

Opening Remarks

By
Dr. Alhassan Iddrisu
Government Statistician

Launch of Report on Slums and Informal Settlements in Ghana
Wesley Towers, Accra
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- Mr. Chairman,
- Deputy Government Statistician,
- Colleagues from MDAs and MMDAs,
- Development Partners, Civil Society Organisations, Members of the Media,
- Distinguished Guests,
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. Good morning.
2. Thank you all for joining us today. We are here to shine a necessary light on a reality too many Ghanaians live with, but too few talk about: the lived conditions of our urban poor.
3. Your presence here reflects a shared commitment to evidence, to equity, and ultimately, to the kind of country we want to build together.
4. Today we launch one of the most critical reports to emerge from the 2021 Population and Housing Census, a thematic study on **Slums and Informal Settlements in Ghana**. This is not just about numbers. It's about people. It's about the millions of Ghanaians whose daily lives are shaped by the environments they live in, many of which, as we now see with clarity, fall below acceptable standards. It is a mirror held up to our cities, our policies, and ultimately, our priorities.

5. If you have walked through any of our major cities including Accra, Kumasi, and Tamale, you have likely seen it: crowded compounds, temporary shelters, children playing by open drains, and families living, cooking, and sleeping in the same cramped space. This report quantifies that reality and gives us the clearest picture we have ever had of where, how, and why these conditions persist.
6. In the report, we introduced a sharper definition of what it means to be “urban”, we call it urban-2. It is localities with 5,000 or more population, at least 75% of the inhabitants with access to electricity, 50% with access to potable water as well as availability of health and educational facilities (at least basic school).
7. A household is said to exhibit slum characteristics if it lacks access to any or a combination of four deprivations, namely, improved drinking water, improved sanitation facilities, durable housing, and sufficient living space (room shared by 3 or less people).
8. Ladies and gentlemen, the findings from the report are revealing and sobering:
 - i. One in ten (9.9%) of the 17,989 localities in Ghana are classified as Urban-2 areas and cover barely 5.0 % (11,811km²) of the country's total land area of 238,533 km²;
 - ii. 57.0% of households or 4.77 million households are in urban areas;
 - iii. 46.1% of urban households or over 2.2 million households, are living in slum conditions. That means nearly 1 in every 2 urban households is facing one or more of the four deprivations;
 - iv. 29.5% of urban households or 1.4 million households are found in slums;
 - v. Roughly 30.8% of the urban population or 4.8 million people, are living in slums, a ratio that exceeds the global average of 24.7% but lower than the Sub-Saharan Africa average of 53.9%;

- vi. There are deep regional variations in slum intensity:
 - a) 10 of the 16 regions have proportions of their urban household population in slums, higher than the national average of 29.5%, ranging from 79.1% in North East to 29.6% in Bono Region, while the remaining six have proportions lower than the national average. The six are, Ashanti, Central, Greater Accra, Volta, Eastern and Western North;
 - b) The Northern Region (4.2%), followed by Savannah (3.6%) and Oti (1.1%), recorded the highest extreme slum intensities. By extreme slum intensity, we mean the proportion of neighbourhoods that exhibit all four slum characteristics in the region;
 - c) But even in more developed regions like Greater Accra and Ashanti, over half of slum households live in rented accommodations;
- vii. We also see stark human development gaps:
 - a) Multidimensional poverty in slums is more than twice that of non-slum areas: 23.4% compared to 10.5%.
 - b) Nearly 1 in 3 people in slums cannot read or write and more than 1 in 5 people have never attended school;
 - c) Mortality rates, waste mismanagement, and indoor pollution are all significantly higher in slum settlements;
 - d) Household death rates in slum areas exceed those in non-slum areas: 41.6 deaths per 10,000 people compared to 30.7 deaths per 10,000 people; and
 - e) 68.4% of households in slums use uncovered waste receptacles compared to 49.5% in non-slum areas.
- 9. These are not abstract statistics. They are the daily realities of Ghanaians doing their best in circumstances they did not choose.

10. This report gives them visibility and gives us a responsibility.
11. So what do we do next? We already have the data. What we need now is coordinated, deliberate action.
 - i. For central government and MMDAs, this report is a planning tool. Use it to design location-specific interventions. Prioritise slum upgrading in budgets. Improve access to water, sanitation, and housing where it is most needed.
 - ii. For civil society, this is a roadmap for advocacy and accountability.
 - iii. For the private sector, it is an opportunity, not just for financial returns, but for lasting impact: think affordable housing, accessible utilities, and inclusive finance.
 - iv. And to our development partners, your role in resourcing long-term, community-rooted responses will be essential.
12. Every slum we transform and every household we uplift brings us closer to the inclusive, safe, and dignified cities every Ghanaian deserves.
13. The full report, along with infographics, factsheet, detailed maps and datasets, will be made available online after the report is launched. I urge you to not just read it but use it. Let's move from evidence to impact.
14. Let me thank the technical team at the Ghana Statistical Service, our partners, and all collaborators who made this possible.
15. And once again, thank you all for being here, not just to witness this launch, but to carry the work forward.
16. Let this not be the end of the story this report tells. Let it be the beginning of the transformation it demands.
17. God bless our homeland Ghana.