ambitious agenda aimed at transforming Korle Klottey into a smart, resilient, business-friendly, and globally competitive municipality.

As the economic heartbeat of Ghana, Korle Klottey hosts numerous corporate headquarters, diplomatic missions, financial institutions, international organizations, and major tourism assets. The municipality is home to the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the World Trade Centre Accra, making it a gateway to Africa's integrated market. With over 68,000 residents and an estimated 40,000 daily visitors, KoKMA boasts a diverse and youthful population, a thriving business ecosystem comprising more than 4,200 registered businesses, over 100 financial institutions, and six major commercial markets. Its strategic location, excellent transport connectivity, advanced digital infrastructure, and proximity to key national assets such as Kotoka International Airport and Tema Port further strengthen its attractiveness as a hub for trade, tourism, and investment.

Recognizing that modern cities must embrace innovation to remain competitive and responsive to citizen needs, KoKMA embarked on an ambitious digital transformation agenda that is redefining local governance in Ghana. Prior to 2023, the Assembly, like many municipalities across Africa, faced persistent challenges associated with manual revenue collection systems, including low compliance, revenue leakages, inaccurate data, and inefficiencies that constrained service delivery. Determined to break this cycle, the Assembly initiated a

bold Digital Revenue Mobilization Strategy under the leadership of Hon. Alfred Allotey-Gaisie and Municipal Coordinating Director Emmanuel Baisie.

Central to this transformation was the implementation of a comprehensive geospatial mapping and digital addressing system. Between 2022 and 2025, KoKMA undertook an extensive property and business identification exercise utilizing GPS-enabled devices, drones, and digital survey tools. This initiative enabled the municipality to digitally map over 98 percent of all structures and business establishments within its jurisdiction. Each property was assigned a Unique Revenue Identification Code (URIC), creating a digital fiscal identity that significantly enhanced billing accuracy, improved revenue tracking, eliminated duplicate records, and established Ghana's first centralized digital property register among Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies. Beyond revenue collection, this geospatial platform now supports broader urban planning activities, including sanitation management, environmental monitoring, and infrastructure planning.

Complementing these efforts was the introduction of multiple cashless payment platforms designed to make civic payments more convenient, transparent, and secure. Through strategic partnerships with fintech companies and telecommunications providers, residents and businesses can now conveniently pay property rates, business operating permits, sanitation fees, and other charges through mobile money platforms, USSD codes, and an online payment portal. Each transaction generates instant digital receipts via SMS, email, or WhatsApp, thereby reducing disputes and strengthening public confidence in the system. The establishment of a Municipal Revenue Command Centre, equipped with real-time dashboards and analytics, has further enabled municipal officials to monitor revenue performance, identify trends, and make informed decisions promptly.

The impact of these reforms has been remarkable. Internally Generated Funds increased from GH¢14.7 million in 2023 to GH¢25.4 million in 2024, representing a 72.22 percent increase within just one year. More than 10,000 citizens actively use KoKMA's digital payment channels, while compliance rates among property owners have risen significantly. These achievements have earned KoKMA national recognition as one of Ghana's leading municipalities in digital governance and positioned it as a model for smart, inclusive, and accountable local administration.

KoKMA's commitment to innovation and excellence extends beyond digital governance to international cooperation and decentralized diplomacy. In March 2026, the Assembly embarked on a historic mission to the City of Kotovsk in the Russian Federation, marking a new chapter in city-to-city cooperation. Led by Municipal Chief Executive Alfred Allotey-Gaisie, Municipal Coordinating Director Emmanuel Baisie, Municipal Director of Finance Ruby Bruce-Bortey, and the Head of Public Affairs and International Relations, the high-level delegation visited Kotovsk from 25th to 29th March 2026 to renew and deepen an existing friendship and cooperation agreement between the two cities.

Far from being merely ceremonial, the mission focused on strategic dialogue, institutional learning, and knowledge exchange in areas including education, healthcare, economic development, and cultural exchange. The renewed agreement reaffirmed both cities' shared commitment to building resilient, innovative, and people-centred municipalities. Speaking during the renewal ceremony, Mayor Alfred Allotey-Gaisie emphasized that the partnership represented not simply a continuation of existing ties but a deepening of a shared vision aimed at expanding international educational opportunities, promoting economic collaboration, and strengthening cultural bonds for the benefit of citizens in both municipalities.

A key outcome of the visit was the establishment of stronger academic and professional links with Tambov State University. Discussions explored scholarship opportunities for students from Korle Klottey, exchange programmes, joint research initiatives, and professional training collaborations. Particularly significant were engagements with the Institute of Medicine and Health Preservation, which opened possibilities for students from the municipality to pursue medical and health-related studies, thereby contributing to the long-term strengthening of Ghana's healthcare workforce. In a reciprocal arrangement, KoKMA proposed positioning itself as a living laboratory where students from Kotovsk could undertake internships, fieldwork, and applied research within the municipality.

The delegation also experienced Kotovsk's rich cultural heritage and economic dynamism. Visits to the Kotovsk City Museum, interactions with local industries, and engagements with cultural and youth institutions highlighted the importance of people-to-people diplomacy in sustaining international partnerships. The delegation further paid tribute at the Military Park of Glory, reinforcing shared values of resilience, sacrifice, and collective memory. These experiences underscored the understanding that sustainable international cooperation is built not only on formal agreements but also on human relationships, cultural understanding, and mutual respect.

Today, the Korle Klottey Municipal Assembly stands as a compelling example of how visionary leadership, innovation, strategic partnerships, and citizen-centred governance can transform local government institutions. Whether through pioneering digital governance reforms, promoting local economic development, fostering international cooperation, or positioning itself as an attractive destination for investment and tourism, KoKMA continues to demonstrate that municipalities can play a critical role in shaping sustainable urban futures. As the municipality advances towards becoming one of Ghana's first smart municipalities, its journey offers valuable lessons not only for Ghana but also for cities across Africa and the Global South seeking to harness innovation and partnerships as catalysts for inclusive growth and sustainable development.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE GOES DIGITAL

The Office of the Head of the Local Government Service (OHLGS) under the leadership of Prof. Lord Mensh is advancing Ghana's decentralisation agenda through a comprehensive digital transformation programme aimed at modernising human resource management and strengthening institutional performance across the Local Government Service.

As part of this initiative, the OHLGS is developing an integrated electronic management system to streamline administrative and human resource processes. The project, funded through the District Assemblies Common Fund – Responsive Factor Grant (DACF–RFG), will be implemented between 2026 and 2027 and will benefit staff of the Office of the Head of the Local Government Service, the Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs), and the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs).

The digital platform is designed to align with national public sector management policies while incorporating international best practices. It will enhance efficiency, transparency and accountability in service delivery through a range of interconnected modules covering attendance management, recruitment, personnel records, promotions, upgrading and conversion, staff deployment and rationalisation, training and development, performance management, disciplinary case management, leave administration, exit management, and internal communication.

The second phase of the project will focus on nationwide deployment of the system, supported by staff training, change management, system integration, and continuous monitoring and evaluation to ensure sustainability and maximum impact.

Complementing this digital transformation, the OHLGS will introduce self-learning modules to strengthen capacity development, improve performance management and promote merit-based career progression. The online learning platform will provide staff with accessible and up-to-date learning resources, encourage continuous professional development, and build competencies required to meet the evolving demands of public service.

The initiative will also reinforce the performance appraisal system by linking learning achievements to performance objectives, promoting accountability, and supporting evidence-based staff evaluation. Furthermore, it will contribute to a transparent and merit-based promotion system by recognising competence, rewarding continuous learning, and fostering a culture of excellence throughout the Local Government Service.

Together, these digital innovations represent a significant milestone in the modernisation of the Local Government Service, positioning it to deliver more efficient, responsive and citizen-centred services in support of Ghana's national development agenda.

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DEEPENING DECENTRALISATION IN GHANA

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