



ECOWAS COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO



DYNAMICS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE, FOOD SECURITY, AND THE CHALLENGES OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN ECOWAS

COUNTRY REPORT



Ghana



ADU OWUSU SARKODIE

MARCH 2026



ECOWAS COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO

DYNAMICS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE, FOOD SECURITY, AND THE CHALLENGES OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN ECOWAS

COUNTRY REPORT

Ghana



Adu Owusu Sarkodie, PhD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
KEY MESSAGES	iv
1. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE, PROSPECTS AND RISKS	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Recent Socio-Economic Developments	2
a. Real Sector	2
b. Fiscal Sector	5
c. Monetary Sector	7
d. External Sector	9
e. Social Sector	12
1.3 Revisions to Projections in the 2024 Report and the Reasons	15
1.4 Prospects and Risks	17
2. FOOD SECURITY CHALLENGES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION	25
2.1 Introduction	25
2.2 Review of the Maputo, Malabo, and Kampala Declarations and Commitments	26
2.3 Food Security Trends and Performance	32
2.4 Effects of Food Security Challenges on Socio-Economic Development	40
2.5 Effects of Food Security Challenges on ECOWAS Integration	43
2.6 Food Security Challenges and Threats in Ghana	46
3. SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE FOOD SECURITY POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE	50
4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	54
REFERENCES	59

ABSTRACT

This report examines Ghana's recent socio-economic performance, outlook, and food security situation. While the macroeconomic environment experienced significant strain in recent years, signs of recovery emerged in 2023. In 2024, the recovery strengthened, with real GDP growth rising to 5.7 percent, driven by a strong rebound in the industrial sector and continued expansion in the services sector. Fiscal policy, however, was markedly expansionary, resulting in a large fiscal deficit of 7.9 percent of GDP on a commitment basis, while inflation remained high at 23.8 percent. The external sector performed strongly, supported by record gold export revenues, while social indicators recorded mixed outcomes.

The report highlights the persistence of food security challenges despite Ghana's alignment with major continental agricultural commitments. Food production has expanded, yet structural bottlenecks, including large yield gaps, limited irrigation, weak extension services, and high food inflation, continue to undermine food availability and access. Nutritional outcomes remain inadequate, and food system stability is weakened by low self-sufficiency in cereals and horticultural crops, minimal irrigation coverage, and accelerating land degradation. These challenges carry significant socio-economic implications and constrain Ghana's ability to contribute fully to ECOWAS agricultural integration.

The report concludes that while progress has been made, substantial structural and macroeconomic constraints persist. It therefore presents a set of recommendations aimed at strengthening macroeconomic recovery, improving food system resilience, and enhancing Ghana's role in regional integration.



KEY MESSAGES

- Ghana's macroeconomic recovery strengthened from a growth perspective in 2024, with real GDP growth rising sharply to 5.7 percent, well above both the 2023 outturn and the 2024 projection of 3.1 percent. This expansion was driven by a strong rebound in the industrial sector and continued growth in services, despite weaker agricultural performance.
- Fiscal policy was highly expansionary in 2024, resulting in a large fiscal deficit of 7.9 percent of GDP on a commitment basis. Inflation also deviated from its projected path and closed the year at 23.8 percent. Nevertheless, interest rates eased moderately, and real private sector credit grew for the first time since 2019.
- External sector performance improved markedly, with the balance of payments recording a substantial surplus, supported primarily by exceptional gold export revenues. Social indicators presented a mixed picture: total unemployment declined marginally, youth unemployment increased, and poverty incidence fell modestly amid increased social protection spending.
- The medium-term outlook points to slower real GDP growth in 2025 due to a sharp fiscal adjustment, with growth expected to stabilise around 4.8 percent during 2026–2027. Inflation is projected to fall steadily, while fiscal consolidation is expected to be significant, supported by newly legislated fiscal rules and strengthened institutional oversight.
- Key downside risks include reductions in USAID funding, which could affect critical social programmes; higher United States tariffs, which could adversely affect non-traditional exports; and the withdrawal of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) from ECOWAS, which presents economic, political, and security challenges.

- Ghana has aligned its agricultural and food security policies with the Maputo and Malabo Declarations, but persistent underinvestment has limited progress toward key targets, including ending hunger, expanding intra-African agricultural trade, and achieving annual agricultural GDP growth of 6.0 percent.
- Although food production has increased, significant structural challenges persist. Large yield gaps, low mechanisation, limited irrigation, weak extension services, and climate-related stresses continue to restrict food availability. High food inflation and the high cost of a healthy diet have weakened food access and increased the prevalence of food insecurity.
- Nutritional outcomes show gradual improvement but remain inadequate, with high rates of child stunting and anaemia being recorded. Food system stability is threatened by low self-sufficiency in cereals and vegetables, minimal irrigation coverage, and accelerating land degradation driven partly by deforestation and illegal mining.
- Food security challenges have broad socio-economic consequences, including adverse effects on rural livelihoods, poverty, and spatial inequality; weakened human capital development; and heightened macroeconomic pressures due to food-driven inflation.
- Ghana's food security constraints also affect ECOWAS integration. Export restrictions imposed during domestic food shortages hinder regional food trade, while persistent food inflation undermines progress towards macroeconomic convergence within the region.
- Strengthening food security will require a sustained increase in public agricultural investment towards meeting the commitments under the Malabo and Kampala Declarations, with priority given to irrigation development, mechanisation, and support for strategic crops and value chains.



- Additional policy measures should include expanding domestic production of import-dependent foods such as rice, vegetables, and poultry; investing in rural feeder roads and strategic buffer stock to reduce food price volatility; implementing targeted nutrition interventions for vulnerable groups; and accelerating land restoration while strengthening enforcement against illegal mining to protect agricultural land and enhance food system resilience.

1. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE, PROSPECTS AND RISKS

1.1 Introduction

In recent years, Ghana's economy has experienced great difficulties. In 2022, access to foreign financing became severely constrained, putting pressure on and ultimately weakening the balance of payments and the exchange rate. This triggered high inflation, which severely reduced investment and economic growth. Socio-economic development suffered in consequence, with unemployment rising sharply.

Signs of recovery, however, began to emerge in 2023. Fiscal performance improved noticeably, thanks especially to the suspension and restructuring of debt payments, while the macroeconomic imbalances eased. Inflation declined markedly, supported by fiscal adjustment, tight monetary policy, and an easing of global inflationary pressures. However, real GDP growth moderated, partly due to the fiscal and monetary tightening. As a result, unemployment remained high.

Heading into 2024, expectations were for the incipient recovery to strengthen further, with the macroeconomy stabilising and real GDP growth turning the corner after recent declines. Nevertheless, the volatile political situation in the Middle East was a menace to this positive outlook, due to the possible implications for world energy prices. The more serious concern, though, was the potential for a fiscal slippage in 2024, an election year, which could compromise the economy's recovery.

This section assesses Ghana's socio-economic performance in 2024 against these expectations and in comparison, with developments in 2023. Following this introduction, Section 1.2 reviews developments in the real, fiscal, monetary, external, and social sectors. Section 1.3 analyses the factors underlying deviations between the 2024 outturns and the projections presented in the previous edition of this report. Section 1.4 presents the socio-economic outlook for 2025–2027, identifies the principal drivers of the outlook, and discusses the key risks together with policy measures to mitigate their potential impacts.

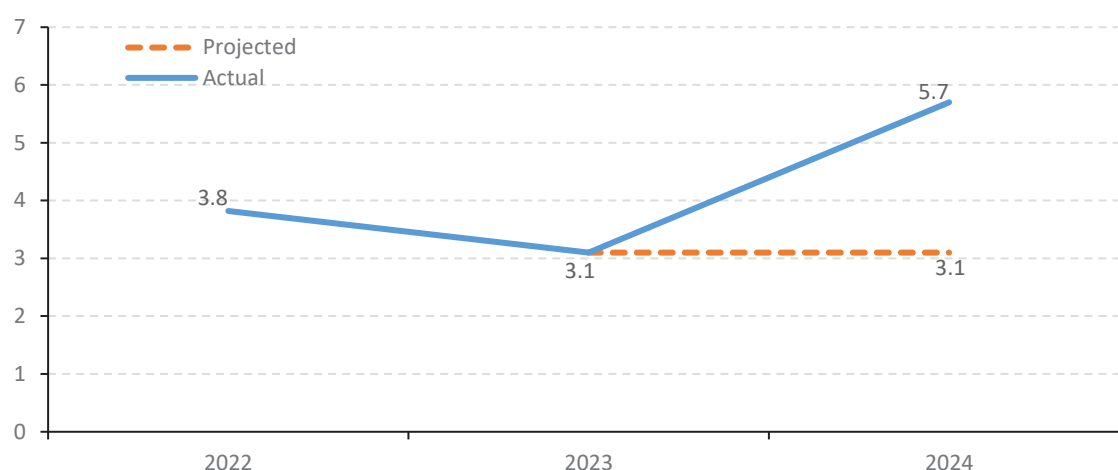


1.2 Recent Socio-Economic Developments

A. Real Sector

Real sector activity picked up speed in 2024, after decelerating in 2023. As Figure 1 shows, real GDP growth posted a robust outturn of 5.7 percent, up from a revised 3.1 percent in 2023. This represented an increase of 2.6 percentage points above the projection of 3.1 percent. It also represented the first-time real GDP growth exceeded 5.0 percent since 2021.

Figure 1: Real GDP growth rate (%) (2022–2024)



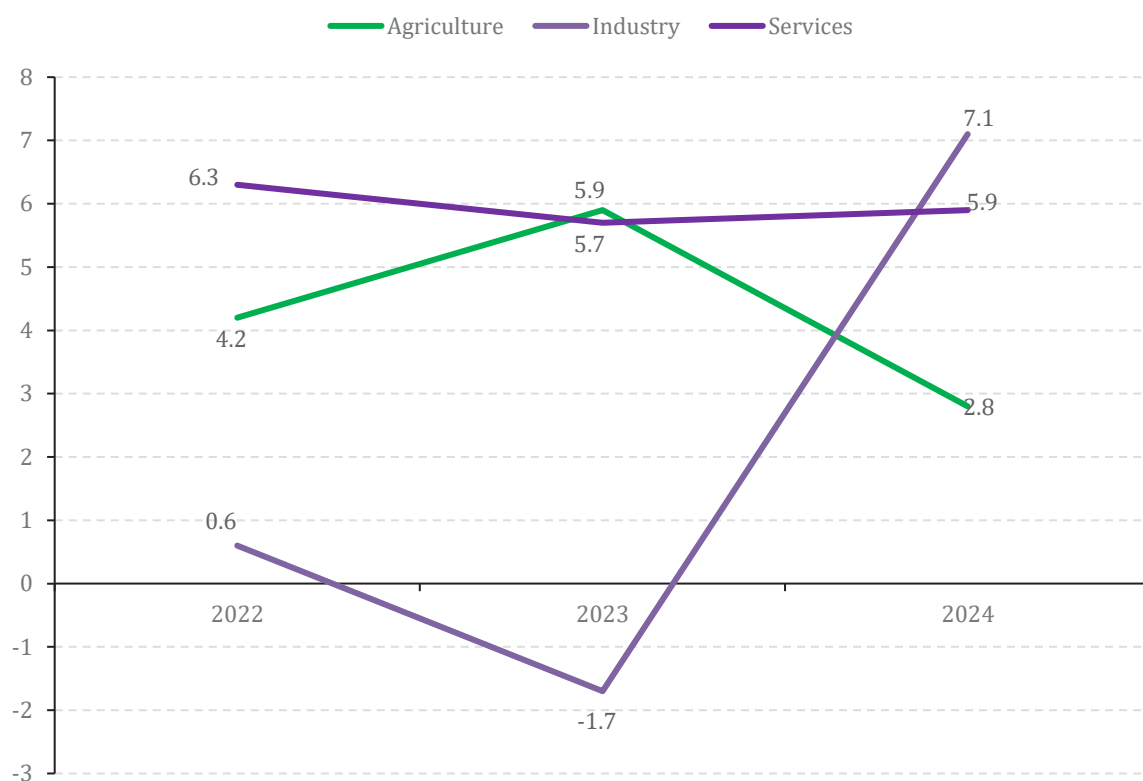
Source: Ghana Statistical Service (March 2025), Ministry of Finance (March 2025)

The rebound was driven by the industrial sector, which expanded by 7.1 percent, in a significant surge from a contraction of 1.7 percent in 2023 (Figure 2). The most important driver of this turnaround was the construction sub-sector, which stimulated by increased government capital spending, grew by 9.6 percent, recovering firmly from a contraction of 11.2 percent in the previous year. The next main driver was the mining and quarrying sub-sector, which expanded by 9.4 percent, led by gold production, which increased by 19.1 percent.

Over the past three years, gold production in Ghana, Africa's largest producer, has recorded strong and sustained growth, increasingly annually at an average rate of 19.4 percent. Higher prices, more investment, and increased domestic demand for gold, thanks to the Bank of Ghana's Domestic Gold Purchase Programme (DGPP), are the primary

inducers of the expansion. The DGPP involves regular gold purchases from the domestic mining industry (both small- and large-scale producers) by the central bank to augment the country's international reserves.

Figure 2: Sectoral real GDP growth rates (%) (2022–2024)



Source: Ghana Statistical Service (March 2025)

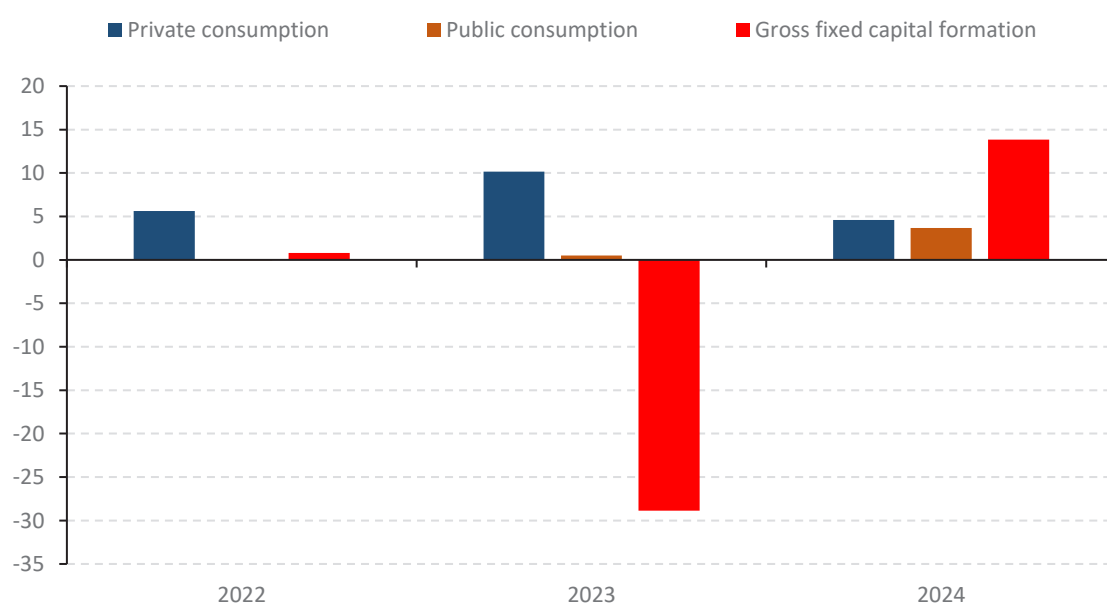
Services, the largest sector of the economy, expanded by 5.9 percent in 2024, slightly higher than the 5.7 percent in 2023. Information and communication activities remained the fastest-growing sub-sector, expanding by 15.8 percent, although this was lower than the 19.5 percent growth recorded in 2023. Ever-deepening and ever-widening use of mobile communications and digital services underpinned this strong performance. During the year, the government further digitalised public services and payment systems through the Ghana.gov portal, in addition to extending information, communication and technology (ICT) services to underserved communities and sponsoring youth digital skills acquisition. Financial and insurance activities followed information and communication with an expansion of 7.8 percent, up from 5.4 percent in 2023.



With regard to agriculture, growth decreased sharply to 2.8 percent from 5.9 percent in the prior year. A key reason for this decline was a 22.4 percent drop in cocoa production. Since 2022, the cocoa sector has experienced weakening fortunes, partly because of expanding illegal gold mining activities, which have dislodged farming in some cocoa-growing districts. After growth in the sector hit 10.4 percent in 2021, it slumped to 0.9 percent in 2022 and -0.3 percent in 2023, followed by the substantial decline in 2024. A second cause of the lower growth in agriculture was low rainfall amid a dry spell that affected some agricultural areas of the country. Growth in the total production of crops decreased to 3.2 percent, as against 6.7 percent in 2023, while growth in livestock production narrowed to 3.5 percent from 6.5 percent in the previous year.

On the expenditure side, the increase in real GDP growth in 2024 was driven chiefly by a sharp turnaround in gross fixed capital formation, which grew by 13.8 percent as against a 28.9 percent decline in 2023. The upturn mirrors the robust growth in construction highlighted above as a key driver of the industrial sector's rebound. Public consumption growth also picked up from 0.5 percent in 2023 to 3.7 percent in 2024, reflecting an expansionary fiscal policy. In contrast, private consumption growth slowed from 10.2 percent to 4.6 percent (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Real growth rates of key expenditure components of GDP (%) (2022–2024)



Source: Ghana Statistical Service (March 2025)

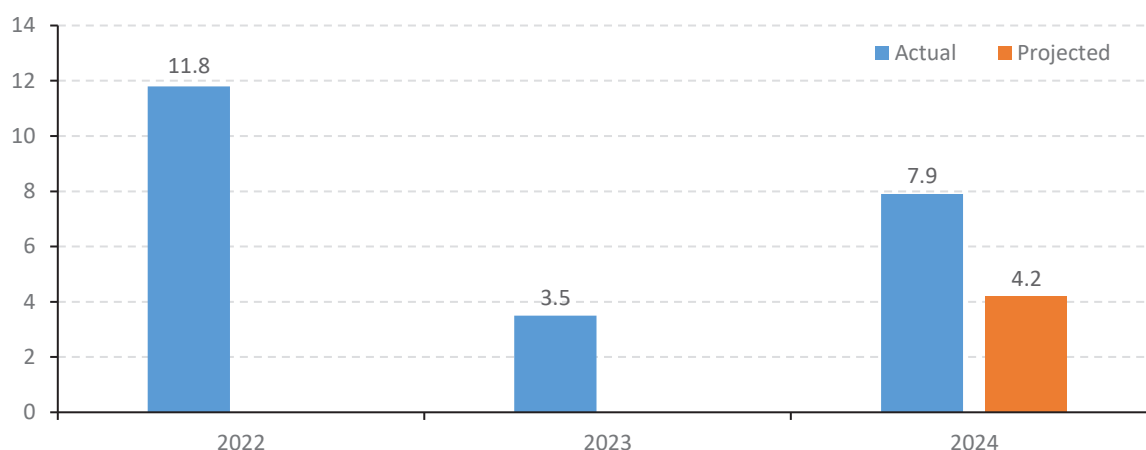
B. Fiscal Sector

The government's fiscal policy stance in 2024 was expansionary. First, total revenue and grants improved by 0.6 percentage points to 15.9 percent of GDP, supported by stronger economic activity. This improvement was driven entirely by higher domestic revenue collections, as total tax and non-tax revenues increased from 15.0 percent to 15.7 percent of GDP. By contrast, grant receipts, representing budget support from development partners, fell from 0.3 percent to 0.1 percent of GDP. Though grant revenue has dipped substantially since Ghana became a lower-middle-income economy a decade and a half ago, the 2024 receipts represent the smallest yet. Interestingly, the government had budgeted to receive 0.3 percent of GDP from this source.

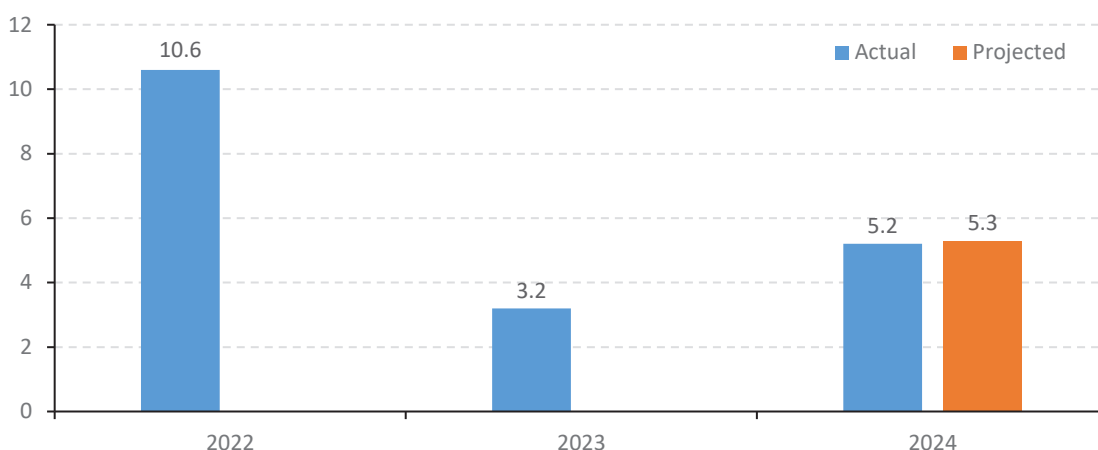
Second, government expenditure on a commitment basis increased by 5.0 percentage points to 23.8 percent of GDP in 2024. This exceeded the budgeted allocation of 21.6 percent of GDP by 2.2 percentage points. Interest expenditure was among the items that increased, rising by 0.7 percentage points to 4.0 percent of GDP, partly due to the restart of formerly deferred external debt payments. This means that non-interest expenditure, which includes grants to other government units, capital outlays, and unbudgeted commitments, accounted for the bulk of the growth in spending, increasing by 4.3 percentage points to 19.8 percent of GDP. On a cash basis, government expenditure increased from 18.5 percent of GDP in 2023 to 21.1 percent in 2024.

Reflecting these revenue and expenditure outturns, the fiscal deficit on a commitment basis grew by 125.7 percent in 2024 to 7.9 percent of GDP from 3.5 percent of GDP in 2023 (Figure 4). The cash fiscal deficit also widened to 5.2 percent of GDP from 3.2 percent in 2023, although it was marginally below the projection of 5.3 percent of GDP (Figure 5). The difference between the cash and commitment fiscal deficits of 2.7 percentage points of GDP represents net arrears (i.e., unsettled net expenditure obligations) incurred by the government in 2024.



Figure 4: Fiscal deficit (% of GDP, commitment basis) (2022–2024)

Source: Ministry of Finance (March 2025)

Figure 5: Fiscal deficit (% of GDP, cash basis) (2022–2024)

Source: Ministry of Finance (March 2025)

The increase in the deficit in 2024 adds to a pattern of expansionary fiscal policies in election years since the re-institution of democratic politics in Ghana in 1992. These expansions have usually been driven by over-expenditure, as in 2024.

The sharp increase in the commitment deficit meant that the government fell significantly short of its main fiscal target for 2024, namely, achieving a primary surplus on a commitment basis of 0.5 percent of GDP. This target, which constituted a key performance benchmark under Ghana's ongoing programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), was missed by 4.4 percentage points of GDP, as the government recorded a primary

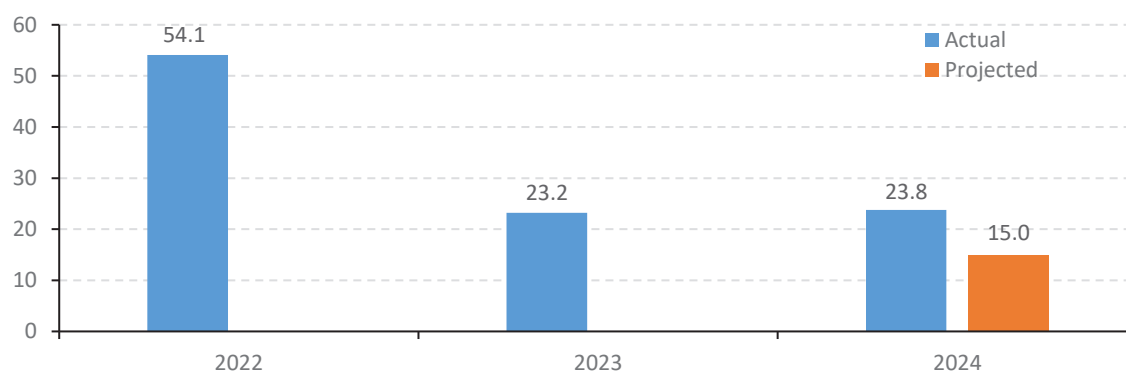
deficit of 3.9 percent of GDP. A fiscal deviation of this magnitude underscores the need for a substantial fiscal adjustment in 2025, supported by a more prudent fiscal stance, to preserve the credibility and integrity of the IMF-supported programme.

Despite the increased deficit, however, the ratio of public debt to GDP declined to 61.8 percent in 2024 from 68.7 percent in 2023 and 72.9 percent in 2022. The improvement is explained mainly by a 29.5 percent reduction in the principal value of Ghana's outstanding Eurobond debt after the completion of a debt exchange in October 2024. The reduction amounted to US\$3.9 billion out of an original principal of US\$13.1 billion, and it helped reduce the total public debt stock to US\$49.4 billion in 2024 from US\$52.4 billion in 2023 and US\$53.9 billion in 2022.

C. Monetary Sector

Inflation confounded expectations in 2024. After declining from 54.1 percent at the end of 2022 to 23.2 percent at the end of 2023, headline inflation had been projected to decline further to 15.0 percent in 2024. Instead, it increased marginally to 23.8 percent (Figure 6). Food inflation remained inflexibly high, closing the year at 27.8 percent, only 0.9 percentage points lower than in 2023, while non-food inflation rose by 1.6 percentage points to finish the year at 20.3 percent. A faster disinflation in food prices was thwarted by low rainfall, which limited agricultural harvests, even as non-food prices were whipped up by a weak exchange rate. During the year, the amount of Ghana cedis required to obtain one United States dollar increased from 11.88 to 14.7, implying an annual depreciation rate of 19.2 percent.

Figure 6: Headline inflation (% end-year) (2022–2024)



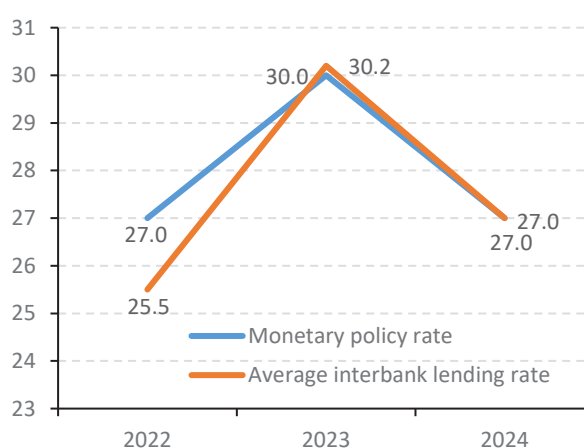
Source: Ghana Statistical Service (January 2025)



A comparison with regional trends underscores the exceptionally high level of inflation in Ghana, which closed 2024 at more than twice the ECOWAS average. Indeed, while inflation increased slightly in Ghana, the average across ECOWAS declined from 12.8 percent at the end of 2023 to 9.3 percent at the end of 2024. Despite this, the Bank of Ghana has highlighted the effects of some regional developments on the country's inflation. This concerns civil and political instability in the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger), which has hampered the farm sectors of those countries and cross-border transportation. The effect is rising cost of food imported from these areas to Ghana (Bank of Ghana, 2025).

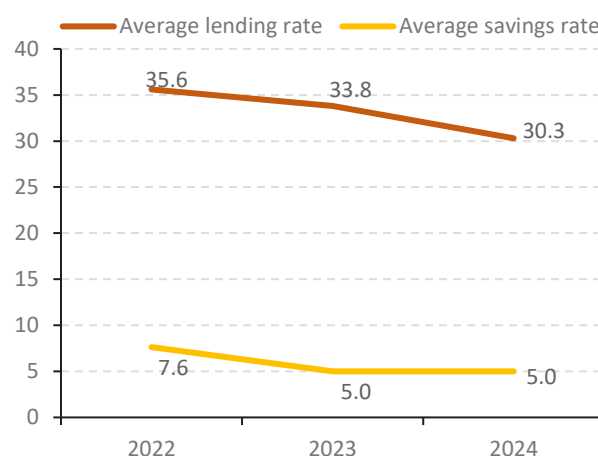
The persistent inflation notwithstanding, interest rates fell in the year, albeit modestly. The central bank cut its policy rate by 300 basis points to 27.0 percent, while the average interbank interest rate decreased by 320 basis points to 27.0 percent (Figure 7). These reductions were transmitted partially to the lending rates on bank credit, the average of which eased by 350 basis points to 30.3 percent at the end of 2024. With an unchanged average savings deposit rate of 5.0 percent, this meant that the interest rate spread edged down by an equal margin to 25.3 percent (Figure 8).

Figure 7: Monetary policy and average interbank lending rates (%) (2022–2024)



Source: Bank of Ghana (January 2025)

Figure 8: Average lending and average savings rates (%) (2022–2024)

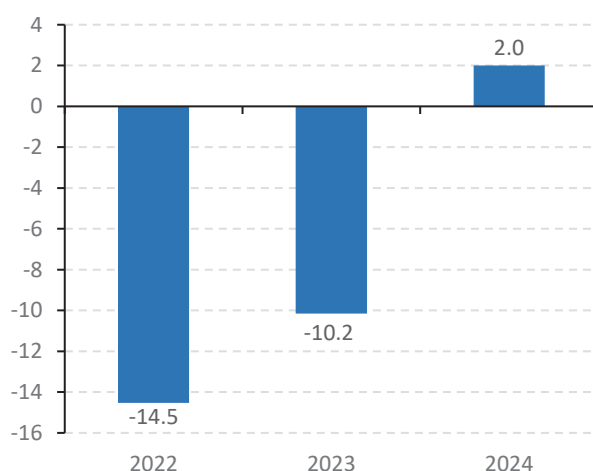


Source: Bank of Ghana (January 2025)

Against this background, bank credit to the private sector grew in real terms for the first time since 2019. As Figure 9 shows, credit rebounded to 2.0 percent real growth in 2024, after shrinking by one-tenth in the prior year and by nearly 15.0 percent in 2022. Along with

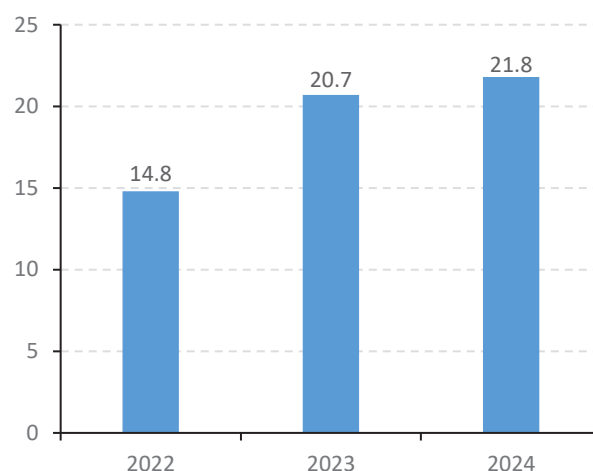
the rapid pick-up in real GDP growth, this is an encouraging sign of the economy's gradual recovery from the severe effects of the 2022 debt crisis. Yet, vulnerabilities in the banking sector remain. Figure 10 suggests that the proportion of non-performing loans in total credit outstanding was more than one-fifth (21.8 percent) as of the end of 2024, a worryingly high level that would need to be brought down considerably to boost lending while reducing financial stability risks.

Figure 9: Real private sector credit growth (%) (2022–2024)



Source: Bank of Ghana (January 2025)

Figure 10: Banking sector non-performing loans ratio (%) (2022–2024)



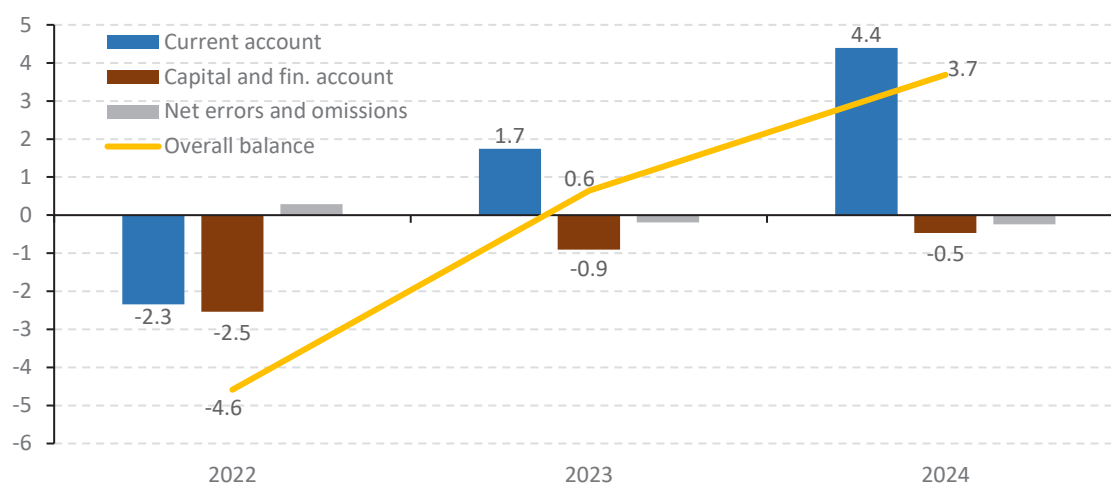
Source: Bank of Ghana (January 2025)

Because traditional bank credit is inadequately supplied to certain strategic sectors, the government uses state lending institutions to shore up credit flows. These include the Ghana Export-Import (GEXIM) Bank, which lends to exporters, and the Microfinance and Small Loans Centre (MASLOC), which provides microcredit to micro, small and informal businesses. As of 2024, GEXIM Bank had issued outstanding credit of GH¢1.3 billion (US\$88.3 million) to borrowers.

D. External Sector

There was a notable consolidation of external account buffers in 2024, with the balance of payments posting a surplus of US\$3.1 billion (3.7 percent of GDP), about six times as large as the surplus of US\$518.4 million (0.6 percent of GDP) in 2023 (Figure 11).



Figure 11: Balance of payments (% of GDP) (2022–2024)

Source: Bank of Ghana (June 2025)

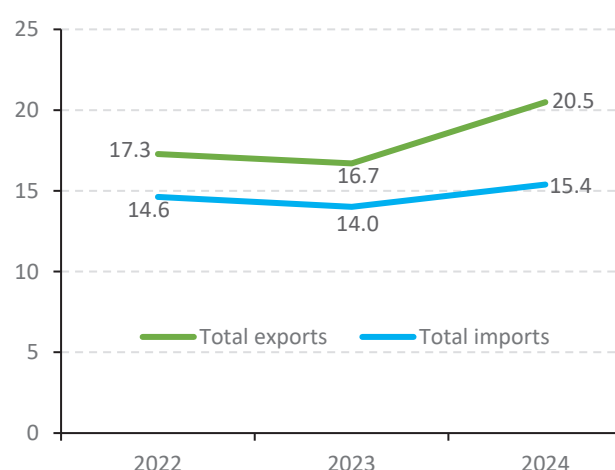
The current account also posted a surplus of US\$3.6 billion, representing 4.4 percent of GDP and 2.6 times the surplus of US\$1.4 billion in 2023 (1.7 percent of GDP). The capital and financial account, on the other hand, recorded a deficit of US\$386.7 million (0.5 percent of GDP), although this was almost 50.0 percent smaller than the deficit of US\$732.6 million (0.9 percent of GDP) in 2023.

At the heart of the performance was the expanding gold sector, which grossed record export earnings of US\$11.6 billion, outstripping the 2023 figure (US\$7.6 billion) by as much as US\$4.0 billion or 53.2 percent. Both higher prices and increased production led to this outcome: output went up by 19.1 percent, as earlier mentioned, while the earned export price per fine ounce rose by 23.2 percent to US\$2,266.7. The record gold exports drove a 22.7 percent growth in total merchandise export revenue to US\$20.5 billion.

Crude oil, the country's second-largest export, generated US\$3.87 billion, remaining broadly unchanged from the US\$3.84 billion recorded in 2023. This reflected flat production, combined with a slight decline in the average realised export price from US\$81.9 to US\$79.7 per barrel. Cocoa, Ghana's third-largest export, generated US\$1.94 billion, representing a decline of 9.9 percent from US\$2.15 billion in 2023. Earnings were reduced by sharply lower export volumes, which more than offset an international price surge. Collectively, the remaining exports earned US\$3.04 billion, falling 2.2 percent from US\$3.11 billion in 2023.

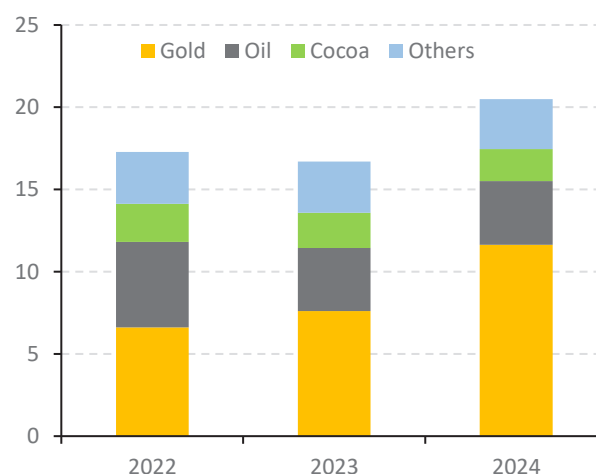
Relative to exports, merchandise imports grew more slowly, rising by 9.9 percent to US\$15.4 billion. As a result, the merchandise trade surplus jumped by 89.3 percent, from US\$2.7 billion to US\$5.1 billion, the highest on record. Given the sizeable balance of payments surplus that this ultimately generated, foreign exchange reserves increased by 52.1 percent from US\$5.91 billion in 2023 to US\$8.98 billion in 2024. About US\$2.50 billion (27.8 percent) of these reserves consisted of gold stocks, up from US\$1.25 billion (21.1 percent) of the reserves as of 2023. This reflects the steady gold reserves build-up under the Domestic Gold Purchase Programme.

Figure 12: Total merchandise exports and imports (US\$bn) (2022–2024)



Source: Bank of Ghana (June 2025)

Figure 13: Components of merchandise exports (US\$bn) (2022–2024)



Source: Bank of Ghana (June 2025)

The external sector in 2024 also benefited from higher inward remittances, which strengthened the current account, and increased foreign direct investment (FDI), which improved the capital and financial account. A relatively reliable external financing source, remittances increased from US\$3.6 billion (4.8 percent of GDP) in 2022 to US\$4.0 billion (5.0 percent of GDP) in 2023 and further to US\$5.4 billion (6.5 percent of GDP) in 2024. Foreign direct investment, meanwhile, had been constrained in 2022–2023 by macroeconomic instability and the country's debt problems. As a result, inflows had declined to US\$1.5 billion in 2022 and US\$1.3 billion in 2023 from US\$2.4 billion in 2021. In 2024, however, they picked up to US\$1.7 billion, strengthened by gradual macroeconomic stabilisation and sustained investor interest in the extractive and services sectors.

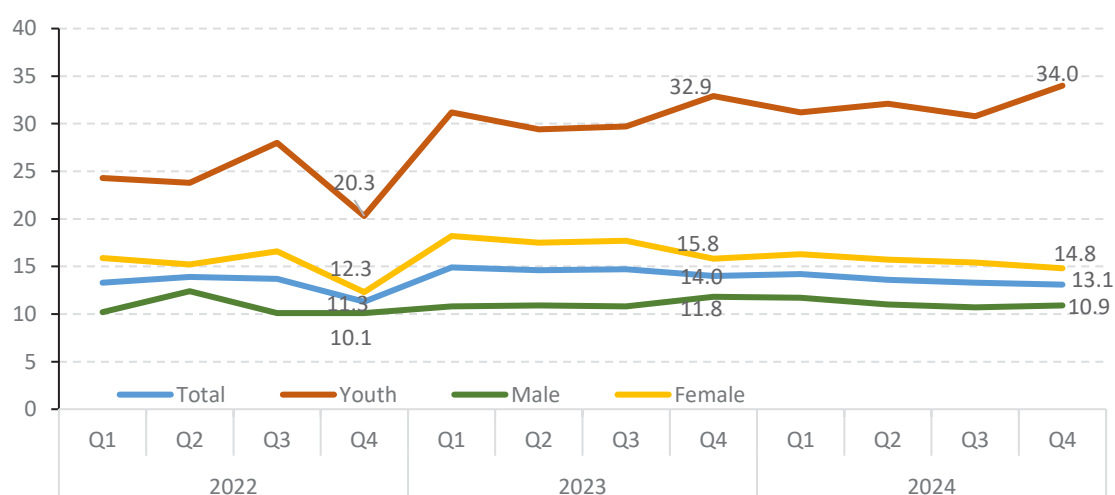


E. Social Sector

Unemployment

Unemployment eased in 2024, benefiting from the faster economic growth in the year. As Figure 14 shows, the rate fell from 14.0 percent in the fourth quarter of 2023 to 13.1 percent in the corresponding period of 2024. In absolute terms, 1.91 million people were unemployed by the end of 2024, compared with 1.89 million by the end of 2023. Over the same period, the number of people in employment rose from 11.58 million to 12.73 million, while the overall labour force increased from 13.47 million to 14.64 million. Despite the drop in the rate of unemployment, however, the long-term unemployment rate, which represents those unemployed for a year or more, inched up from 4.9 percent to 5.2 percent.

Figure 14: Unemployment rates (%) (2022Q1–2024Q4)



Source: Ghana Statistical Service (July 2025)

Unemployment declined among both males and females (Figure 14). While male unemployment dropped from 11.8 percent to 10.9 percent, female unemployment decreased from 15.8 percent to 14.8 percent. Unemployment remained higher among females than males, although the gap stabilised at close to 4.0 percentage points. With respect to youth unemployment, defined as the unemployment rate among those aged 15–24, the situation worsened, as the rate jumped to 34.0 percent at end-2024 from 32.9 percent at end-2023. With this, the gap between the youth unemployment rate and the

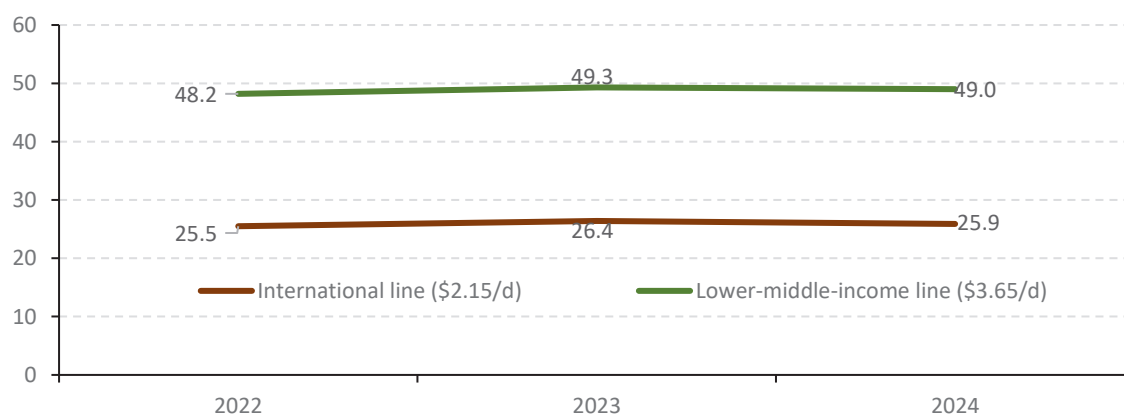
overall unemployment rate widened from 18.9 percentage points to 20.9 percentage points.

The unemployment rate in urban areas continued to exceed that in rural areas, in part showing the social burdens attached to the urbanisation phenomenon. Urban unemployment recorded 14.3 percent in the fourth quarter of 2024, 2.9 percentage points higher than rural unemployment of 11.4 percent. Nevertheless, both rates were lower than their levels of 15.6 percent and 11.9 percent, respectively, in the fourth quarter of 2023. On the other hand, underemployment was more common in rural than in urban areas, although it declined during the year in both places. Between end-2023 and end-2024, time-related underemployment, a measure of employed persons in the labour force working an insufficient number of hours, dropped from 20.1 percent to 9.6 percent in rural areas, compared with a fall from 12.0 percent to 5.3 percent in urban areas. Nationally, time-related underemployment fell by more than half from 15.5 percent to 7.2 percent in the period.

Poverty

Estimates of the incidence of poverty reveal a decline in 2024. Based on the international poverty line of US\$2.15 per day, poverty incidence dropped from 26.4 percent of the population in 2023 to 25.9 percent in 2024. Similarly, poverty incidence based on the lower-middle-income poverty line of US\$3.65 per day declined from 49.3 percent to 49.0 percent (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Poverty rate (% of population) (2022–2024)



Source: World Bank (April 2025)

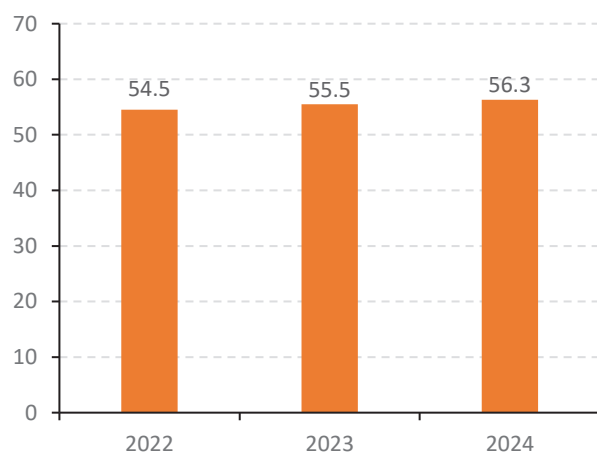


The sharp increase in economic growth, as well as expanded social protection spending and coverage, was behind the fall in poverty incidence (IMF, 2025). Social protection programmes in Ghana include the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), which covers the medical bills of scheme members; the Capitation Grant, which funds free public basic education; the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme, which pays cash benefits to extremely poor households; and the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP), which provides daily hot meals to public basic school pupils in the poorest districts of the country. Funding for these programmes has increased steadily since 2023, helping relieve the adverse impacts of the government's fiscal consolidation policies on the poor.

Access to basic social amenities and services

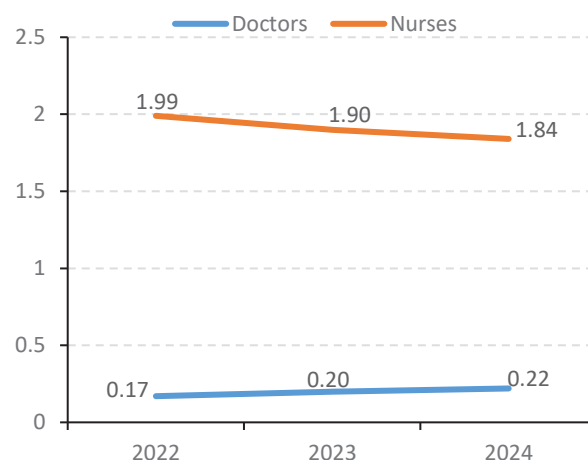
There were marginal improvements in most health care indicators in 2024, though a few deteriorated. Public health insurance coverage through the National Health Insurance Scheme improved to 56.3 percent of the population from 55.5 percent in 2023 (Figure 16). This corresponded to a rise in the number of insured persons to 18.5 million from 17.8 million. In addition, child mortality rates improved. The infant mortality rate, which measures the number of babies who die within one year of birth per 1,000 live births in a given year, declined to 8.0 from 8.1. The under-five mortality rate, which measures the number of children who die within five years of birth per 1,000 live births in a given year, also declined to 10.7 from 10.9. By contrast, maternal mortality worsened for a second straight year, increasing from 109.3 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2023 to 112.5 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2024.

Figure 16: Public health insurance coverage (% of population) (2022–2024)



Source: NDPC (June 2025)

Figure 17: Doctor- and nurse-to-population ratios (number per thousand) (2022–2024)



Source: NDPC (June 2025)

Though it remained well below the World Health Organization (WHO) benchmark of one doctor per 1,000 population, Ghana's doctor-to-population ratio improved from 0.20 to 0.22 doctors per 1,000 population, reflecting an increase in the number of trained and licensed medical practitioners (Figure 17). By contrast, the nurse-to-population ratio declined from 1.90 nurses per 1,000 population in 2023 and 1.99 per 1,000 in 2022 to 1.84 per 1,000 population in 2024, largely as a result of the continued emigration of nurses, particularly to Europe. Nevertheless, the ratio remained above the WHO benchmark of one nurse per 1,000 population.

Access to electricity, although relatively high, remained largely unchanged in 2024, increasing only marginally from 88.9 percent of the population in 2023 to 89.0 percent. The slow pace of expansion reflects reduced investment in rural electrification, which has constrained progress towards achieving universal access to electricity.

1.3 Revisions to Projections in the 2024 Report and the Reasons

Real GDP

Real GDP grew considerably faster in 2024 than predicted. Compared to a projected growth rate of 3.1 percent, real GDP expanded by 5.7 percent, led by the industrial sector.

This expansion reflected the effects on the real sector of larger-than-expected fiscal and



monetary impulses, as both the fiscal deficit and the growth of money supply far exceeded their projections. First, the 2024 fiscal deficit of 7.9 percent of GDP on a commitment basis was 88.1 percent bigger than the budgeted 4.2 percent of GDP. Second, annual broad money supply growth reached 31.9 percent against a projected 17.4 percent. An additional cause of the stronger-than-projected real GDP growth was higher-than-expected gold production, with output climbing by 19.1 percent against a forecast of just 3.3 percent.

Inflation

Inflation also exceeded projections in 2024. Instead of declining to the projected 15.0 percent, headline inflation ended the year at 23.8 percent. As with real GDP growth, looser-than-anticipated fiscal and monetary policies were to a high degree responsible for the higher inflation. Another key driver was unanticipated increases in food prices due to a sudden outbreak of arid weather in the country's agricultural zones, which curtailed farm harvests.

Fiscal deficit

According to the government's budget for 2024, the fiscal deficit on a commitment basis was expected to be 4.2 percent of GDP. When the year closed, however, the deficit stood at 7.9 percent of GDP, exceeding its projection by 3.7 percentage points. Most of this increase resulted from higher expenditure, especially on capital projects, prompted by electoral pressures. As a result, government expenditure on a commitment basis jumped to 23.8 percent of GDP, 2.2 percentage points above the projection of 21.6 percent of GDP. Revenue, too, missed the projected level, as it came in at 15.9 percent of GDP, 1.5 percentage points below the projected 17.4 percent of GDP.

By contrast, the fiscal deficit on a cash basis was broadly in line with expectations, recording 5.2 percent of GDP compared with the projected 5.3 percent. This outcome, despite the substantial divergence between the projected and actual commitment deficits, reflected the accumulation of expenditure arrears, which restrained cash outflows during the year.

Table 1: Projected versus actual values of key macroeconomic indicators

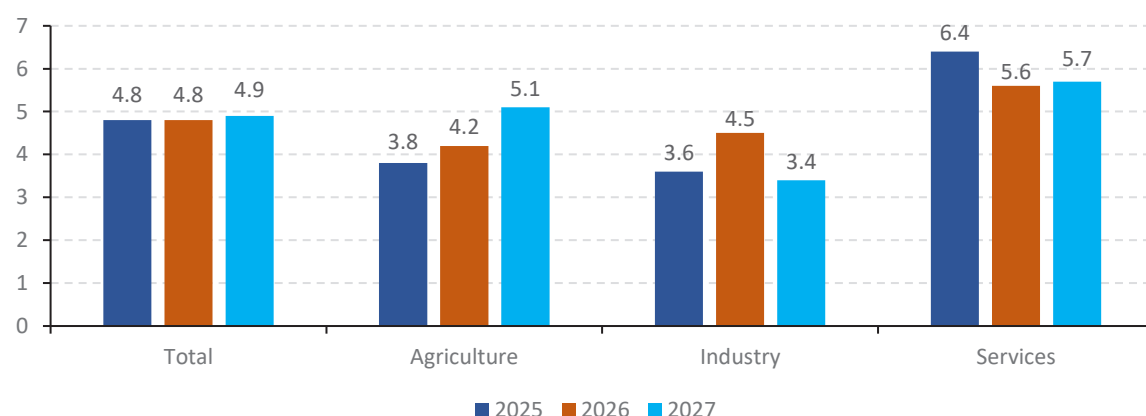
Indicator	Projected	Actual
Real GDP growth (%)	3.1	5.7
Inflation (year-end, %)	15.0	23.8
Fiscal deficit (commitment basis, % of GDP)	4.2	7.9
Fiscal deficit (cash basis, % of GDP)	5.3	5.2

Source: Ghana Statistical Service (March 2025), Ministry of Finance (March 2025)

1.4 Prospects and Risks

Real GDP

Despite the acceleration in 2024, growth in real sector activity is expected to fall to 4.8 percent in 2025 on the back of a sharp fiscal adjustment, which is expected to constrain aggregate demand. The deceleration reflects an anticipated reversal in the fortunes of the industrial sector, which is projected to grow by 3.6 percent, down steeply from 7.1 percent in 2024. On the other hand, growth in services is projected to pick up to 6.4 percent from 5.9 percent. Also, with more propitious weather expected, agriculture is predicted to expand at 3.8 percent, up from 2.8 percent. This expansion will be aided by a 2.4 percent growth in cocoa output, kicking off a recovery in that industry after recent poor harvests.

Figure 18: Projected real GDP and sectoral growth rates (%) (2025–2027)

Source: Ministry of Finance (November 2025)



After the fall in 2025, growth is projected to stabilise at 4.8 percent in 2026, before it improves slightly to 4.9 percent in 2027. Expected to lead this growth are agriculture and services. Agriculture is forecast to grow by 4.2 percent and 5.1 percent in 2026 and 2027, respectively, while services is expected to expand by 5.6 percent and 5.7 percent in the period. These outturns will broadly outpace projected growth rates of 4.5 percent and 3.4 percent in the industrial sector.

To improve growth in agriculture, the government has rolled out the Feed Ghana Programme. This four-year (2025–2028) initiative includes interventions to increase agricultural mechanisation, irrigation, and post-harvest storage capacity. It also includes subsidies for vegetable and poultry production to achieve national self-sufficiency. With respect to industry, the government announced the Rapid Industrialisation for Jobs policy, which includes plans to revive defunct factories and build new ones. Policies for the services sector include new ICT initiatives, such as the One Million Coders programme, which is expected to provide advanced digital skills to one million youths. In addition, a new tourism initiative, the Black Star Experience, is being promoted.

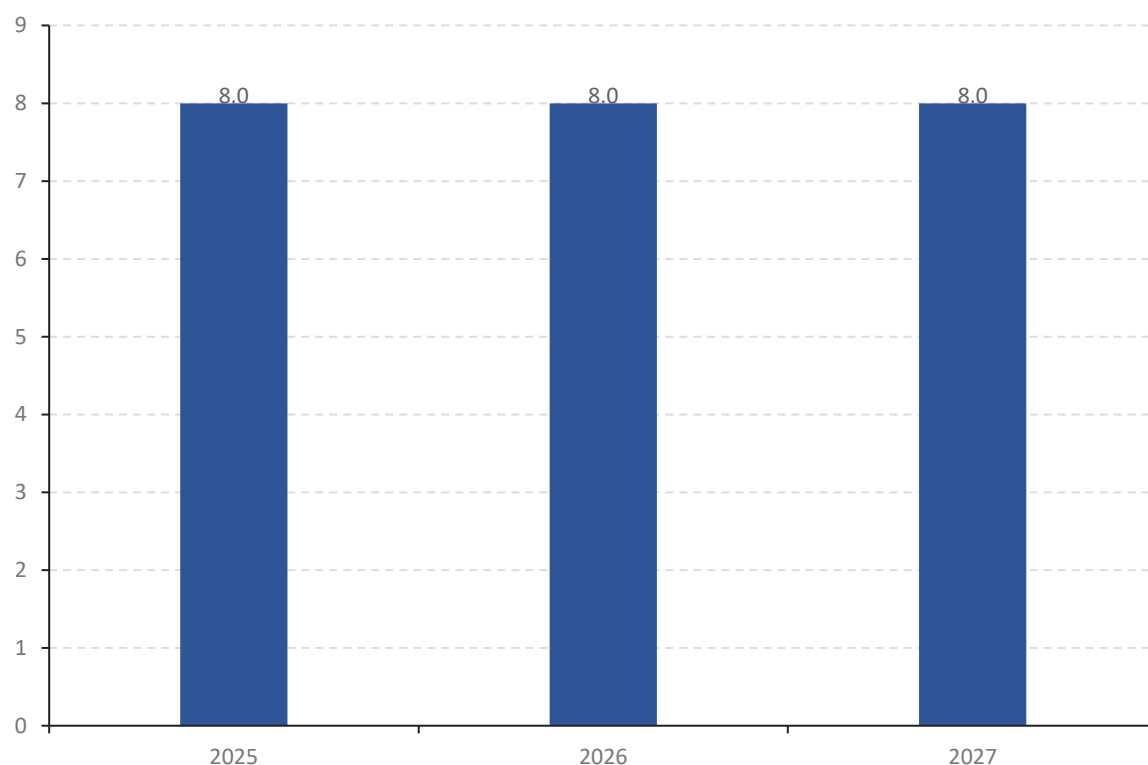
There is a significant likelihood that growth would top the current forecasts. This optimism springs from the growth outturns in the first and second quarters of 2025. In both quarters, real GDP expanded by 6.3 percent year-on-year, reflecting strong activity in the services sector and a sharp improvement in agricultural production. On average, the two sectors expanded by 8.9 percent and 5.9 percent, respectively, in the first and second quarters of 2025, considerably outpacing expectations. Owing to this, the 4.8 percent growth forecast for 2025 looks likely to be exceeded. If this momentum is sustained, real GDP growth could rise above the 4.8–4.9 percent predicted for 2026–2027.

Inflation

Projections for headline inflation paint the picture of a steady decrease. From 23.8 percent as of end-2024, inflation is forecast to drop significantly in 2025 to 8.0 percent, the monetary policy target. It is then expected to stabilise at this target in 2026–2027. Complementing the fiscal adjustment, the central bank has committed to maintaining a restrictive monetary policy stance, and to take further necessary measures until it is

comfortable with the disinflation process. This policy coordination is a critical basis of the forecast decline in inflation. Nevertheless, the potential for geopolitically induced commodity market shocks to upend the predicted path of inflation is not minute and stands as the main risk to bringing inflation down to tolerable levels in Ghana.

Figure 19: Projected headline inflation (% end-year) (2025–2027)

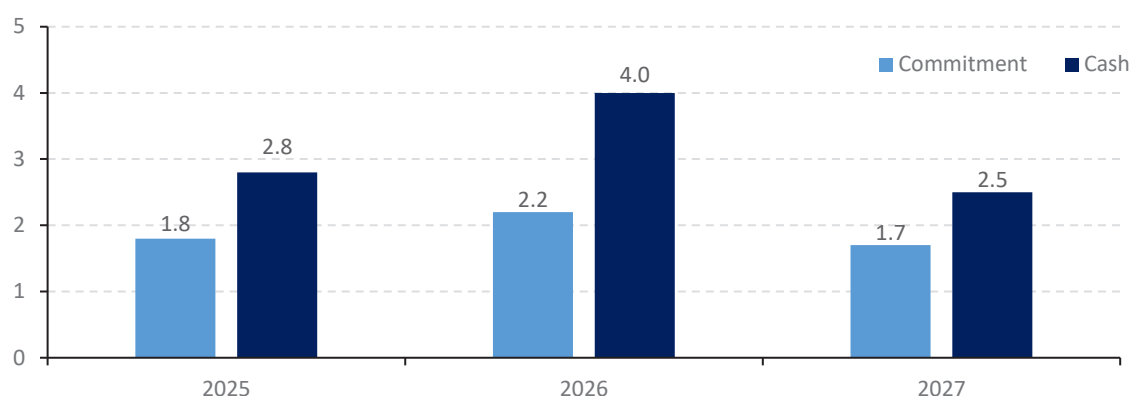


Source: Ministry of Finance (November 2025)

Fiscal Deficit

In 2025, the government is planning to embark upon a rapid, expenditure-driven fiscal adjustment to restore a sustainable fiscal position, after the large fiscal overrun in 2024. In this regard, the fiscal deficit on a commitment basis is forecast to fall to 1.8 percent of GDP in 2025, equivalent to a reduction of 6.1 percentage points from the 2024 position. Total revenue and grants are projected to rise by 0.1 percentage points to 16.0 percent of GDP, while total expenditure is projected to decline by 6.0 percentage points to 17.8 percent of GDP. This means as much as 98 percent of the consolidation is expected to come from reduced expenditure, with only approximately 2.0 percent from increased revenue generation.



Figure 20: Projected fiscal deficit (% of GDP) (2025–2027)

Source: Ministry of Finance (November 2025)

The deficit is projected to increase to 2.2 percent of GDP in 2026, driven by higher expenditure, especially on capital investment. Afterward, it is projected to fall to 1.7 percent of GDP in 2027, driven by increased revenue. Total revenue and grants are forecast to improve to 16.8 percent of GDP in 2026 and further to 17.2 percent in 2027. Total expenditure, on the other hand, is projected to rise to 18.9 percent of GDP in 2026 and to remain at that level in 2027.

The fiscal deficit on a cash basis is projected to follow a similar profile, dropping to 2.8 percent of GDP in 2025, then rising to 4.0 percent in 2026, before falling to 2.5 percent of GDP in 2027.

To limit borrowing and debt accumulation, the government has legislated new fiscal rules. The rules mandate a minimum annual primary fiscal surplus on a commitment basis of 1.5 percent of GDP and a maximum debt-to-GDP ratio of 45.0 percent by 2034. These rules are expected to help restore debt sustainability and rebuild market confidence following the debt restructuring. The legislation also establishes a Fiscal Council, whose remit includes advising the government on fiscal policy and monitoring compliance with the fiscal rules. Reforms are also being implemented in the public procurement system to improve expenditure control and efficiency. Another pillar of the government's debt management strategy is the building up of the Sinking Fund to provide resources to meet debt obligations as they arise.

Key Risk Factors

(a) USAID aid cuts

The United States is a major bilateral donor to Ghana, providing financial assistance principally through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). In the three fiscal years prior to 2025, USAID disbursed US\$496.7 million cumulatively to Ghana, equivalent to 0.26 percent of Ghana's GDP yearly. This comprised US\$137.7 million in the 2021/2022 U.S. fiscal year (October 2021 to September 2022), US\$168.8 million in 2022/2023, and US\$190.2 million in 2023/2024 (Table 2). The resources financed an array of programmes in health, the leading sector, as well as agriculture, education, and governance. The programmes were executed in association with government and non-government (local and external) partners.

Table 2: United States financial assistance to Ghana

Year/Source	USAID	Others	Total	USAID	Others	Total
	<i>US\$ million</i>			<i>% of Ghana's GDP</i>		
2022	137.7	77.6	215.3	0.19	0.10	0.29
2023	168.8	27.7	196.5	0.21	0.03	0.24
2024	190.2	29.3	219.5	0.23	0.03	0.26

Source: ForeignAssistance.gov (November 2025)

Following the U.S. administration's shutdown of much of USAID's activities in 2025, researchers at the Centre for Global Development (CGD) have estimated that the decision will eliminate 79.0 percent of the Agency's programmes in Ghana in the 2024/2025 fiscal year, costing US\$104 million (Kenny and Sandefur, 2025). The Agency's future commitments will also be affected.

At the macroeconomic level, the reduction in USAID support is unlikely to be felt. This is because the total assistance is usually low as a percentage of Ghana's GDP (see Table 2), with the estimated cut in 2024/2025 representing just 0.12 percent of GDP and 0.63 percent of government expenditure. At the sectoral level, however, the impact would be felt if no mitigation occurs. Programmes to improve health outcomes, including in the areas of maternal and child care, malaria prevention, and HIV/AIDS prevention and



treatment, would be scaled back, alongside initiatives in agriculture, education, and governance. This could affect development outcomes in these areas. The impact is also likely to be felt disproportionately in the poorest parts of the country, especially the North, where many USAID programmes are focused. To mitigate these effects, the government has committed to plugging the funding gap, especially in the health sector programmes. Thus, the situation is encouraging more self-reliance in development financing.

(b) U.S. tariff hikes

In April 2025, the United States imposed a 10 percent tariff on goods imports from several countries including Ghana, unsettling world trade.¹ Before the measure, Ghana's exports had traditionally entered the U.S. market duty-free through the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and other preferential schemes. These exports include crude oil, the largest, along with cocoa beans and products, yam, cassava, rubber, wood, and textiles and apparel

Table 3: Ghana–U.S. merchandise trade (US\$ million)

Item	2022	2023	2024
Exports	2,767.8	1,626.8	1,173.9
Imports	974.6	860.6	968.2
Balance	1,793.2	766.2	205.7

Source: United States Census Bureau (June 2025)

In 2024, goods exports to the U.S. fetched Ghana US\$1.17 billion. Trade in the opposite direction was valued at US\$968.2 million, yielding a trade surplus for Ghana of US\$205.7 million. This surplus was smaller than the surpluses in 2023 and 2022 of US\$766.2 million and US\$1.79 billion, respectively. Hydrocarbons dominate the country's exports to the U.S., accounting for around two-thirds in 2024. Interestingly, the April tariff hike exempted hydrocarbons, as well as pharmaceuticals and certain critical minerals.

¹ Imports from other countries, including some ECOWAS states, were subjected to higher tariffs, but these were later suspended for 90 days and replaced with a basic 10 percent rate.

In August 2025, the U.S. raised the import tariff to 15 percent. However, in November, it exempted a range of agricultural goods including cocoa products, which form the second-biggest export from Ghana to the U.S. Although the U.S. is an important trading partner, it accounts for less than 5.0 percent of Ghana's total merchandise exports. Consequently, the direct macroeconomic impact of the tariff measures is expected to be limited. Indeed, an analysis by International Economics Consulting for the ECOWAS Commission estimates a loss for Ghana of US\$54 million in 2025 from the tariff decision announced in April (International Economics Consulting and ECOWAS Commission, 2025). This is equivalent to just 4.4 percent of the country's 2024 exports to the U.S. From a sectoral perspective, however, non-traditional export sectors like cocoa products, wood, and textiles and apparel that rely on the U.S. market are likely to directly suffer reduced demand.

There are potential indirect effects, too. First, a global trade war resulting from the U.S. tariffs has the potential to reduce trade and economic growth, thereby cutting overall demand for Ghana's exports. On the other hand, the tariff policy, by potentially prompting investors to reallocate their assets to mitigate economic uncertainty, could have indirect benefits for Ghana. These benefits include a weakening of the U.S. dollar and an increase in gold prices. The former would benefit domestic inflation through lower import prices, and the latter would benefit the balance of payments through higher gold export revenue. These positive effects are, in fact, already visible in 2025, as the cedi has strengthened and gold export income has soared in the first half of the year.

(c) Withdrawal of Alliance of Sahel States (AES) from ECOWAS

The AES, comprising Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, officially quit ECOWAS on 29 January, 2025. The withdrawal has potential economic, political, and security implications for Ghana.



Table 4: Ghana's trade with ECOWAS and AES (US\$ million)

Bloc	2022	2023	2024
ECOWAS	2,330.9	2,143.0	1,691.6
AES	981.4	894.8	570.6
Exports	848.8	669.2	527.1
Imports	132.6	225.6	43.5
% AES	42.1	41.8	33.7

Source: IMF (June 2025)

From an economic perspective, the AES countries, particularly Burkina Faso, are important trading partners within Ghana's intra-ECOWAS trade. Collectively, they accounted for approximately 34–42 percent of Ghana's merchandise trade with ECOWAS between 2022 and 2024 (Table 4). Should the withdrawal instigate new trade barriers or restrictions on cross-border commerce, then some of this trade could be lost, or it may go underground via smuggling, given the porousness of land borders in the region.

In addition, Burkina Faso's significant contribution to Ghana's maritime transit traffic could shrink in the face of new trade barriers, or if it leverages its exit from ECOWAS to find alternative transit corridors. Furthermore, cross-border infrastructure plans (e.g., the Ghana–Burkina Faso Railway Interconnectivity Project), which are already faltering, look likely to be halted.

Politically, the withdrawal threatens Ghana's cooperation with the three states on governance affairs. Security-wise, too, it threatens cooperation to combat threats such as terrorism, illegal migration, and trafficking. Already fragile border security between Ghana and Burkina Faso could worsen without bilateral coordination to repress threats, the most worrisome of which is terrorism spillover from the Sahel. This poses direct economic risks, as it could disturb the regular and sizeable cross-border trade flows between the two countries. However, the transitional arrangements established by ECOWAS, especially with regard to trade and cross-border travel, are likely to mitigate some of the adverse impacts of the AES states' exit on Ghana.

2. FOOD SECURITY CHALLENGES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION

2.1 Introduction

Food security, commonly defined as a situation in which “all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO, 1996) is a fundamental objective of agricultural policy in Ghana. This reflects the recognition that food security is essential not only for maintaining a healthy population but also for enhancing productivity and promoting broader economic, social, and political development. In this sense, food security is both a prerequisite for and an indicator of sustainable development.

Food security is commonly analysed through four interrelated dimensions: availability (i.e., the physical availability of food); access (i.e., economic and physical access to food); utilisation (i.e., the effective use of food to achieve adequate nutrition); and stability (i.e., the sustained availability, access, and utilisation of food over time) (Jones et al., 2013). Whether assessed at the individual, household, national, regional, or global level, these four dimensions collectively determine the food security status of a population.

Over the past two decades, Ghana has pursued ambitious agricultural and food security strategies aligned with continental and global frameworks. The country is a signatory to the 2003 Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa, which commits African Union (AU) member states to allocate at least 10 percent of their national budgets to agriculture and achieve an annual agricultural GDP growth rate of at least 6 percent. Ghana also adopted the 2014 Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods, which reaffirmed the commitments of the Maputo Declaration while introducing additional targets to be achieved by 2025. More recently, the country endorsed the 2025 Kampala CAADP Declaration on Building Resilient and Sustainable Agrifood Systems in Africa, reaffirming its commitment to transforming agrifood systems, strengthening climate resilience, and promoting sustainable agricultural development.



Despite aligning its national policies with these frameworks, Ghana's agricultural and food security outcomes have remained below expectations. Food production has increased significantly over the past decade, while the country's Global Hunger Index (GHI) score improved from 16.5 in 2016 to 13.1 in 2025, placing Ghana in the "moderate" hunger category. Nevertheless, the 2020 Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) estimated that 3.6 million people, representing 11.7 percent of the population, were food insecure (MoFA et al., 2020). Notably, agricultural households experienced higher levels of food insecurity than non-agricultural households. In addition, persistently high food inflation in recent years has eroded food affordability, disproportionately affecting vulnerable households.

These developments raise concerns about Ghana's progress towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, which seeks to end hunger and achieve food security by 2030, as well as the country's ability to meet the targets of the Malabo Declaration. Persistent food insecurity also poses significant risks to socio-economic development and the deepening of regional integration within ECOWAS.

This section analyses food security in Ghana over the period 2015–2024, focusing on trends, policy implementation, and their socio-economic implications. Specifically, the section: (i) reviews Ghana's implementation of the Maputo, Malabo, and Kampala Declarations; (ii) assesses the country's food security situation and the socio-economic effects of food insecurity; (iii) examines the implications of food security challenges for Ghana's participation in ECOWAS regional integration; and (iv) identifies the major constraints to achieving food security in Ghana.

2.2 Review of the Maputo, Malabo, and Kampala Declarations and Commitments

The 2003 Maputo Declaration

The Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa, adopted by the Assembly of the African Union in 2003, represented a landmark commitment to position agriculture as a key driver of economic growth, food security, and poverty reduction across Africa. It committed AU member states to allocate at least 10 percent of public expenditure to agriculture and rural development and to pursue policies aimed at

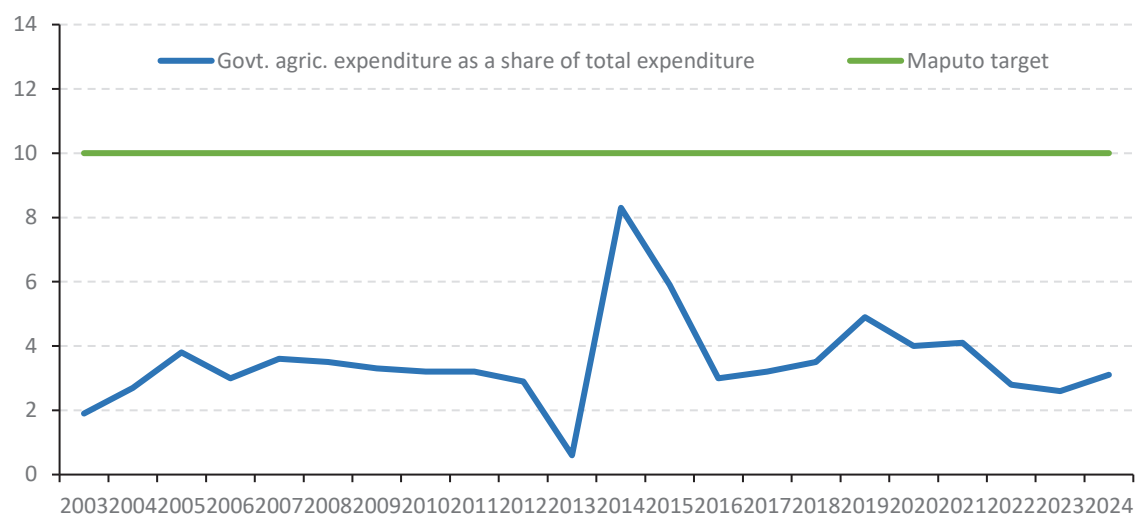
achieving a minimum annual agricultural GDP growth rate of 6 percent (African Union, 2003; 2024). The Declaration also established the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) as its implementation framework, providing strategic guidance for the preparation and implementation of national agricultural investment plans.

In Ghana, the principles of the Maputo Declaration were translated into national policy through the Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP II), a long-term strategic framework introduced in 2007, together with a series of medium-term agricultural investment plans. The first two plans, the Medium-Term Agriculture Sector Investment Plans (METASIP I and II), were implemented between 2011 and 2017. This was followed by the Investing for Food and Jobs (IFJ) programme (2018–2021), which included flagship initiatives such as Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ), Rearing for Food and Jobs (RFJ), and Planting for Export and Rural Development (PERD).

The Maputo framework provided an important long-term strategic foundation for agricultural policy. However, Ghana's persistent failure to meet the Declaration's public investment target has constrained the full achievement of its objectives. As Figure 21 shows, government expenditure on agriculture as a share of total public expenditure has consistently remained below the 10 percent benchmark, averaging 3.5 percent between 2003 and 2024. The situation deteriorated further during 2022–2024, when severe fiscal and macroeconomic pressures reduced average agricultural expenditure to just 2.8 percent of total public expenditure.



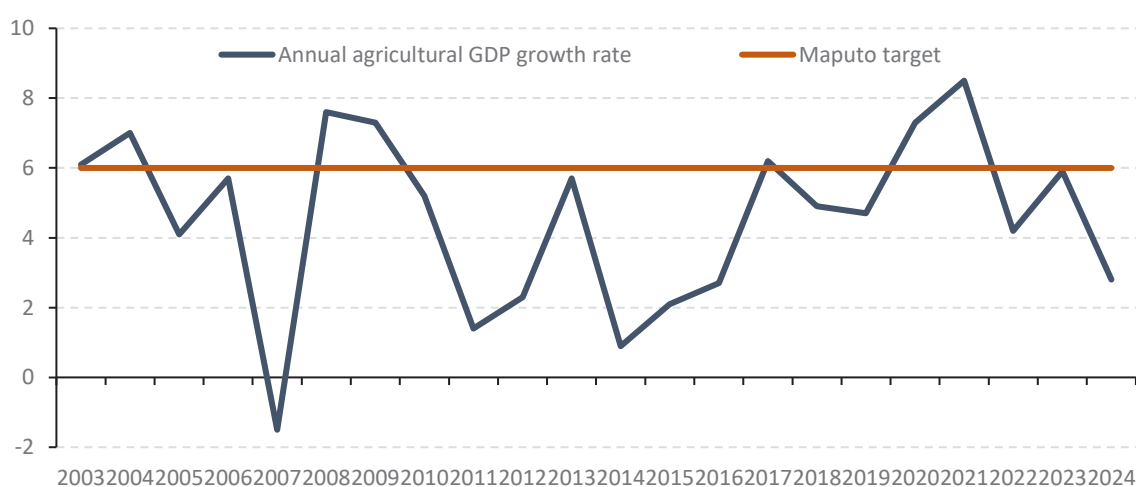
Figure 21: Government agricultural expenditure as a share of total expenditure (%) (2003–2024)



Source: Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System (ReSAKSS) (August 2025)

This persistent underinvestment constrained the effective implementation of agricultural sector investment plans, resulting in a frequent failure to achieve the Maputo Declaration's target of an annual agricultural GDP growth rate of 6.0 percent (Figure 22). Between 2003, the year the Maputo Declaration was adopted, and 2024, agricultural GDP growth averaged only 4.6 percent per annum, well below the prescribed benchmark.

Figure 22: Annual agricultural GDP growth rate (%) (2003–2024)



Source: Ghana Statistical Service (March 2025)

The 2014 Malabo Declaration

Adopted in 2014, the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods renewed Africa's commitment to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and reaffirmed its objectives.² The Declaration established a set of measurable targets to be achieved by 2025, including ending hunger, halving poverty through inclusive agricultural growth, and tripling intra-African agricultural trade. It also called for increased public and private investment in agriculture, higher agricultural productivity, greater resilience to climate variability and related risks, expanded opportunities for women and youth in agriculture, and stronger national food and strategic grain reserves (African Union, 2014; 2024).

Ghana's response to the Malabo Declaration has been implemented primarily through its two most recent medium-term agricultural investment plans, METASIP II and Investing for Food and Jobs (IFJ). These frameworks introduced a range of programmes aimed at increasing agricultural productivity, reducing post-harvest losses, and improving market access. A flagship initiative under the IFJ framework was the Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) programme (2018–2021), which sought to increase the production of cereals (maize, rice, and sorghum), legumes (soybean and groundnut), vegetables (including tomato, onion, pepper, cabbage, cucumber, lettuce, and carrot), and root and tuber crops such as cassava. The programme provided subsidised fertiliser and improved seed varieties, expanded agricultural extension services, and supported the construction of warehouses to strengthen post-harvest storage. Complementary initiatives, including the One District, One Factory (1D1F) programme and the Rearing for Food and Jobs (RFJ) programme, sought to strengthen agro-industrial linkages and expand livestock production (MoFA, 2018).

Despite these policy interventions, Ghana's progress towards achieving the Malabo commitments has been slower than anticipated. The Fourth Biennial Review of Progress Towards the Malabo Commitments, conducted in 2023, concluded that Ghana was not on

² These include the main Maputo targets on public spending and annual GDP growth in agriculture.



track to achieve the 2025 targets. Nevertheless, Ghana ranked as the highest-performing country in ECOWAS and was among the top ten performers across the continent, reflecting relatively strong regional performance despite falling short of the Declaration's overall targets (African Union Commission, 2024).³

Table 5: Ghana's Malabo Declaration implementation performance as of 2023

Commitment	Ghana's Score	Benchmark	Progress	Average ECOWAS Score	Average African Score
Commitment to the CAADP process	8.40	10.00	Not on track, albeit narrowly	8.27	7.66
Enhancing investment finance in agriculture	5.22	9.50	Not on track	3.34	3.15
Ending hunger by 2025	3.52	9.26	Not on track	3.14	2.90
Halving poverty through agriculture by 2025	9.01	8.94	On track	3.85	3.04
Boosting intra-African trade in agriculture	2.59	9.00	Not on track	2.32	2.23
Enhancing resilience to climate variability	8.76	9.75	Not on track, albeit narrowly	7.14	5.91
Enhancing mutual accountability for actions and results	9.27	8.60	On track	7.71	7.02
Overall score	6.68	9.29	Not on track	5.11	4.56

Source: African Union Commission (4th CAADP Biennial Review Report, published in February 2024)

Table 5 presents Ghana's performance against the seven broad commitments of the Malabo Declaration. The country achieved an overall score of 6.68 out of 10, falling short of the minimum benchmark score of 9.29 required to be considered on track to meet the 2025 commitments. Nevertheless, Ghana performed above both the continental average (4.56) and the ECOWAS average (5.11). The country was assessed as being on track in two areas: halving poverty through agriculture and strengthening mutual accountability for actions and results. However, it was not on track to achieve the commitments on ending hunger by 2025, increasing agricultural investment financing, and boosting intra-African

³ No African Union member country was assessed to be on track.

agricultural trade. Ghana also narrowly missed the benchmarks relating to commitment to the CAADP process and enhancing resilience to climate variability and other shocks (ibid.).

Several factors contributed to Ghana's slower-than-expected progress. These include persistent underinvestment in agriculture, reflected in the country's failure to consistently meet the Maputo target of allocating at least 10 percent of public expenditure to the sector; low agricultural productivity and limited adoption of modern technologies; high post-harvest losses; weak social protection systems; and relatively low levels of agricultural trade with other African countries (ibid.).

The 2025 Kampala Declaration

The Kampala CAADP Declaration on Building Resilient and Sustainable Agrifood Systems in Africa provides the continent's post-Malabo development framework. It extends the commitments of the Maputo and Malabo Declarations through the CAADP Strategy and Action Plan (2026–2035), while broadening the focus from agriculture-led development to a comprehensive agrifood systems transformation agenda. This renewed framework integrates agricultural production, agro-processing, trade, nutrition, and resilience into a unified strategy for sustainable development (African Union Commission, 2025).

The Declaration is organised around seven strategic commitments: (i) intensifying sustainable food production, agro-industrialisation, and trade; (ii) increasing investment and financing for accelerated agrifood systems transformation; (iii) ensuring food and nutrition security; (iv) advancing inclusivity and equitable livelihoods; (v) strengthening the resilience of agrifood systems; (vi) improving agrifood systems governance; and (vii) mobilising a broad range of stakeholders to translate these commitments into measurable outcomes.

To support these objectives, the Declaration establishes ambitious targets for 2035, including a 45 percent increase in agrifood output, a 50 percent reduction in post-harvest losses, and a threefold increase in intra-African agricultural trade. It also reaffirms the Malabo commitment that governments allocate at least 10 percent of public expenditure to agriculture and sets a continental goal of achieving zero hunger by 2035. In addition, all



African Union member states are expected to integrate CAADP indicators into national planning and budgeting systems by 2028.

For Ghana, which enters the post-Malabo period with a mixed implementation record, achieving these objectives will require substantially higher public investment in agriculture, stronger post-harvest management systems, accelerated value chain industrialisation, wider adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices, and deeper integration into regional agricultural markets, particularly through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Reflecting this new policy direction, the Government of Ghana launched the Feed Ghana Programme (FGP) in April 2025, explicitly recognising the Kampala Declaration as the regional framework underpinning its objectives.

2.3 Food Security Trends and Performance

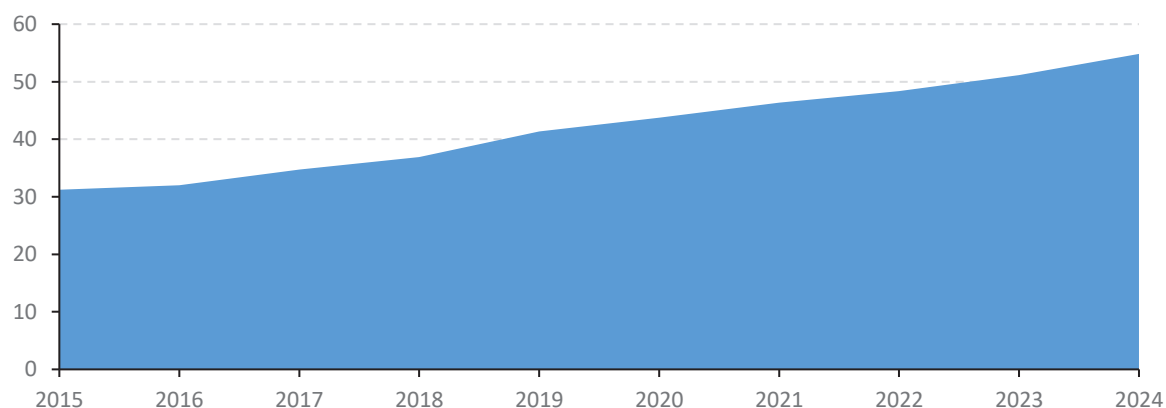
The analysis of food security in this section is based on the four-dimensional framework introduced earlier: (i) food availability, referring to the domestic supply of food from production, imports, and strategic reserves; (ii) food access, referring to the ability of households and individuals to obtain food through markets or their own production; (iii) food utilisation, referring to the extent to which individuals derive adequate nutritional value from the food they consume; and (iv) food stability, referring to the consistency of food availability and access over time. Each dimension is assessed using a combination of macroeconomic and sectoral indicators drawn from national and international data sources.

Food Availability

Food availability has improved over the last decade, supported by an expansion in cultivated area and modest gains in agricultural productivity. As Figure 23 shows, the production of major staple crops increased substantially between 2015 and 2024. Aggregate output of seven key food crops, maize, rice, yam, cassava, plantain, sorghum, and soybean, rose from 31.2 million metric tonnes in 2015 to 54.8 million metric tonnes in 2024. Much of this increase was driven by root and tuber crops, particularly cassava and

yam, owing to their comparatively high yields and resilience under local agroecological conditions.

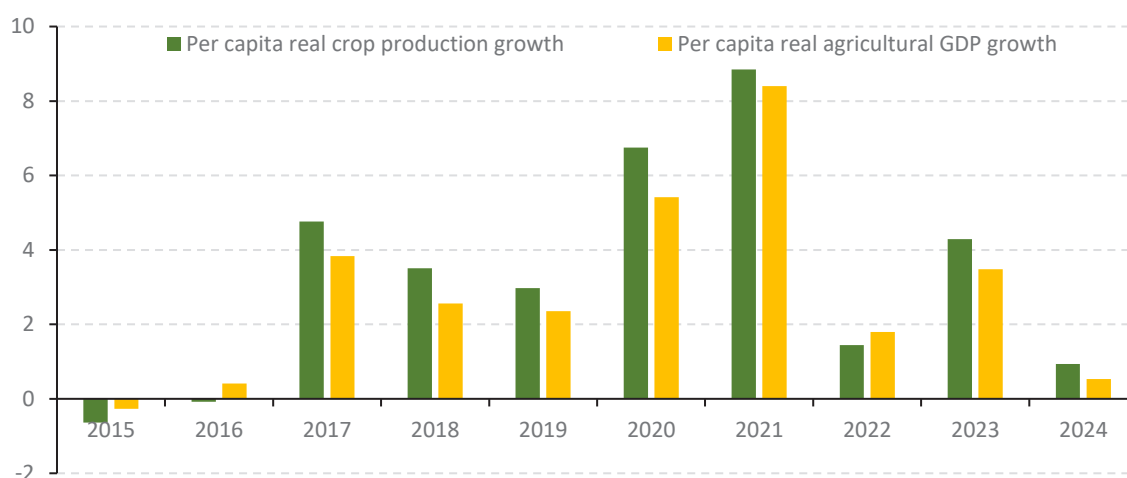
Figure 23: Total production of seven key food crops (million Mt) (2015–2024)



Source: Ministry of Food and Agriculture (March 2025), NDPC (June 2025)

Overall, crop production outpaced population growth during 2015–2024, resulting in an average annual increase of 3.3 percent in real per capita crop production. After recording negative growth in 2015–2016, per capita crop production rebounded between 2017 and 2021, driven largely by the implementation of the third medium-term agricultural investment plan, Investing for Food and Jobs (IFJ, 2018–2021), and its flagship Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) programme (Figure 24). Growth subsequently slowed as fiscal constraints reduced public investment in agriculture. Real per capita agricultural output, which includes crops, livestock, fisheries, and forestry, exhibited a similar trajectory.

Figure 24: Per capita growth in real crop and agricultural output (%) (2015–2024)

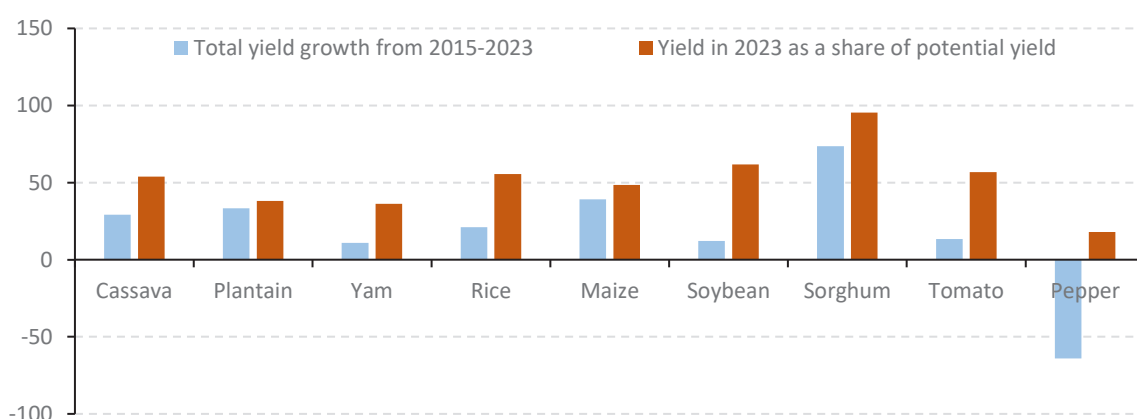


Source: Ghana Statistical Service (March 2025)



Despite the increases in crop production, both in absolute and per capita terms, food availability continues to be constrained by substantial productivity gaps across most major crops. Although average crop yields have generally improved over time, gains have been modest for several important crops, including yam, soybean, tomato, and rice, despite sustained policy efforts to raise productivity. Furthermore, as of 2023, actual yields for many crops remained well below their estimated potential (Figure 25). The Ministry of Food and Agriculture defines potential yields as those achieved under conditions where farmers have access to effective extension services and adopt recommended production technologies (MoFA, 2022). For example, pepper yields reached only 18.0 percent of their estimated potential, while yam, maize, and rice attained 36.2 percent, 48.5 percent, and 55.5 percent, respectively. Sorghum was the only major crop with yields approaching the potential, achieving 95.5 percent of the estimated level.

Figure 25: Yield performance of selected crops (%)



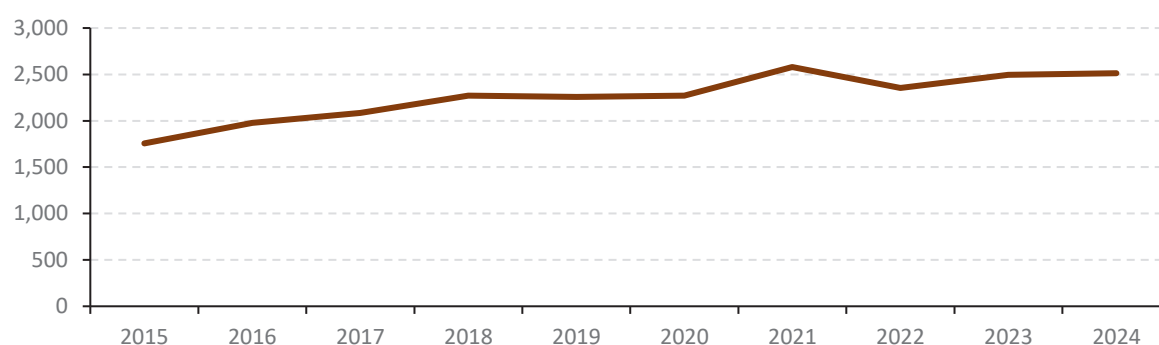
Source: Ministry of Food and Agriculture (March 2025)

The wide yield gaps reflect persistent structural constraints, including low levels of mechanisation and irrigation, limited access to quality extension services, and increasing climate-related stresses. These factors reduce the efficiency with which land, labour, and other agricultural inputs are transformed into output, thereby constraining the growth of domestic food supply. At the same time, the sizeable gap between actual and potential yields points to considerable untapped production potential. Targeted investments in irrigation infrastructure, mechanisation, extension services, improved seed systems, and soil fertility management could substantially increase agricultural productivity, strengthen domestic food availability, and improve overall food security.

Food Access

Food access is determined largely by the interaction between household incomes and food prices. Measured by per capita GDP in current US dollars, average incomes rose steadily between 2015 and 2021 before declining sharply during the macroeconomic crisis of 2022. Although per capita income recovered partially in 2023 and 2024, it remained below its pre-crisis peak of US\$2,579 recorded in 2021 (Figure 26).

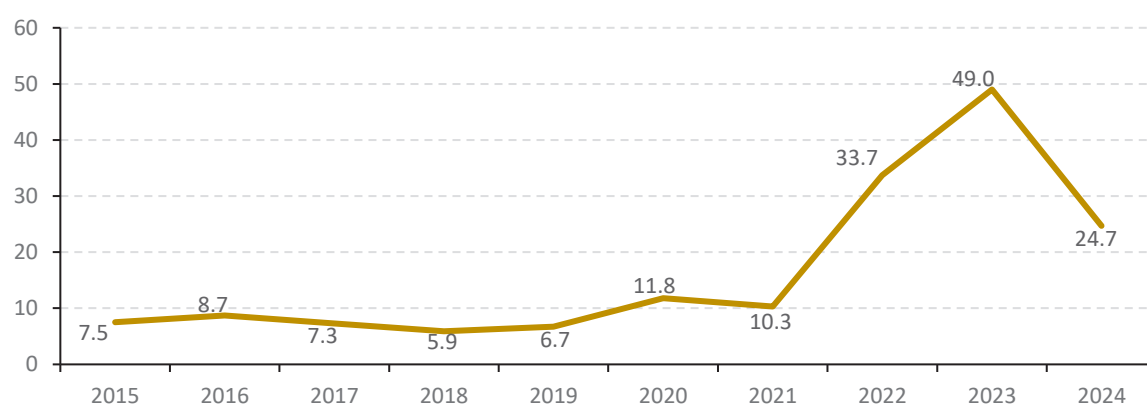
Figure 26: Per capita GDP (Current U.S. dollars) (2015–2024)



Source: Ghana Statistical Service (March 2025)

Food price inflation was relatively stable between 2015 and 2019 but began to accelerate during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Inflationary pressures intensified sharply from 2022 onwards, driven by the domestic macroeconomic crisis, exchange rate depreciation, and rising global food and fuel prices. The resulting surge in food prices significantly eroded household purchasing power, particularly among low-income households, making food price inflation one of the principal constraints to food access in recent years.

Figure 27: Average food price inflation (%) (2015–2024)



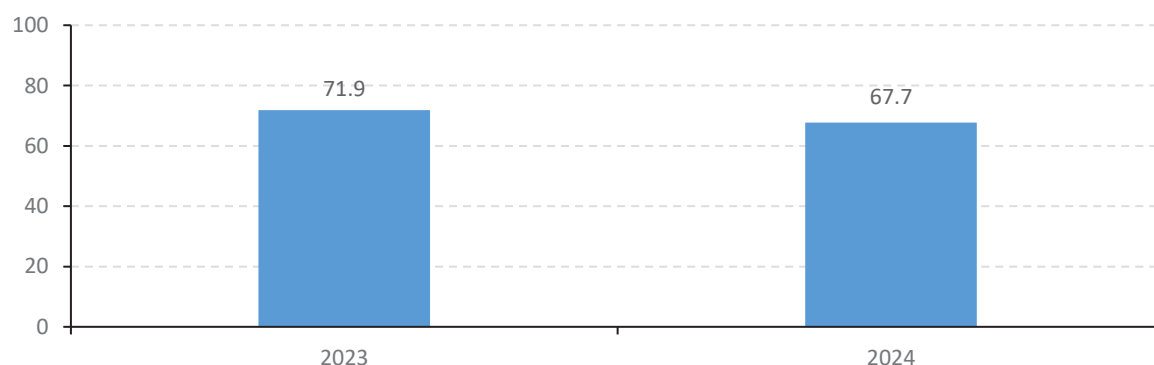
Source: Ghana Statistical Service (January 2025)



Figure 27 shows that food price inflation remained in single digits between 2015 and 2019 before rising into double digits from 2020 onwards. It peaked at 49.0 percent in 2023 before moderating to 24.7 percent in 2024. Despite this decline, food price inflation remained well above its pre-2022 levels, significantly eroding real household incomes and increasing the vulnerability of low-income households to food insecurity.

The relationship between the daily Cost of a Healthy Diet (CoHD) and the national daily minimum wage further illustrates the extent to which rising food prices have constrained food access. The CoHD measures the minimum cost of foods required to meet the daily nutritional recommendations set out in Ghana's Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (MoFA, 2025a). In 2023, the CoHD was equivalent to 71.9 percent of the daily minimum wage. Although this share declined modestly to 67.7 percent in 2024, it remained exceptionally high (Figure 28). When the cost of meeting minimum dietary requirements absorbs more than two-thirds of a worker's daily wage, many low-income households are compelled to substitute cheaper, less nutritious foods for healthier options, reduce the quantity of food consumed, or both, thereby increasing the risk of food insecurity and malnutrition.

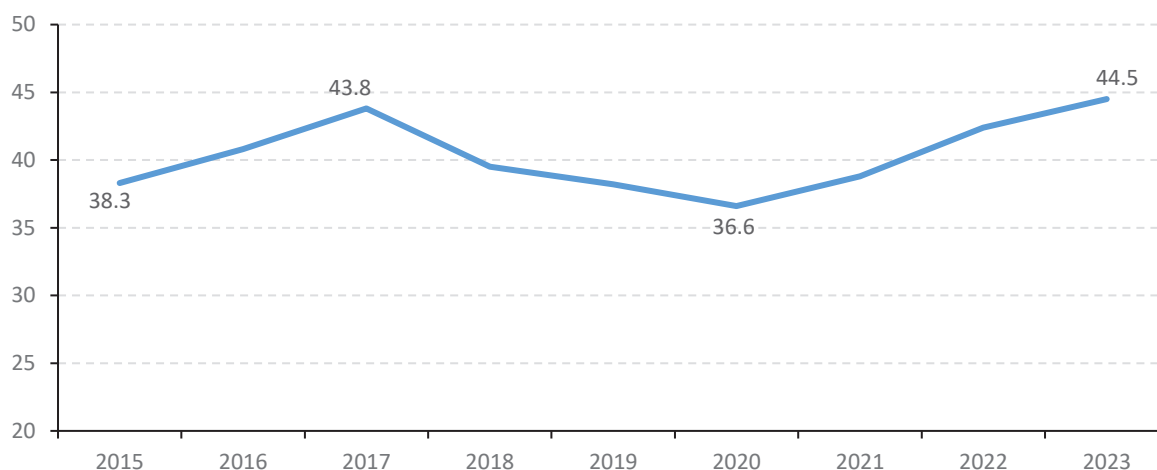
Figure 28: Daily cost of a healthy diet as a ratio of daily minimum wage (%) (2023–2024)



Source: Ministry of Food and Agriculture (2025), Ministry of Finance (2025)

Figure 29 suggests that these developments have contributed to a deterioration in food security in recent years. After declining between 2018 and 2020, the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity increased sharply during 2021–2023, reaching 44.5 percent of the population by the end of the period. This trend is consistent with the erosion of household purchasing power caused by high food price inflation and declining real incomes.

Figure 29: Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity (% of population) (2015–2023)

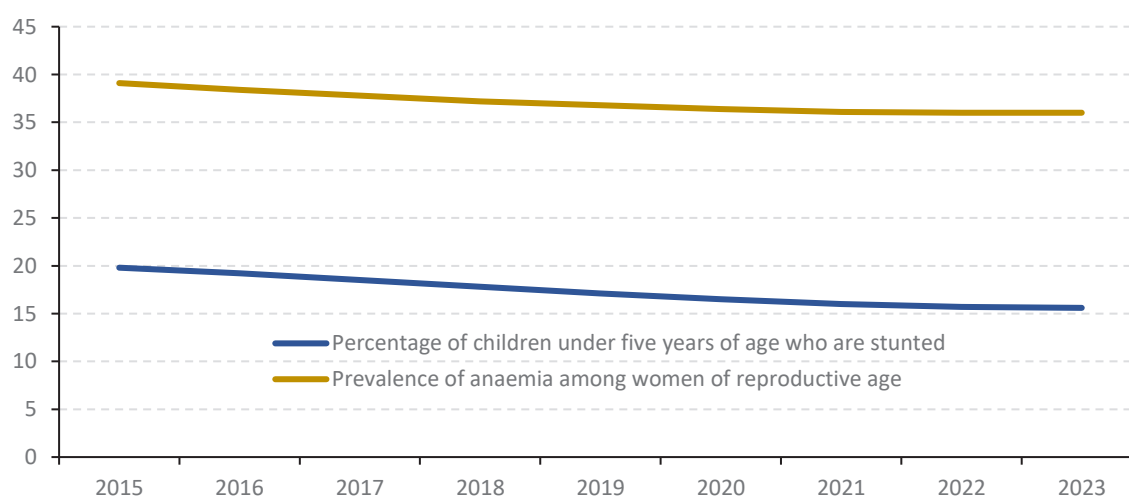


Source: FAO (June 2025)

Food Utilisation

Despite gradual improvements in nutritional outcomes, significant challenges remain in the quality of diets, nutrient absorption, and the health and sanitation conditions that enable individuals to derive adequate nutritional benefits from the food they consume. Women and young children remain the most nutritionally vulnerable population groups, facing disproportionately high risks of poor food utilisation due to inadequate dietary diversity, limited access to quality healthcare, and inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) conditions.

Figure 30: Prevalence of stunting and anaemia (%) (2015–2023)



Source: FAO (June 2025)



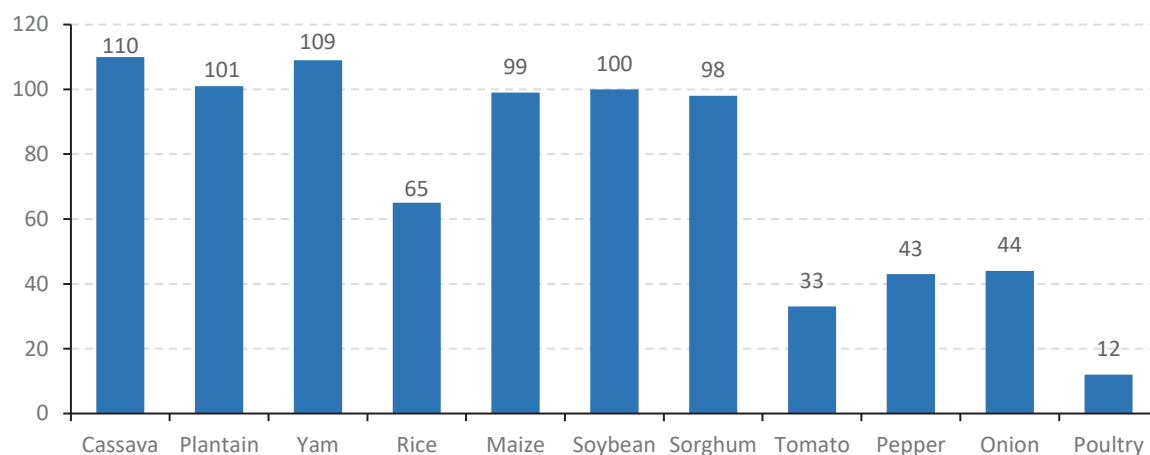
Figure 30 highlights these challenges. Although both indicators have improved over time, the prevalence of child stunting and anaemia among women of reproductive age remains unacceptably high. Stunting, a manifestation of chronic undernutrition that results in children being too short for their age, declined among children under five from 19.8 percent in 2015 to 15.6 percent in 2023. While this represents important progress, the prevalence remains sufficiently high to indicate that many children continue to experience inadequate nutrition during the critical early years of life.

Similarly, the prevalence of anaemia among women aged 15–49 declined only modestly, from 39.1 percent in 2015 to 36.0 percent in 2023. Persistently high anaemia rates point to deficiencies in dietary quality, particularly inadequate intake and absorption of iron, folic acid, and other essential micronutrients. Beyond compromising women's health and productivity, anaemia increases the risk of maternal mortality and adverse birth outcomes, with long-term implications for child health and human capital development.

Food Stability

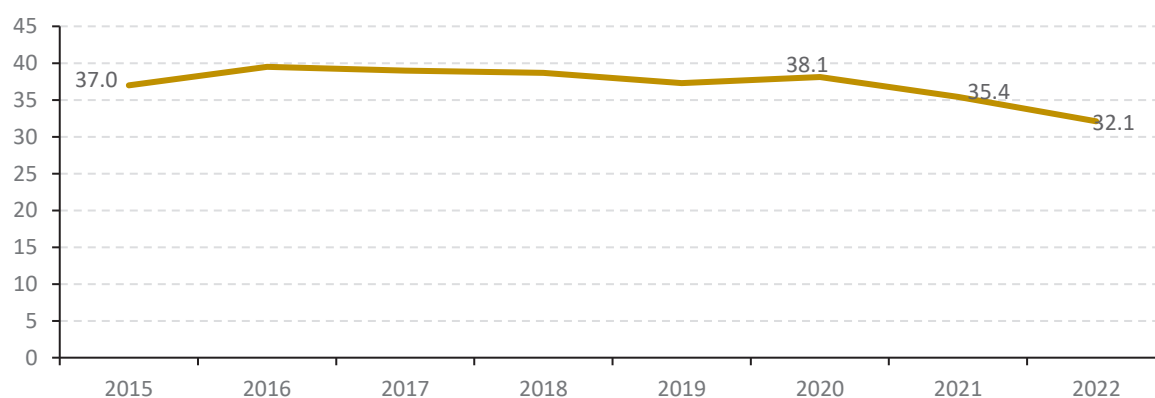
Several indicators suggest that Ghana's food stability remains vulnerable to both structural constraints and external shocks. These include food self-sufficiency ratios, cereal import dependence, irrigation coverage, and the extent of land degradation.

Food self-sufficiency, the extent to which domestic production is able to meet national food requirements, varies considerably across major food commodities (Figure 31). Root and tuber crops, including cassava, yam, and plantain, record self-sufficiency ratios exceeding 100 percent, indicating that domestic production is sufficient to meet local demand and, in some cases, generate marketable surpluses. By contrast, self-sufficiency is substantially lower for cereals, particularly rice, as well as for horticultural crops such as onion, tomato, and pepper. Poultry also exhibits a low self-sufficiency ratio, reflecting the country's heavy reliance on imported frozen chicken. This dependence on imports heightens Ghana's exposure to global supply disruptions, international price fluctuations, and exchange rate volatility, thereby increasing the vulnerability of the food system to external shocks.

Figure 31: Self-sufficiency ratios for key food commodities and products in 2024 (%)

Source: Ministry of Food and Agriculture (March 2025)

Driven largely by rice imports, Ghana's cereal import dependency ratio remained above 30 percent throughout the period, although it declined from 35.4 percent in 2020 to 32.1 percent in 2022 (Figure 32). This modest improvement was partly associated with the global inflationary pressures following the COVID-19 pandemic, which increased import costs and contributed to a reduction in import volumes. The persistently high cereal import dependency ratio indicates that, despite investments under the Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) programme and related agricultural initiatives, domestic cereal production has not expanded sufficiently to keep pace with rising consumption demand.

Figure 32: Cereal import dependency ratio (%) (2015–2022)

Source: FAO (June 2025)

Low irrigation coverage, estimated at only 3.3 percent of cultivated land during 2022–2024 (MoFA, 2025b), poses a significant risk to food stability because it leaves Ghana's



agricultural production overwhelmingly dependent on rainfall. This dependence increases production volatility, as variations in rainfall patterns directly affect yields and output. It also limits opportunities for dry-season farming and increases exposure to climate-related shocks, including droughts and delayed rainfall. The dry spell that constrained crop production growth in 2024 illustrates the vulnerability associated with excessive reliance on rain-fed agriculture.

Increasing land degradation further threatens the stability of Ghana's food system. Between 2015 and 2019, the share of Ghana's total land area classified as degraded increased substantially, from 3.5 percent to 16.6 percent (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, 2023), indicating a rapid deterioration in land and soil quality. Land degradation reduces the productive capacity of agricultural land, undermines long-term yield potential, and increases the risk of future food shortages.

The deterioration of land quality is driven by multiple factors, including deforestation, illegal mining, unsustainable agricultural practices, and expanding settlements. Illegal mining has been particularly damaging, contributing significantly to the loss of approximately 160,000 hectares of vegetation cover between 2005 and 2019 (Earth Observatory, 2021). Its impacts extend beyond vegetation loss, and include the removal of fertile topsoil, destruction of biodiversity, contamination of surface and groundwater resources, and the degradation of agricultural land.

2.4 Effects of Food Security Challenges on Socio-Economic Development

Food security is closely linked to Ghana's broader socio-economic development outcomes, affecting employment and livelihoods, poverty and inequality, health and human capital development, and macroeconomic stability and growth. These effects are transmitted through three main channels: (i) the livelihoods and incomes of agricultural producers; (ii) the health, welfare, and productivity of consumers; and (iii) the macroeconomic conditions of the country. The interaction of these channels influences not only household welfare but also the resilience and performance of the national economy.

Effects on Employment and Rural Livelihoods

Agriculture is Ghana's second-largest source of employment, engaging approximately one-third of the employed population, predominantly in rural areas (GSS, 2021). Consequently, agricultural performance has direct implications for rural employment, income generation, and poverty reduction. When agricultural production is stable and profitable, it stimulates both farm-based activities and wider rural economic opportunities. Conversely, production shocks arising from climate events, input constraints, or disease outbreaks can significantly undermine the livelihoods of smallholder farmers.

The 2024 dry spell, which contributed to a sharp slowdown in crop production growth (see Section 1.2A), demonstrates the effects of agricultural shocks on rural livelihoods. The event reduced grain yields and contributed to higher food prices (MoFA, 2024). In response, the government provided food assistance, including bags of rice and maize, to more than 800,000 affected farmers (ibid.). Such shocks, which have become increasingly frequent, reduce farm profitability, discourage investment in agriculture, and may weaken youth participation in the sector. They also contribute to rural–urban migration, resulting in declining rural populations and increased informal employment pressures in urban areas.

Effects on Poverty and Inequality

The relationship between food security and poverty is mutually reinforcing. Food insecurity, particularly when driven by rising food prices, reduces household purchasing power and deepens poverty. Conversely, poverty limits households' ability to access sufficient, safe, and nutritious food, creating a cycle of deprivation. Data from the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS 7) show that food expenditure represents 49.2 percent of total household expenditure among the poorest income quintile, compared with 38.2 percent among the richest quintile and a national average of 39.9 percent (GSS, 2019). This indicates that food price increases disproportionately affect poorer households. In 2022, the World Bank (2023) estimated that inflationary pressures, largely driven by rising food prices, pushed approximately 850,000 Ghanaians into poverty.



Food insecurity also reinforces Ghana's persistent spatial poverty disparities, particularly between the northern and southern parts of the country. Northern regions, where poverty rates exceed 50 percent, have a larger concentration of households in lower income groups and are therefore more vulnerable to food price shocks. Addressing food insecurity is consequently essential for achieving more inclusive and geographically balanced economic growth.

Effects on Health and Human Capital

Food insecurity has significant implications for nutrition, health outcomes, and human capital development. Inadequate access to nutritious diets contributes to malnutrition, which negatively affects labour productivity, cognitive development, and long-term economic performance. Poor nutrition remains an important contributor to child and maternal mortality in Ghana (Ministry of Health, 2016). Although the Global Hunger Index (2024) classifies Ghana's hunger level as "moderate," persistent micronutrient deficiencies among children and women of reproductive age demonstrate that food insecurity continues to constrain human capital development.

The economic costs of malnutrition are substantial. Ghana loses an estimated 6.4 percent of annual GDP through productivity losses associated with malnutrition (WFP, 2025). Poor nutrition also affects educational outcomes, as children from food-insecure households are more likely to experience illness, fatigue, and reduced school participation. These effects undermine progress towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 on zero hunger and SDG 3 on good health and well-being.

Effects on Macroeconomic Stability and Economic Growth

Food security challenges are closely connected to macroeconomic performance. Food constitutes 43 percent of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) basket, making food prices a major determinant of overall inflation. The sharp increase in food prices during 2022–2023 was therefore a significant contributor to Ghana's elevated headline inflation, which reached a peak of 54.1 percent in December 2022 and prompted monetary tightening by the Bank of Ghana. The resulting deterioration in purchasing power and economic uncertainty contributed to slower real GDP growth.

High food prices also place additional pressure on public finances by increasing the need for social protection interventions and agricultural support measures. In 2023, for example, the government expanded funding for the School Feeding Programme in response to rising food costs. Similarly, in 2024, the government provided financial assistance to farmers affected by the dry spell in vulnerable agricultural zones. These interventions demonstrate the fiscal implications of food system vulnerabilities and the importance of strengthening resilience to reduce reliance on emergency responses.

2.5 Effects of Food Security Challenges on ECOWAS Integration

Food security and regional integration are closely interconnected within the ECOWAS framework. The ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP), adopted in 2005 and aligned with the continental Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), identifies food security as a central pillar of regional economic cooperation, resilience, and political stability. Consequently, Ghana's food security challenges have implications beyond national borders, affecting regional trade, market integration, macroeconomic coordination, and policy coherence within the ECOWAS community.

Food Trade and Market Integration

A core objective of ECOWAS is the establishment of a common regional market through the free movement of goods, including agricultural commodities. However, Ghana's domestic food supply challenges have periodically resulted in trade restrictions that constrain regional integration efforts. A notable example is the imposition of export restrictions during periods of domestic food shortages. In 2021–2022, amid disruptions to global supply chains and the effects of the Russia–Ukraine war on food and input markets, the government restricted exports of key staples, including maize, rice, and soybean. Similarly, in August 2024, following the onset of a severe dry spell, restrictions were introduced on grain exports. Although these measures were intended to protect domestic supplies and stabilise food prices, they disrupted established trade relationships with neighbouring countries, including Burkina Faso, Niger, Togo, and Côte d'Ivoire.

Import-related measures have also affected regional market integration. In 2022, the Bank of Ghana introduced restrictions on foreign exchange access for the importation of



selected commodities, including rice, poultry, vegetable oil, pasta, and fruit juice. These measures were designed to conserve foreign exchange reserves and encourage domestic production. However, while motivated by legitimate domestic economic concerns, such restrictions can undermine the ECOWAS objective of creating an open and integrated regional food market by limiting trade flows and increasing market fragmentation.

Ghana's continued reliance on rice imports from outside Africa, particularly from Asian suppliers such as Thailand and Vietnam, further illustrates the country's limited integration into regional agricultural value chains. Although ECOWAS has promoted regional rice self-sufficiency through initiatives such as the ECOWAS Rice Offensive, Ghana's limited processing capacity, production constraints, and consumer preferences for imported rice varieties have constrained its participation in regional rice production and value addition networks.

Inflationary Pressures and Divergence in Macroeconomic Conditions

Severe food price inflation, such as the episode experienced by Ghana during 2022–2023, has implications for macroeconomic convergence within ECOWAS. Given the high share of food in household expenditure, particularly among poor and vulnerable populations, rapid increases in food prices can generate broader macroeconomic instability by reducing real incomes, weakening household purchasing power, and constraining economic growth. These pressures complicate efforts to coordinate macroeconomic policies and achieve convergence across member states.

In 2022, for example, Ghana failed to meet all six ECOWAS macroeconomic convergence criteria, representing a deterioration from 2021, when the country satisfied three of the criteria (WAMA, 2023). This experience illustrates how persistent food-related inflationary pressures in major regional economies can undermine progress towards ECOWAS's broader objective of macroeconomic stability and convergence.

Regional Food Reserves and Crisis Response

A key ECOWAS initiative for addressing collective food insecurity is the Regional Food Security Reserve (RFSR), which was operationalised in 2013. The Reserve is designed to provide emergency food assistance during localised crises while complementing national

food reserve systems. Ghana has actively participated in this initiative by hosting national food storage facilities and contributing data to the ECOWAS Regional Agricultural Information System (ECOAGRIS).

Participation in the RFSR has strengthened Ghana's institutional alignment with ECOWAS frameworks for food security monitoring, data harmonisation, and crisis response. The integration of the National Food Buffer Stock Company (NAFCO), which manages Ghana's strategic food reserves, into this regional framework demonstrates this policy convergence.

However, domestic food supply constraints have limited Ghana's capacity to make significant contributions to the regional reserve mechanism. For example, during 2021–2022, domestic shortages of maize and rice constrained the country's ability to meet its commitments to the RFSR while simultaneously maintaining adequate national supplies.

Policy Harmonisation and Institutional Coordination

The ECOWAS agricultural integration framework emphasises policy convergence among member states through the implementation of ECOWAP and alignment with the commitments of the Malabo Declaration. In principle, Ghana's agricultural investment plans have reflected ECOWAP's priorities of food sovereignty, regional market integration, and resilience building. However, implementation has been characterised by limited coordination between national agricultural strategies and broader regional objectives.

National initiatives, including the Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) programme and the Feed Ghana Programme (FGP), have focused largely on increasing domestic production, with comparatively limited emphasis on regional value chains and cross-border market opportunities. While this domestic focus is understandable given Ghana's food security challenges, it may limit opportunities to exploit regional economies of scale, strengthen specialisation, and enhance participation in ECOWAS agricultural markets. Furthermore, insufficient levels of agricultural investment constrain Ghana's capacity to contribute to and benefit from wider regional agricultural transformation efforts.



2.6 Food Security Challenges and Threats in Ghana

Despite progress in agricultural policies and production outcomes, Ghana's food system continues to face structural challenges that threaten the availability, accessibility, utilisation, and stability of food supplies. This subsection identifies and examines the major constraints and emerging threats to food security in the country.

Weak Agricultural Infrastructure and High Post-Harvest Losses

Weak agricultural infrastructure remains a major constraint to achieving food security in Ghana. Inadequate rural roads, storage facilities, and market infrastructure increase transaction costs, limit market access, and contribute to substantial post-harvest losses, estimated at approximately 30 percent of agricultural output (Abubakari et al., 2017). Similarly, limited cold storage and warehousing capacity reduces the ability to preserve perishable commodities, smooth seasonal supply fluctuations, and support efficient food distribution across regions.

Limited access to modern irrigation infrastructure is another critical bottleneck. As noted earlier, only 3.3 percent of cultivated land was irrigated as of 2024, leaving agricultural production highly dependent on rainfall patterns. This reliance increases farmers' exposure to climate variability and production shocks.

Weak transport connectivity between major production areas, particularly in northern Ghana, and major consumption centres such as Accra and Kumasi further constrains market integration. These logistical challenges contribute to regional disparities in food availability and price levels. Strengthening agricultural infrastructure, therefore, is essential not only for increasing production but also for improving food stability, reducing losses, and enhancing affordability.

Dependence on Food Imports

A second structural vulnerability is Ghana's continued dependence on imported food commodities, particularly rice, wheat, poultry, and edible oils. The country currently imports approximately 40 percent of its rice consumption, 67 percent of its tomato supply, and nearly 90 percent of poultry products (MoFA, 2025b). Such dependence exposes the

domestic food system to external supply disruptions, international price volatility, and foreign exchange pressures.

The Russia–Ukraine conflict during 2022–2023 highlighted these vulnerabilities, as disruptions to global supplies of grains, edible oils, and fertilisers contributed to significant increases in domestic food prices. In addition, Ghana’s large food import bill, estimated at US\$2.75 billion in 2024 (GSS, 2025), places pressure on the balance of payments and contributes to exchange rate vulnerabilities.

Government initiatives such as the National Rice Development Strategy II (NRDS II, 2019–2030) seek to increase domestic rice production and reduce import dependence. However, implementation has been constrained by inadequate public investment, high production costs, and limited processing capacity. Without sustained efforts to improve productivity, strengthen value chains, and promote import substitution where economically viable, Ghana’s food security will remain exposed to global market shocks.

Macroeconomic Instability

Recurring macroeconomic instability represents another major threat to food security. Episodes of high inflation, currency depreciation, and fiscal stress directly affect food affordability, agricultural input costs, and the capacity of government to support food system interventions. During 2022–2023, annual inflation exceeded 30 percent in both years, while food inflation averaged 33.7 percent in 2022 and 49.0 percent in 2023. Exchange rate depreciation also increased the cost of imported agricultural inputs, including fertilisers, pesticides, and machinery, reducing farmers’ ability to access essential production resources.

Fiscal constraints have further limited government capacity to finance agricultural support programmes and social protection interventions. For example, delays in payments to suppliers under the Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) programme in 2022 disrupted input supply chains and weakened confidence among programme participants. These developments demonstrate the close relationship between macroeconomic stability and food system resilience.



Achieving sustained macroeconomic stability through prudent fiscal management, export diversification, and exchange rate stability will therefore be critical to reducing recurring food price shocks and protecting vulnerable households from food insecurity.

Population Growth and Urbanisation

Ghana's growing population and rapid urbanisation are creating additional pressures on the food system. The population reached an estimated 33.0 million in 2024 and continues to expand at approximately 2.1 percent annually. Meanwhile, urbanisation has accelerated, with nearly 60 percent of the population residing in urban areas, according to the 2021 Population and Housing Census.

Urbanisation can generate opportunities for agribusiness development, value chain expansion, and increased market demand. However, it also increases dependence on commercial food supply chains and imports while heightening the risk of urban food insecurity. The 2022–2023 cost-of-living crisis demonstrated the vulnerability of urban poor households, as rising food prices combined with higher transport and housing costs to reduce household purchasing power.

Urban expansion also contributes to the conversion of productive agricultural land into residential and industrial uses. This threatens peri-urban food production, particularly vegetable and grain cultivation around major urban centres such as the Greater Accra and Ashanti Regions, thereby reducing the availability of land for domestic food production.

Climate Change and Environmental Degradation

Climate change represents one of the most significant long-term threats to Ghana's food security. Rising temperatures, increasingly variable rainfall patterns, and more frequent droughts and floods are disrupting agricultural production cycles. Average annual temperatures increased from 26.6°C in the 1960s to 27.4°C during 2006–2015, while rainfall patterns have become increasingly unpredictable, particularly in the Northern Savannah and Forest Transition zones, where many staple crops are produced (World Bank, 2020). These climate pressures threaten yields of major crops, including maize, millet, sorghum, and rice (ibid.).

Climate-related shocks are already affecting agricultural communities. Flooding along the White Volta Basin, which extends across the five northern regions, has damaged farmland and displaced farming households, while prolonged dry spells have intensified land degradation, desertification, and soil fertility decline. Without substantial adaptation measures, including expanded irrigation, climate-resilient seed varieties, and climate-smart agricultural practices, the productivity of rain-fed agriculture, which accounts for more than 90 percent of farms, is likely to decline.

Environmental degradation compounds these climate risks. Deforestation associated with logging, charcoal production, and illegal mining has accelerated soil erosion, reduced water availability, and degraded agricultural land. Illegal mining has particularly severe consequences, as it has expanded into farming areas, contaminated water bodies, and reduced the availability of land for crop and livestock production. It has also diverted labour, particularly among young people in rural communities, away from agriculture. If these trends continue, they will significantly undermine Ghana's agricultural potential and long-term food security.

Global and Regional Shocks

Ghana's food security is also influenced by external geopolitical and market shocks. The COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2022) disrupted global supply chains, increased production and logistics costs, and reduced household incomes, while the Russia–Ukraine conflict contributed to disruptions in global grain and fertiliser markets, increasing pressure on domestic food prices and agricultural input costs. Future global shocks, including pandemics, geopolitical conflicts, and energy price volatility, could similarly disrupt food supply chains and destabilise domestic food markets.

At the regional level, insecurity in the Sahel presents additional risks to Ghana's food system. Cross-border conflicts and instability can disrupt regional trade flows, limit access to key markets, and contribute to population displacement into northern Ghana, placing additional pressure on already vulnerable local food systems. These risks underscore the importance of strengthened regional cooperation under ECOWAS, including improved early warning systems, coordinated food reserve mechanisms, and measures to maintain the uninterrupted movement of essential food commodities during periods of crisis.



3. SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE FOOD SECURITY POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Ghana has developed a relatively comprehensive food and agricultural policy framework and has implemented three medium-term agricultural investment plans over the past two decades: METASIP I, METASIP II, and Investing for Food and Jobs (IFJ). These frameworks, together with complementary policies such as the National Nutrition Policy and National Climate Change Policy, provide strategic direction for advancing food security objectives and support policy continuity across successive governments. • Ghana's agricultural policies and strategies are consistently aligned with continental and global frameworks, including the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the Maputo and Malabo Declarations, ECOWAP, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This alignment enhances policy coherence and facilitates access to regional and international financing opportunities. • Ghana has relatively strong agricultural and food security data systems compared with many African countries. Institutions such as the Statistics, Research and Information Directorate (SRID) of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the Ghana Statistical	• Ghana's public expenditure on agriculture remains substantially below the 10 percent Maputo target, typically ranging between 3 and 5 percent of total public expenditure. This underinvestment constrains institutional capacity and limits the effective implementation of policy commitments. Consequently, many programmes remain dependent on donor support, raising concerns about long-term sustainability. • Implementation capacity at the local level remains limited. District Assemblies often lack adequate financial resources, technical expertise, and logistical capacity to effectively implement agricultural, nutrition, and food security interventions. • Policy attention and resource allocation have focused predominantly on increasing food production, with comparatively less emphasis on nutrition outcomes, post-harvest management, climate resilience, irrigation development, and soil health. This imbalance contributes to persistent weaknesses in food utilisation indicators, such as stunting and anaemia, and stability indicators, such as irrigation coverage and land degradation.

Service (GSS), and the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) provide important data and analytical support. This capacity has contributed to Ghana's strong performance in African Union CAADP reporting, reflected in a score of 9.27/10 for mutual accountability in the Fourth CAADP Biennial Review.

- Food security is addressed through coordination among multiple public institutions, including the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Roads, and Ministry of Works, Housing and Water Resources, alongside international organisations working on food and nutrition. This provides a foundation for cross-sector collaboration.
- The presence of public research institutions, agricultural universities and colleges, and international research partnerships provides a strong foundation for innovation. These institutions support the development and dissemination of improved seed varieties, climate-smart agricultural practices, and soil fertility management technologies.

- Ghana lacks a fully integrated food security early warning system that combines meteorological information, market intelligence, nutrition surveillance, and agricultural production forecasts. This limits preparedness and response capacity during climate shocks, food price spikes, and other emerging crises.



Opportunities	Threats
- Public-private partnerships in areas such as irrigation, mechanisation, storage infrastructure, and agro-processing provide opportunities to strengthen implementation capacity while reducing pressure on public finances. - International climate finance mechanisms and blended finance instruments offer opportunities to mobilise additional resources for climate adaptation, resilient agriculture, and sustainable food system investments. - The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and ECOWAS policy frameworks, including ECOWAP and regional food reserve mechanisms, provide opportunities to harmonise standards, expand markets, strengthen regional value chains, and improve food security cooperation. - Digital innovations, including e-extension services, geographic information system (GIS)-based land monitoring, digital input distribution platforms, digital agricultural marketplaces, and mobile-based credit assessment tools, can improve institutional efficiency, strengthen service delivery, and enhance resource allocation. - The Kampala CAADP framework (Kampala Declaration) provides an opportunity to reinvigorate Ghana's	- Fiscal constraints, including high debt service obligations, together with macroeconomic instability arising from inflation and currency depreciation, may limit government's ability to finance food security programmes. At the same time, fiscal consolidation could restrict investment capacity, particularly in the short term. - Ghana's reliance on imported food commodities and agricultural inputs exposes the food system to external shocks, including global supply disruptions, international price volatility, and exchange rate fluctuations. - Climate change, including rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, and more frequent extreme weather events, alongside environmental pressures such as illegal mining, will continue to strain institutional capacity and limited public resources. - Continued dependence on externally funded projects, resulting from inadequate domestic financing, creates sustainability risks and may lead to disruptions when donor priorities or funding cycles change.

agricultural transformation agenda. Its food systems approach, strengthened accountability mechanisms, and measurable targets for nutrition, resilience, and trade offer a platform for improving policy coordination and implementation capacity.



4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Ghana's economy recorded a strong growth rebound in 2024 despite continued macroeconomic pressures. Real GDP expanded by 5.7 percent, nearly double the projected rate of 3.1 percent, supported by robust industrial activity, particularly in construction and mining. However, inflation remained elevated, closing the year at 23.8 percent, well above the ECOWAS average, while the fiscal deficit on a commitment basis widened significantly to 7.9 percent of GDP, largely due to election-related expenditure pressures. Although unemployment declined marginally, youth unemployment remained high, long-term unemployment increased, and structural weaknesses in the labour market persisted. The external sector strengthened, supported by higher gold production and exports, resulting in sizeable trade, current account, and balance of payments surpluses. The outlook points to lower inflation but slower economic growth in 2025 as fiscal consolidation takes effect. Key risks include global commodity price shocks, increases in U.S. import tariffs, and the withdrawal of the Alliance of Sahel States from ECOWAS.

The second section of this report argued that food security challenges are both a consequence and a driver of broader socio-economic vulnerabilities. Although Ghana has recorded significant increases in food production over the past decade, both in aggregate and per capita terms, the country remains heavily dependent on imports of key commodities, including cereals, vegetables, and poultry. This dependence increases vulnerability to external supply disruptions and exchange rate fluctuations. Rising food inflation in recent years has further weakened household purchasing power and constrained food access. At the same time, structural constraints, including limited irrigation, low agricultural productivity, high post-harvest losses, and accelerating land degradation, continue to undermine food system stability. The increase in degraded land from 3.5 percent to 16.6 percent of total land area between 2015 and 2019 highlights the scale of environmental pressures facing agricultural production. Illegal mining, which has contributed substantially to vegetation loss and land degradation, poses an additional threat to long-term food system sustainability.

These food security challenges have significant socio-economic implications, affecting rural livelihoods, employment, household welfare, macroeconomic stability, and Ghana's role in ECOWAS agricultural integration. While Ghana has performed better than most African Union and ECOWAS member states in implementing the Malabo Declaration commitments, it remains off-track in critical areas, including ending hunger, expanding intra-African agricultural trade, and achieving the 10 percent public expenditure target for agriculture. Nevertheless, Ghana possesses important institutional strengths, including relatively strong data systems and a well-developed, continentally aligned food and agricultural policy architecture. These assets provide a foundation for advancing food systems transformation under the 2025 Kampala Declaration and leveraging opportunities arising from the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

To consolidate economic recovery and build a resilient food system, policy action must address both immediate macroeconomic risks and the deeper structural constraints affecting agricultural productivity, food access, and resilience.

Recommendations

The government should:

- **Strengthen fiscal discipline and credibility.** The government should pursue expenditure-led fiscal consolidation to reverse the large election-year fiscal deficit recorded in 2024. Consolidation should focus on improving the efficiency of recurrent expenditure while protecting high-impact investments, particularly infrastructure spending, which has strong growth and productivity effects.
- **Operationalise and strengthen fiscal governance institutions.** The newly legislated Fiscal Council should be fully operationalised and empowered to enforce compliance with fiscal rules. This will support fiscal discipline, strengthen investor confidence, and reduce macroeconomic and financial stability risks.
- **Strengthen financial sector resilience and expand access to credit.** Policies should focus on reducing non-performing loans, improving credit risk management, and encouraging loan restructuring where appropriate. The



government and the Bank of Ghana should accelerate credit market reforms, including the development of a comprehensive digital credit scoring system.

- Mitigate risks associated with the Alliance of Sahel States' (AES) withdrawal from ECOWAS.** Ghana should strengthen security cooperation and maintain trade continuity along regional corridors. This should include enhanced bilateral cooperation, particularly with Burkina Faso, where consistent with Ghana's ECOWAS obligations, alongside continued investment in port efficiency and border infrastructure.
- Address youth unemployment through integrated labour market reforms.** The government should expand well-funded public-private skills development programmes focused on sectors with high employment potential, including agriculture, agro-processing, construction, and information and communications technology (ICT). On the demand side, reforms should improve the operating environment for businesses by restoring macroeconomic stability, reducing the cost of capital, modernising public services, and increasing infrastructure investment.
- Increase public investment in agriculture.** Ghana should progressively raise agricultural expenditure towards the Malabo commitment. A practical pathway would involve doubling the current allocation of approximately 3 percent of public expenditure to 6 percent within two years, followed by a gradual increase to 10 percent within five years. Priority investments should focus on irrigation, mechanisation, productivity-enhancing technologies, and strategic food crops.
- Strengthen domestic production of import-dependent food commodities.** Public and private investment should be mobilised to develop value chains for rice, vegetables, poultry, and other strategic commodities. Priority should also be given to expanding storage, processing capacity, and market infrastructure to reduce post-harvest losses.
- Reduce food price volatility and strengthen market stabilisation mechanisms.** Investments in rural feeder roads should be accelerated to reduce transport costs



and improve market connectivity. The National Food Buffer Stock Company should receive adequate resources to strengthen strategic reserves and respond effectively to temporary supply disruptions.

- **Improve nutrition outcomes and food utilisation.** The government should use Cost of a Healthy Diet (CoHD) evidence to guide nutrition interventions targeting vulnerable groups, particularly women and children. Complementary efforts should promote dietary diversification, food safety, and nutrition awareness through public education and community-based programmes.
- **Restore degraded land and strengthen action against illegal mining.** The government should accelerate land restoration efforts, including the rehabilitation of degraded agricultural and cocoa-producing areas. Measures should include stronger enforcement against illegal mining, improved surveillance, coordination among security and regulatory agencies, and faster prosecution of offenders.
- **Strengthen Ghana's role in ECOWAS regional food security initiatives.** Ghana should reduce reliance on ad hoc agricultural trade restrictions that conflict with ECOWAS objectives. Instead, it should work with regional partners to develop integrated value chains in rice, horticulture, and livestock to reduce collective import dependence and strengthen regional food security.

ECOWAS should:

- **Develop a coordinated regional response to declining external development finance.** ECOWAS should assess the impact of reduced donor support, particularly following reductions in USAID assistance, on critical sectors such as food security and health. Based on this assessment, member states should pursue coordinated resource mobilisation strategies using both regional and external financing mechanisms.
- **Adopt a coordinated response to changes in the U.S.' tariff policy.** ECOWAS should engage with U.S. authorities to preserve preferential trade arrangements that support member states' exports. Over the medium to long term, it should support export diversification by strengthening trade relationships with emerging



markets, including Asia and South America, while simultaneously addressing barriers to intra-regional trade.



REFERENCES

- Abubakari, M., Buah, S. S. J., Kanton, R. A. L. & Sugri, I. (2017). *Appropriate postharvest practices for improved grain storage*. CSIR–Savanna Agricultural Research Institute.
- African Union. (2003). *Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa*. African Union.
- African Union. (2014). *Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods*. African Union.
- African Union Commission. (2024). *4th CAADP Biennial Review Report 2015–2023*. African Union.
- African Union Commission. (2025). *Kampala CAADP Declaration on Building Resilient and Sustainable Agrifood Systems in Africa*. African Union.
- Bank of Ghana. (2025). *2024 Annual report and financial statements*. Bank of Ghana.
- Earth Observatory. (2021, June 15). *The large footprint of small-scale mining in Ghana*. NASA. <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/148434/the-large-footprint-of-small-scale-mining-in-ghana> Earth Observatory
- Food and Agriculture Organisation. (1996). *Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action*. FAO.
- Ghana Statistical Service. (2019). *Ghana Living Standards Survey 7 (GLSS 7) Main Report Final*. GSS.
- Ghana Statistical Service. (2021). *Ghana 2021 Population and Housing Census General Report Volume 3E–Economic Activity*. GSS.
- Ghana Statistical Service. (2025). *Ghana 2024 Trade Report*. GSS.
- International Economics Consulting and ECOWAS Commission. (2025). *Trade in ECOWAS: Impact of U.S. Tariffs*. ECOWAS Commission.
- International Monetary Fund. (2025). *Ghana: Fourth Review under the Arrangement under the Extended Credit Facility, Request for Modification of Performance Criteria*.



Financing Assurances Review, and Monetary Policy Consultation – Staff Report No. 2025/175. IMF Staff Country Reports.

Jones, A. D., Ngure, F. M., Pelto, G., & Young, S. L. (2013). What are we assessing when we measure food security? A compendium and review of current metrics. *Advances in Nutrition*, 4(5), 481–505.

Kenny, C. and Sandefur, J. (2025, March 26). *USAID cuts: New estimates at the country level*. Centre for Global Development. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/usaids-cuts-new-estimates-country-level>

Ministry of Food and Agriculture. (2018). *Investing for Food and Jobs. An Agenda for Transforming Ghana's Agriculture (2018–2021)*. Government of Ghana.

Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ghana Statistical Service, World Food Programme, & Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. (2020). *Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA)–Ghana*. Government of Ghana.

Ministry of Food and Agriculture. (2022). *Agriculture in Ghana: Facts and Figures (2021)*. Statistics, Research and Information Directorate (SRID), Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

Ministry of Food and Agriculture. (2024, August 27). *Dry spell update: Government unveils measures to mitigate effects on food system and farmers*. <https://mofa.gov.gh/site/index.php/media-centre/latest-news/item/655-dry-spell-update-government-unveils-measures-to-mitigate-effects-on-food-system-and-farmers>

Ministry of Food and Agriculture. (2025). *Cost of a Healthy Diet in Ghana–2024 Annual Report*. Statistics, Research and Information Directorate (SRID), Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

Ministry of Food and Agriculture. (2025). *Programme-based budget estimates for 2025*. Government of Ghana.

Ministry of Health. (2016). *National Nutrition Policy*. Government of Ghana.

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. (2023). *Ghana: National report for the seventh reporting process (PRAIS 4)*. Government of Ghana.

West African Monetary Agency. (2023). *ECOWAS Macroeconomic Convergence Report for 2022*. WAMA.

World Bank. (2020). *Climate-Smart Agriculture Investment Plan for Ghana*. World Bank.

World Bank. (2023). *7th Ghana Economic Update—Price Surge: Unraveling Inflation’s Toll on Poverty and Food Security*. World Bank.

World Food Programme. (2025, August). *Ghana Country Brief*. WFP.



101, Yakubu Gowon Crescent,
Asokoro District, P.M.B 401,
Abuja, Nigeria

www.ecowas.int

ISBN 978-978-61827-4-2



9 789786 182742