

**GOVERNMENT OF GHANA**



**MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**



# **NATIONAL URBAN POLICY FRAMEWORK**

**MAY 2012**





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# Foreword

This is the first time in the history of Ghana that a comprehensive urban policy has been formulated to promote a sustainable, spatially integrated and orderly development of urban settlements with adequate housing and services, efficient institutions, sound living and working environment for all people to support rapid socio-economic development of Ghana.

The most spectacular change in Ghana over the last few decades has been the dramatic demographic shift from rural areas to the cities. For instance, with well over 70% rural at independence, the country is now over 50% urbanized. As cities and towns in Ghana have confronted this demographic explosion, urban management has become all the more challenging amid the current trend toward decentralization. With little experience in urban management, local governments have often been unable to develop strategies and plans to mobilise the resources they need to deal with urban growth.

Successive government interventions and response to urbanization and urban growth have been piece-meal and fragmented in character, and at best been largely pursued within the framework of a number of development plans. In the absence of clearly defined policy direction on urban development, past government interventions in the urban sector have largely been project-based and not comprehensive enough. The response has been limited, and hence, the increasing challenges confronting the Ghanaian urban sector. To forestall this trend, the Ministry in-conjunction with key stakeholders has formulated this policy to guide the country's urban development programmes and projects.

It is instructive to note that with the advent of His Excellency, the late President Mills's government in relation to its "Better Ghana Agenda" under the auspices of the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA) the policy formulation process was initiated in 2009 and adopted the participatory approach. The process of consultations and reviews carried out over a period of 2 years, confirmed the importance and benefits of urbanization to people, civil society groups, private sector, national and local governments, traditional authorities, development partners among others in the sustainable development of Ghana.

The policy seeks to address some of the fundamental problems associated with urban development and management in the country. These include a weak urban economy, land-use disorder and uncontrolled urban sprawl, increasing environmental deterioration, inadequate urban services, urban poverty, slums and squatter settlements, weak urban governance and institutional coordination, delimitation of urban areas of jurisdiction and lack of integrated planning across jurisdictional boundaries, weak rural-urban linkages, limited data and information on urban areas, inadequate urban investment and financing, weak information, education and communication strategy, and weak urban transportation planning and traffic management and a host of other challenges associated with our decentralization programme.

Though the policies enshrined in this document do not provide an all-round panacea or solution for all our urbanization challenges, they provide the framework and direction for dealing with issues of urban governance, safety and security in the urban areas, promotion of urban economic development with emphasis on local economic development and informal sector. It also seeks to improve the environmental quality of urban life, effective urban planning and management to curb excessive urban sprawl, improve access to adequate and affordable housing.

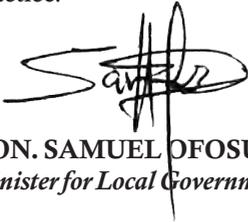
The document further deals with issues of facilitating re-distribution of urban population, strengthen applied research in urban and regional development, expand sources of funding for urban development and strengthen urban financial management. Finally the document seeks to ensure efficient urban infrastructure and service delivery, promote climate change adaptation and mitigation, and promote a spatially integrated hierarchy of urban centres on a sustained basis.

One key element of the policy thrust is the involvement of the local community, opinion leaders, traditional authorities, religious groups, development partners, state and non-state actors in the urban development and management process. It provides for decision-making framework that takes on board all identifiable stakeholders. Indeed, it forms an integral part of our commitment to deepen the decentralization programme that the late President Mills government has embarked upon since 2009.

In line with the principle of participatory democracy and multi-stakeholders process approach to sustainable development, provision has been made in the document for periodic review and adjustment to reflect emerging realities in urbanization and its challenges in Ghana. In addition, an action plan has been developed to guide the implementation of the policy initiatives and action areas.

As we grapple with old and new challenges in a rapidly urbanizing Ghana, this timely policy framework will serve as a useful guide for effective and efficient urbanization to facilitate sustainable socio-economic development of our beloved country. In developing this policy we have also taken cognizance of the fact that URBANIZATION is irreversible and is a natural phenomenon in development.

Finally, I would like to commend all the ministries, departments and agencies for their cooperation, commitment and unstinting efforts in developing this policy. The opinions, remarks and contributions received during the extensive stakeholder consultations have enriched the policy document. It is my fervent hope that this policy document would be translated from paper commitment to practice.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Amfofo', with a vertical line extending downwards from the bottom of the signature.

**HON. SAMUEL OFOSU AMPOFO**  
*Minister for Local Government and Rural Development*

# Acknowledgement

The methodology used in developing this policy adopted a participatory approach and the entire process was a collaborative effort involving extensive consultations with identified stakeholders at the state and non-state level of organisations. Notable amongst them are the central government ministries, departments, agencies (MDAs), regional coordinating councils (RCCs), local government officials, private sector representatives, civil society groups, traditional authorities, development partners, community members and the general public. The development of this policy would not have been possible without the financial and technical assistance from the Support for Decentralization Reforms programme of the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) and the World Bank through the Ghana Urban Transport Project.

The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development would like to register its profound gratitude for the support this process received from the Former President of the Republic of Ghana, His Excellency the Late Professor John E. A. Mills and His Excellency the President of the Republic of Ghana, John Dramani Mahamah. Indeed, it was at the Presidency that this policy got the tacit support to involve all MDAs for their inputs into its development.

At the Ministerial level, this policy document was developed under the astute leadership and guidance of Honourable Samuel Ofose Ampofo, Minister for Local Government and Rural Development. The substantial work done by Hon. Elvis Afriyie-Ankrah and Hon. S.M.E.K. Ackah, Deputy Ministers for Local Government and Rural Development cannot go unmentioned. Our recognitions extend to the Technical Backstopping Team members; Mr Richard Acquah-Harrison, a retired Senior Human Settlements Advisor, UN-HABITAT and Mr C.N.K. Boateng, a retired National Director of Town and Country Planning Department, who made contributions at every stage of the policy formulation process.

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Yankson and Professor George Owusu. The entire process was successfully and professionally coordinated by Mr Kwadwo Yeboah, Principal Town Planning Officer at the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development.

We also recognize the significant work done by the Technical Working Group made up of

Professor E. K. A. Tamakloe,	Formerly of Department of Planning, KNUST, ( <i>Chairman</i> )
Professor J. Songsore	Geography Department, University of Ghana
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Mr Charles Boakye	Formerly of World Bank, Consultant, Infrastructure Engineer
Mr L. Hesse	Department of Urban Roads
Mr I.B. Williams	Town & Country Planning Department
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Mr A. Opoku Boamah	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
Mr Yahaya H. Yakubu	Ministry of Water Resources Works and Housing
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Professor S.E. Owusu	Centre for Settlement Studies, KNUST
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Environmental Protection Agency  
Town and Country Planning Department  
National Development Planning Commission  
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The ministry appreciates the considerable support from all the Regional Ministers during the ten (10) regional validation workshops. This acknowledgement is not complete without mentioning the names of Hon. Joseph Yieleh Chireh (MP) and Mr Daniel A. Nyankamawu, former Minister and former Chief Director of this Ministry respectively who initiated the policy formulation process.

Finally, my acknowledgements go to the good people of Ghana for their effective participation and contribution to the entire process. The views, comments and inputs received during the stakeholder consultations are reflected in the policy document.



**NANA BRIGHT ODURO KWATENG**

*Chief Director*

*Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development*

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

DPCU	District Planning Coordinating Unit
GIS	Geographic Information System
GIZ	German Development Cooperation
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
ILUTP	Integrated Land Use and Transportation Planning
LAP	Land Administration Project
LED	Local Economic Development
LUPMP	Land Use Planning and Management Project
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NUP	National Urban Policy
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council
RPCU	Regional Planning Coordinating Unit
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SMEs	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
SSNIT	Social Security and National Insurance Trust
TCPD	Town and Country Planning Department
UDU	Urban Development Unit

# Definition of Terminologies

## **Housing**

Broadly defined as a multi-dimensional commodity that includes physical shelter, the related services and infrastructure, and the inputs such as land and finance required to produce and maintain it. Housing also covers the solutions geared towards improving the shelter and the environment in which it exist. When housing is reduced to shelter or living space only, dwellings tend to be built without regard to the environment and services needed to support their inhabitants.

## **National Urban Policy**

This is a framework for ensuring the sustainable growth and development of cities and towns of all sizes in a country. Such a policy framework incorporates social, economic, political, spatial, environmental and all other relevant factors. The policy framework serves as a guide in making specific decisions at the national and local levels and which affect the pattern of urban growth in the nation.

## **Peri-urban**

Generally referred to the area between the built-up urbanised land of a city where non-agricultural activities predominate and the surrounding rural areas engaged predominantly in agricultural activities. Peri-urban or urban fringe areas can be described as transitional zones with both rural and urban characteristics, but nevertheless on the path to becoming urban.

## **Slum**

Indicate housing which falls below a certain level necessary for human development.

## **Squatter settlement**

Refers to housing that is either the result of illegal occupation or has been developed in an unauthorized fashion

## **Sustainable Development**

A development process which does not impact adversely on the environment and which takes into account the needs of present generation as well as future generations

**Urbanization** Proportion of the total population living in settlements defined as 'urban' or else a rise in this proportion.

### **Urban area (centre)**

No universally accepted single definition of an urban centre exists. Countries therefore generally define towns based on several approaches taking into account their level of socio-economic development. Ghana uses the statistical or population approach. By this approach, an urban centre (town) in Ghana is officially defined as any settlement with a population of 5000 or more. However, no official definitions exist for various urban categories such as 'small', 'medium' and 'large' towns

In addition to the criterion of minimum population size, some countries combine population with some other diagnostic criteria to define urban places such as the majority of the workforce being engaged in non-farm activities for the settlement to qualify as urban. Third, administrative criteria-the majority of towns and cities in the world are defined according to legal or administrative criteria and this may have little correspondence with the actual physical extent of the urban area. The fourth is functional classification, which reflects the real extent of the influence of an urban area. Ghana should take a cue from these in re-defining the concept of urban beyond the population criterion

### **Urban growth**

Growth in the physical area expansion and/or increase in the population of towns and cities

### **Urban sprawl**

Broadly defined as the uncontrolled outward expansion or growth of cities, resulting in the creation of urban neighbourhoods which are under-serviced.

## Prologue

Urbanisation is one of the most significant processes that have affected human societies especially since the last century. It is an inter-sectoral phenomenon involving all aspects of human society and economy. Towns and cities perform various functions not only for the space economies they serve but increasingly the importance of some of them extends to the regional and global levels. However, urbanisation poses certain challenges if not properly managed. It needs to be stressed that the challenges posed by urbanisation would not simply go away without conscious efforts and interventions. The close association between urbanisation and socio-economic development requires that every effort must be made to minimise the challenges, and thus enhance or maximise the benefits of the process.

Therefore, the National Urban Policy (NUP) represents a bold attempt to comprehensively intervene in the urban sector to facilitate and promote the sustainable development of Ghanaian cities and towns. Such an attempt which has been long in forthcoming after the initial attempts in the immediate post-independence era, reflects a growing consensus among majority of the Ghanaian stakeholders of the need to promote the sustainable development of the towns and cities as nodal points or engines of growth for national and regional development.

This National Urban Policy document makes a bold statement to promote socio-economic development of Ghanaian urban centres – a development process which is all-inclusive and takes account of the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. In addition, it adheres to the country's environmental policy by advocating for all environmental concerns to be incorporated in all decision-making about urban development. The NUP is also in accordance with Ghana's Habitat Agenda. More importantly, it makes far reaching proposals in an Action Plan for implementation in order to arrest rising inequalities in socio-economic and spatial terms and advance towards sustainable development.

The policy document makes it clear that Ghana is unlikely to benefit from a comprehensive urban intervention without active participation of the Ghanaian society. It therefore calls for enhanced participatory and accountable good governance as well as pursuance of an effective Information, Education and Communication (IEC) strategy to promote public ownership to facilitate the implementation of the policy.

## Ghana's Urbanization A Historical and Future Demographic Profile

YEAR	1960	1970	1984	2000	2010	2030**
National Population	6,726,815	8,559,213	12,296,081	18,912,079	24,658,823	34,715,384
National Pop. Growth Rate	-	2.4% (1960-70)	2.6% (1970-84)	2.7% (1984-2000)	2.5% (2000-2010)	-
Urban Population	1,551,174	2,472,456	3,934,796	8,274,270	12,545,229	22,565,000
Urban Pop. Growth Rate	-	4.7% (1960-70)	3.3% (1970-84)	4.6% (1984-2000)	4.25% (2000-2010)	2.79
Urban Share of National Pop.	23%	29%	32%	44%	50.9%	65%
Number of Urban Localities	98	135	203	366	-	-
All Localities	-	47,769	56,170	88,656	-	-

Source:

- 1) Ghana Statistical Service 2005: Population Data Analysis Report Volume 2: **Policy Implications of Population Trends** (GSS 2005)
- 2) Ghana Statistical Service, May 2012: 2010 Population & Housing Census; Summary Report of Final Result
- 3) UN-HABITAT 2012: State of the World's Cities 2012/213: Prosperity of Cities \*\*

# 1.0 BACKGROUND

## 1.1 Introduction

Ghana is urbanizing rapidly. Yet, the country lacks a comprehensive urban policy for guiding the growth and development of its towns and cities. Consequently, the rapid pace of urbanization is taking place within a context in which the growth of the cities and towns is occurring with little or no direction.

The absence of a national urban policy has undermined the policy coherence of the multiple central and local government institutions that perform urban development functions. The situation has affected institutional coordination and harmonization for urban development and management. With the responsibility for urban development thinly spread among several Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) and other players without strong coordination, performances tend to be conflicting, cost-prohibitive and ineffective.

In order to respond well and fully to the compounding urban challenges as well as to better harness the benefits of urbanization, the responsive efforts by stakeholders should flow from a clearly defined policy direction; hence the preparation and presentation of a National Urban Policy.

## 1.2 Policy Formulation Process

The preparation of the National Urban Policy commenced in March 2009. It was undertaken through sets of activities that included the following:-

- The current situation and framework conditions for urban development and management in the country were assessed through a review of existing studies and other available empirical data.
- A series of consultations, through zonal fora and cross-country field interviews, were held with stakeholders that included MDAs, Regional Coordinating Council (RCCs), MMDAs, Traditional Authorities, selected professionals, and the civil society group including the private sector. The consultations served to secure the involvement of the key stakeholders in the policy preparation process.

- A draft policy proposal was prepared on the bases of the background investigation/situation analysis made and the outcome of the stakeholder consultations.
- The draft policy proposal was subjected to a technical review by a multidisciplinary group of technical experts.
- A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the draft policy proposal was conducted in a workshop with the key stakeholders, under the technical leadership of the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Following the SEA and essential incorporation of recommendations, ten broad stakeholders' consultation workshops were conducted in the regions to consider and validate the reviewed draft policy proposal. Ten validated reports were consolidated and integrated to produce a Final Draft National Urban Policy Framework.
- A draft Action Plan, founded on the final Draft Policy Framework, was prepared.
- Three zonal stakeholder consultation workshops were conducted to review and validate the draft Action Plan.
- Cabinet considered and approved the final draft National Urban Policy Proposal with its draft Action Plan for implementation.

### **1.3 The Urban Situation: Problems/Challenges**

A background comprehensive study and report of the country's urban situation is presented in a separate Volume to highlight in detail the urban growth and development issues that confront the country.

In outline, the urban growth and development challenges are:-

#### **Overconcentration of growth and development in a few cities**

A skewed urban settlement and development system increasingly concentrates population, investments, economic activities and services in a few large urban settlements, especially in and around Accra and Kumasi. The system fails to promote socio-economic development of the country's vast rural and lagging regions.

### **A weak urban economy:**

The urban economy faces difficult challenges. It continually fails to generate enough industrial development and growth; it fails to induce and advance adequate development and growth of the urban hinterland; and it has a large struggling informal component that receives little institutional credit support. The urban economy also generates limited, inadequate employment for a rapidly growing urban population.

There is also a policy vacuum regarding the urban economy. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, as a matter of course, tends to focus on national/macro economic development policy; but at the local level, District Assemblies do not have structures responsible for economic development, and therefore there is no formal policy direction and support for local economic development, particularly that of the urban informal sector.

### **Land-use disorder and uncontrolled urban sprawl**

Inadequate budgetary support and a weak statutory basis for strategic planning, land use control and urban management have resulted in haphazard development, urban sprawl of the cities and large towns, and squatter/ informal settlements – all with grossly deficient basic urban infrastructure and services. The lack of support for planning has also resulted in the increasing congestion of city centres, a deficient intra urban transportation system, widespread traffic congestion, and environmental degradation.

### **Increasing environmental deterioration**

Environmental deterioration arises from conflicting land uses; unsatisfactory collection, disposal, and treatment of waste; choked drains and frequent flooding; coastal erosion and denudation; ineffective management of quarrying of mineral aggregates; ineffective land use management and environmental protection; and the attitudinal indiscipline of the growing urban population.

### **Inadequate urban infrastructure and services**

Due to rapid population growth, increase in economic activities, unplanned development and limited funds available, central government agencies and metropolitan and municipal assemblies cannot cope with the demands for infrastructure and services. This challenge has been compounded by the weak capacities of municipal and metropolitan local governments. In the absence of formal provision of infrastructure and services, the majority of the urban population resort to informal channels in obtaining urban services, most at a relatively higher cost or price.

### **Increasing Urban Insecurity**

Inadequate urban employment opportunities, the large army of unemployable youth with limited skills and training, and the high drop-out rates in schools are contributing to a high crime wave in urban Ghana, especially in the large cities – Accra, Kumasi and Tamale. A serious and emerging issue related to urban insecurity is the increasing vulnerability of urban areas to disaster. This arises from several sources, including cities developing or expanding into risk-prone sites, a general state of weak urban governance, and the absence of urban planning which incorporates objectives for security.

### **Urban Poverty, Slums and Squatter Settlements**

Faced with low-income jobs in the urban informal sector and poor wages and salaries, many urban dwellers are falling into the poverty bracket. They cannot afford formal housing; so they seek a foothold in slum and squatter settlements with highly overcrowded units, poor sanitation, disintegrating infrastructure and insufficient services. As a result of rising urban unemployment and problems of access to land and other resources, the family is ceasing to be the basic economic unit of production, distribution and consumption that can ensure the survival of its vulnerable members – infants and children, old persons and the disadvantaged. This situation contributes to streetism and homelessness.

### **Weak Urban Governance and Institutional Coordination**

Urban development and management in Ghana has multiple stakeholders with planning, management and operational responsibilities. The stakeholders include the MMDAs, parastatals, customary landowners, NGOs, the private sector and individuals. At the core of the urban governance challenges are; (i) weak governance structures; (ii) lack of capacity of the MMDAs to perform urban management functions under the decentralization policy as outlined in the provisions of the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462) and the National Development Planning (Systems) Act, 1994 (Act 480); (iii) failure of MDAs to transfer functions, personnel and resources to the MMDAs as required under the decentralization policy; (iv) failure of MMDAs and RCC to effect institutional coordination, as required under Act 462; (v) parallel statutory provisions; and (vi) external donor programmes and projects whose implementation arrangements tend to undermine the decentralization policy. The prevailing institutional situation weakens urban governance and, consequently, urban development.

### **Weak Information, Education and Communication Strategy**

MDAs and MMDAs have been undertaking activities pertaining to information, education and communication, but their impact in terms of creating awareness

and participation of people in the development process is limited. As a result, there is (i) very little awareness of, and interest in, the laws and regulations on development controls, and (ii) no community participation in identifying and dealing with the unauthorized development found in many urban communities.

### **Inadequate Urban Investment and Financing**

The urban sector has received a fair amount of investment funds over the past two decades, but most of the funding has been directed towards sporadic projects which are not based on comprehensive urban sector needs assessments and strategic plans. The lack of comprehensive interventions and limited funds has resulted in a situation whereby the impact of these projects has not been effective in promoting urban centres as engines of growth, and as places providing sound living and a satisfactory working environment.

### **Weak Urban Transportation Planning and Traffic Management**

Weak transportation and traffic management, and a limited mode of transport (mainly by road) are extremely costly in terms of time spent in traffic, as well as fuel, vehicle maintenance and doing business in many large Ghanaian towns and cities. These costs are making many Ghanaian cities, especially Accra and Kumasi, uncompetitive, and they limit investments in these centres and the country at large. The urban transport and traffic congestion issue is due mainly to the absence of Integrated Land-Use and Transportation Planning (ILUTP), including (i) a continuous survey of the origin and distribution of traffic entering the cities and large towns; and (ii) parking needs studies. The Department of Urban Roads has been widening roads and introducing new road links, urban transport operators have been putting more buses on the roads, and the Motor Traffic Unit has been managing traffic. But because of the absence of an ILUTP, all attempts have brought about very little improvement in the urban transportation and traffic situation.

### **Delimitation of Urban Areas of Jurisdiction, and Lack of Integrated Planning Across Jurisdictional Boundaries**

Cities and other urban centres, such as Accra and Kumasi, have grown beyond their jurisdictional boundaries into adjoining political districts. Thousands of people in the peri-urban or peripheral urban areas travel to Accra and Kumasi to work, and they make great demands on the facilities and services provided in the cities. There are three issues: (i) city authorities, for lack of jurisdiction, are not able to adequately address the planning needs of the peripheral population; (ii) official city, town and district boundary demarcations in Ghana have not taken into consideration this over-spilling growth of urban settlements and the socio-economic linkages; and (iii) the city/municipal authorities and the neighbouring

district authorities fail to cooperate to undertake joint integrated planning, as directed under the provisions of Act 480.

### **Weak Rural-Urban Linkages**

The growth of urban and rural economies depends on strong functional linkages such as road networks, service delivery linkages, goods production and distribution linkages, and political and administrative linkages. These and other linkages, upon which economic growth depends, are weak in Ghana.

### **Limited Data and Information on Urban Centres**

Detailed disaggregated data on Ghanaian cities and towns are difficult to come by. While census data provide some important information on Ghanaian cities, they are insufficient. It is generally acknowledged in research and policy circles that there is a paucity of up-to-date information on cities in Ghana.

## **2.0 THE POLICY FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Guiding Principles**

The National Urban Policy is based on seven key guiding principles and the country's environmental policy, which requires all policies, plans and programmes to be subjected to a sustainable environmental assessment (SEA). The principles also emerge from national convictions in democratic constitutional practice, lessons in the country's development history and global lessons in urbanization. They are:-

#### **2.1.1 Promoting Urban Centres as Engines of Growth**

Cities and towns are engines of growth and incubators of civilisation which facilitate the evolution and transmission of knowledge, innovation, culture, industry and commerce. Urban settlements, properly planned and managed, promote economic growth, human development and the protection of the natural and built environment.

#### **2.1.2 Promoting Development through an Integrated Settlement System**

Human settlements across the national territory are functionally interdependent. An integrated settlement system enhances rural-urban linkages and promotes equitable distribution of the benefits of development to reach populations in the various settlements of the country.

#### **2.1.3 Facilitating Socio-Economic Development of Rural and Lagging Regions**

The Directive Principle of State Policy 35 (i) (d) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana calls for "... even and balanced development of all regions and every part of each region, and, in particular, improving the conditions of life in the rural areas, and generally, redressing any imbalance in development between the rural and the urban areas".

#### **2.1.4 Mainstreaming Environmental concerns into Urban Development**

Urban inhabitants have a right to the sustainable development of human settlements, environmental quality, good health, and wellbeing. This is a key guiding principle in accordance with Ghana's Environmental Policy and its related SEA.

#### **2.1.5 Enhancing Participatory and Accountable Urban Governance**

The principle of enhancing participatory and accountable urban governance

seeks to strengthen urban management in the country in the context of decentralization. The participation of all relevant stakeholders ensures better transparency and accountability.

#### **2.1.6 Employing Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Strategy**

IEC employed on a continuous basis (i) creates awareness of, and promotes interest in, policies directed towards urban planning, management and development; and (ii) promotes the ownership of policies and the involvement of all stakeholders in the implementation of policies.

#### **2.1.7 Emphasizing the Roles of Central and Local Governments**

The central government and local governments, on account of their position, are better placed to analyse the entire urban system and respond to compelling countrywide concerns about urban growth and development.

## **2.2 THE VISION AND GOAL**

### **Vision of Ghana**

Ghana's development vision for the past two decades has been to lift as many Ghanaians as possible out of poverty in the shortest possible time through a structural transformation of the economy, and to attain a middle income status.

### **Goal of the Policy**

Addressing the challenges of the urban situation, with focus on the broader national development vision, *the goal of the National Urban Policy (NUP) is to promote a sustainable, spatially integrated and orderly development of urban settlements with adequate housing, infrastructure and services, efficient institutions, and a sound living and working environment for all people to support the rapid socio-economic development of Ghana.*

## **2.3 OBJECTIVES OF POLICY**

In order to attain the above goal of the NUP, the following objectives will be pursued:

- i. To facilitate balanced re-distribution of urban population.
- ii. To promote a spatially integrated hierarchy of urban centres.

- iii. To promote urban economic development
- iv. To improve environmental quality of urban life.
- v. To ensure effective planning and management of urban growth and sprawl, especially of the primate cities and other large urban centres.
- vi. To ensure efficient urban infrastructure and service delivery.
- vii. To improve access to adequate and affordable low-income housing.
- viii. To promote urban safety and security.
- ix. To strengthen urban governance.
- x. To promote climate change adaptation and mitigation mechanisms.
- xi. To strengthen applied research in urban and regional development.
- xii. To expand sources of funding for urban development and strengthen urban financial management.

### 3.0 POLICY INITIATIVES FOR ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES

There could be several policy initiatives towards the achievement of the objectives, but in an environment of increasingly scarce resources, it is crucial that priorities are clearly identified and actively pursued by all the relevant stakeholders. In order to achieve the preceding objectives, the following initiatives will be pursued:-

#### 3.1 Initiatives to achieve Objective 1: *Facilitating balanced re-distribution of urban population*

- i. Create new growth points as counter-magnets to fast growing cities such as Accra and Kumasi.
- ii. Promote accelerated growth of small and medium-sized towns, including district and regional capitals.
- iii. Ensure that existing and newly created centres adhere to best environmental and land management practices.

#### 3.2 Initiatives to achieve Objective 2: *Promoting spatially integrated hierarchy of urban centres*

- i. Undertake a study and establish a hierarchy of urban centres for defined functions and levels of services.
- ii. Spatially integrate regional and district capitals by transportation and communications facilities and other relevant services within the context of the guidelines provided in national and regional spatial development frameworks as recommended in the outputs of the Land Use Planning and Management Project (LUPMP).
- iii. Minimize the travel time between service centres of all sizes and their hinterlands.
- iv. Establish rural service centres and strengthen rural-urban linkages to promote agriculture and development of agro-based industries.

#### 3.3 Initiatives to achieve Objective 3: *Promoting urban economic development*

- i. Promote local economic development (LED).
- ii. Improve urban services and infrastructure to support economic development and advance industrial investments and production.
- iii. Target infrastructural investments in growth centres as the choice destination for investments and other economic activities.

- iv. Enhance the competitiveness of Ghanaian cities in regional and international context.
- v. Change official attitude towards the informal enterprises from neglect to recognition and policy support.
- vi. Ensure that urban planning provides for the activities of the informal economy.
- vii. Build up and upgrade the operational capacities of the informal enterprises.
- viii. Improve funding support for the informal economy.

### **3.4 Initiatives to achieve Objective 4: *Improving environmental quality of urban life***

- i. Develop and manage infrastructure systems with the appropriate technology needed to provide basic hygienic conditions in towns and cities.
- ii. Prepare and implement sanitation action plans for all leading urban centres, including related statutory regulations and bylaws for ensuring effective collection, disposal and treatment of solid, liquid and toxic waste.
- iii. Generate environmental awareness by increasing mass media public education programmes on sanitation in schools and public places.
- iv. Provide adequate equipment and operational funds to support waste management activities.
- v. Protect open spaces, green belts, forest reserves, water bodies, wetlands, water catchment areas and other ecologically sensitive areas from physical development and urban encroachment.
- vi. Develop and implement a systematic programme of flood control measures in urban communities.
- vii. Pursue rigorous public education and law enforcement against reprehensive public attitudes and conduct that induce environmental degradation.
- viii. Establish adequate measures against natural hazards in urban areas.
- ix. Prepare and implement coastal management plans to effect coastal re-vegetation and erosion control of denuded and neglected coastal towns.
- x. Protect the environmental quality of mining towns and their hinterlands.
- xi. Educate the general public and communities to utilize marine, coastal and wetlands resources with negligible or minimal environmental hazards to coastal towns and cities.

xii. Attend to the hygiene and quality of food for the urban public.

### **3.5 Initiatives to achieve Objective 5: *Ensuring effective planning and management of urban growth and sprawl, especially of the primate cities and large urban centres.***

- i. Ensure that investments and development will consistently and increasingly be directed towards targeted counter-magnet growth areas.
- ii. Probe and establish an effective integrated planning system for contiguous greater metropolitan areas, such as Accra/Kumasi/Sekondi-Takoradi, which embrace different political districts, in the light of the provisions of Act 480 (Sections 12, 13, 14) and the Guidelines recommended by the LUPMP (See 3.13).
- iii. Ensure adoption and implementation/enforcement of relevant recommendations from the Land Use Planning and Management Project regarding legislation, development guidelines, planning standards, spatial development frameworks, structure plans, local plans and land use controls.
- iv. Strengthen the use of remote sensing (such as aerial photographs and satellite imageries) and a Geographic Information System (GIS) to enhance urban development and management.

### **3.6 Initiatives to achieve Objective 6: *Ensuring efficient urban Infrastructure and service delivery***

- i. Assess infrastructure needs of urban areas and mobilize resources to support infrastructural development.
- ii. Improve delivery and management of urban services and infrastructure (including education, health, water, sanitation, energy).
- iii. Guide and manage investments in all relevant transport modes for an efficient and effective intra and inter-city transport development.
- iv. Promote efficient and effective public transport systems.
- v. Develop and manage infrastructure systems with appropriate technology and standards to suit the peculiarities of urban communities.
- vi. Provide adequate technical capacity, equipment and operational funds to support waste management activities.
- vii. Provide infrastructure and services on the basis of national/regional/district spatial development framework and urban structure plans.

- viii. Strengthen the capacity and institutional coordination of utility companies and other service and infrastructure providers.

### **3.7 Initiatives to achieve Objective 7: *Improving access to adequate and affordable low-income housing***

The policy initiatives are to be found in the Draft National Housing Policy (2009). They include, for example, the following:

- i. Provide a congenial environment for private sector delivery of affordable housing.
- ii. Implement recommendations on the promotion of indigenous building materials and appropriate construction technologies.
- iii. Promote the provision of social or low-income rental housing through public and public-private partnership arrangements.
- iv. Upgrade slums and dilapidated housing stock, especially in urban areas selected as growth poles.
- v. Explore the introduction of non-conventional housing finance and strategies that benefit low-income groups.

### **3.8 Initiatives to achieve Objective 8: *Promoting urban safety and security***

- i. Incorporate specific security and disaster prevention and management mechanisms in urban planning and management.
- ii. Intensify education on individual and community responsibility and initiative in urban safety and security.
- iii. Introduce a more effective property addressing system (house numbering and street naming) to enhance security and safety in communities.
- iv. Enforce standards and regulations on the provision of fire hydrants.
- v. Strengthen emergency rapid response to disaster and emergency situations.
- vi. Promote the use of Urban Surveillance Systems to assist in identifying illegal conduct.
- vii. Promote the use of remote sensing (such as aerial photographs and satellite imageries) and a Geographic Information System (GIS) to enhance urban security.

### **3.9 Initiatives to achieve Objective 9: *Strengthening urban governance***

- i. Review, strengthen and resource the decentralized structures and sub-structures to make them effective in local governance in line with the

- policy recommendations contained in the new Decentralization Policy Framework and its Action Plan (April 2010).
- ii. Involve relevant state and non-state agencies and institutions in the governance of cities and towns.
  - iii. Improve and enforce legislation and standards on urban development including the validation and adoption of those developed and recommended by the Land-Use Planning and Management Project of LAP.
  - iv. Ensure effective coordination, monitoring and review of the NUP.
  - v. Probe and strengthen the institutional framework at the local level for effective coordination of urban development in the light of the provisions of Act 462 and its subsidiary legislation.
  - vi. Strengthen institutional arrangements and measures to ensure efficient implementation of the NUP at the local level.
  - vii. Institute practical measures to continually enrich the capacities and outlook of key actors in urban development and management.
  - viii. Establish special courts to handle issues pertaining to urban development.

### **3.10 Initiatives to achieve Objective 10: *Promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation mechanisms***

- i. Intensify public information and awareness campaigns on energy conservation, climate change and mitigation strategies.
- ii. Encourage progressive reduction of hazardous substances by industry.
- iii. Promote settlement structure plans designed to achieve a high level of amenity as well as the prevention of effluent and refuse pollution.
- iv. Promote and strengthen cooperation of adjoining MMDAs in collaboration with traditional authorities and other relevant stakeholders in management of water bodies and other natural resources.
- v. Avoid coastal zone development which affects ecologically-sensitive areas.
- vi. Impose and enforce more effective coastal zone and wetlands management regulations.
- vii. Strengthen the capacities of agencies that are charged with promoting environmental standards.
- viii. Generate public awareness on climate change and litigation strategies through mass media educational campaigns.

### **3.11 Initiatives to achieve Objective 11: *Strengthening applied research in urban and regional development***

- i. Strengthen the capacity of research institutions and other bodies concerned with urban and regional development.
- ii. Develop an extended urban and regional information system to reinforce the land use planning and information system that is being developed by the LUPMP.
- iii. Promote public-private partnerships to fund research on urban development.
- iv. Encourage urban research that has immediate bearing on development problems and needs.

### **3.12 Initiatives to achieve Objective 12: *Expanding sources of funding urban development and strengthening financial management***

- i. Find new ways of mobilizing finance for investments and urban development.
- ii. Promote public-private partnerships as alternative source of funding for urban infrastructure and services.
- iii. Adopt best practices in municipal finance and non-conventional and innovative ways of revenue mobilization.
- iv. Support customary landowners in prime urban areas to negotiate and collaborate with the banking institutions to develop site and services projects to enhance industrial and residential development.
- v. Undertake the servicing of land for private development and recover the cost by a levy of service charges from beneficiary land owners and development charges from beneficiary developers.
- vi. Promote the use of pension and other investment funds as investments in specified urban development.

### **3.13 *Cross-Cutting Initiatives***

There are two cross-cutting initiatives which will contribute to the achievement of multiple objectives. The initiatives, stated below, are directed towards objectives one to six, which relate to legislation, the urban settlement system, the urban economy, forward and integrated planning, urban local plans, land-use management, and planning standards. The two cross-cutting initiatives are –

- **The Land Use and Planning Bill** drafted under the LUPMP. (The Draft Bill was considered and recommended at national stakeholder consultations).
- **Development Guidelines** produced by the LUPMP. These are refashioned instruments for guiding and fostering spatial development at national and local level. The key instruments are **Planning Models, Planning Standards and Land Use Zoning Regulations**.

The Planning Models comprise:

- i. **National Spatial Development Framework** covering the entire country.
- ii. **Regional Spatial Development Framework** for an administrative region; and where necessary sub-regional development plan for part of a region and multi-regional Spatial Development Framework for two or more regions.
- iii. **District Spatial Development Framework** for a district; and where necessary a multi-district or Joint Spatial Development Framework.
- iv. **Structure Plan** for a district, part of a district or multiple districts.
- v. **Local Plan** for each part of a district, where physical development is taking place or proposed to take place.
- vi. The formulation, adoption, application, management and related processes of the foregoing spatial development plans.

## **4.0 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

Urban development is a multi-faceted process involving the combined activities of many institutions or actors. The absence or non-performance of existing institutions as well as the lack of coordination among them partly accounts for the under-performance of the Ghanaian urban sector. Thus it is critical to achieve close collaboration and effective coordination of the activities and programmes of various institutions as they relate to urban development.

There is also need for clarity of the roles and responsibilities of the different spheres of government, the private sector and civil society organisations. The roles are defined in the Action Plan which is published separately as part of the National Urban Policy. The tasks which must be addressed are as follows:

NUP should signal a consistent message of conviction to key departments, state agencies, MMDAs, and the private sector about development priorities. Key decision-makers and investors need to know how and where the government expects to focus poverty reduction and economic development efforts, including the different locational advantages of each city, their priority industries, environmental challenges and infrastructure needs.

The powers of public bodies over the development and management of urban areas will be streamlined in order to organise their functions more efficiently and to strengthen city leadership.

Government policies and investment programmes will be coordinated and they will have a spatial dimension and a focus on major priority areas such as poverty reduction programmes.

Government will support initiatives to develop urban management capacity, but the management of urban areas themselves must be carried out at the local level by the MMDAs, where they are in touch with local needs and conditions. This is in line with the country's decentralisation policy framework.

Capacity-building will continue to be a key function of the state, as a result of the deficient skills and experience among many District Assemblies.

This is one of the main constraints on extending essential services to poor communities and business users.

Improve the knowledge and understanding of the challenges facing the country, and analyse the changing urban system in order to have a strong evidence base for better decision-making.

Government will establish performance indicators and appoint an independent coordination and monitoring committee every two years to monitor and evaluate progress made and challenges encountered in implementing the goals and objectives of the NUP. The committee will make recommendations and suggest alternative actions deemed appropriate.

The measures for addressing the foregoing tasks are detailed in the Action Plan.

Crucial among them are (a) the establishing of an inter-ministerial body, which will operate as Cabinet sub-committee to oversee the coordination, monitoring and review of the NUP, (b) strengthening of the Urban Development Unit (UDU) of MLGRD to serve as the secretariat of the NUP and the inter-ministerial body, (c) capacity building and institutional strengthening for local level coordination and implementation of urban development and management, and (d) building up the UDU to effectively relate to stakeholders at the national level and the core NUP coordinating institutions and players at the local level.