



## GOVERNING JUSTLY AND DEMOCRATICALLY

### OVERVIEW

#### PROFILE

Date of Independence: 1957  
Population: 23 million (2007)  
Languages: English, Akan, Mole-Dagbani, Ewe, Ga-Adangbe, Guan, and others  
GDP per capita: \$716 (2008)  
*Source: U.S. State Department*

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### BACKGROUND

Ghana is a stable, democratic country with a free press, independent judiciary, apolitical military, and active civil society. Five credible national elections have been held since its return to democracy in 1992. Over the past few years, Ghana has pursued a robust macroeconomic reform agenda, which has resulted in a significant decline in poverty and steady growth in gross domestic product. In 2007, commercial quantities of oil were discovered off the coast of Ghana, which may provide a revenue stream that could rapidly accelerate growth and move Ghana toward its goal of middle income status by 2020. To sustain these goals, USAID supports good governance, health, education, and economic growth. In 2006, the Millennium Challenge Corporation signed a five-year, \$547-million compact with the Government of Ghana, which focuses on agriculture.



### DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE PROGRAMS

USAID supports Ghana's efforts to consolidate democracy by strengthening civic participation in democratic processes and ensuring that local and national governments are responsive to the needs and interests of their citizens. Ghana's decentralization efforts coupled with strong citizen participation will provide the foundation for better delivery of services. USAID programs ensure that local activities are harmonized with central government policies and that local governments increase their capacity to plan, budget, and implement effectively with citizen input. USAID also continues to enhance civil society's capacity to advocate and engage with government. USAID is planning initiatives in the Western Region that will be especially critical as oil and gas production will require heightened attention by local governments.

### GOOD GOVERNANCE

In a region fraught with turmoil, Ghana is a welcome model of stability. Small steps are taken daily towards consolidating democracy in this West African nation. However, in spite of this progress, Ghana continues to suffer from weak governance institutions, corruption and a lack of clarity on policies to manage oil and gas revenues. In spite of commitments to decentralization, Ghana's governance systems and practices remain highly centralized, with limited citizen participation. The Government Accountability Improves Trust II program, which ended in July 2009, was effective in establishing strong "working together" approaches in 25 targeted districts (out of the existing 170 districts) in which local governments engaged citizens in their budget making and development planning processes. USAID solidifies previous achievements by advancing a new strategic objective, strengthening democratic governance through civic involvement, to make capacity building for government officials an explicit part of the objective statement.



# USAID | GHANA

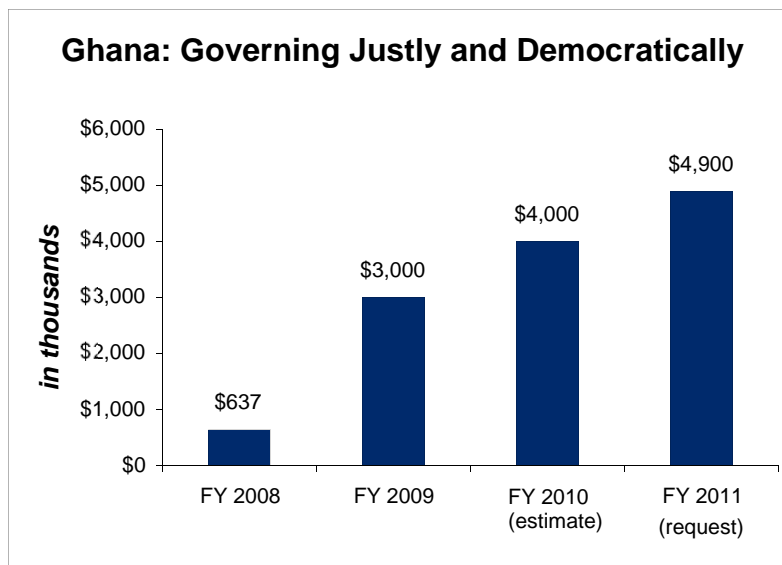
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

This strategy involves expanding public participation in local governance, increasing internally generated funding of targeted local districts, and achieving comprehensive development planning for local districts.

## CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society is vibrant in Ghana. According to a 2008 European Commission study, there are approximately 3,800 registered civil society organizations, with the largest concentration in the capital of Accra. Small, rural organizations operate throughout the country with varying degrees of effectiveness. The challenges facing civil society in Ghana include a lack of technical capacity and inadequate financial resources. Civil society groups at the local level, peer educators and others have been conducting USAID programs in health, education, water, and sanitation. In addition, USAID assists in strengthening the capacity of civic groups to engage with local governments by providing technical assistance and training through their networks. As a result, citizen groups are being given observer status in local governments and their representatives are serving on subcommittees.

## FUNDING



On behalf of the American people, the U.S. government has provided humanitarian assistance and economic development to those in need around the world since the Marshall Plan.