



As travel patterns get back to normal, vaccine roll-out & adherence to COVID-19 protocols are critical, says GSS

Accra, Ghana - 27 April 2021 ****For immediate release****

People are now moving between districts and regions at similar levels to before the novel coronavirus hit Ghana in early 2020. That is according to a new report on travel within the country by Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), Flowminder Foundation and Vodafone Ghana.

The GSS and Flowminder discovered that following a sharp reduction in travels during the partial lockdown of 2020, people in at least half the regions are now moving within and between regions as much as they were before the beginning of the pandemic, after analysing anonymised and aggregated (group-level statistics) telecommunications network data provided by Vodafone Ghana.

Analysts examined how population movements were impacted by various mobility-related policies since the start of the pandemic. The report highlights three mobility trends: a decrease during partial lockdown (March 2020); gradual recovery from June to December 2020; and a possible decrease from mid-January 2021 in response to the presidential address about the second wave of COVID-19 in the country.

Government Statistician Professor Samuel Annim said: "The partial lockdown and mobility restrictions are likely to have slowed the rate of COVID-19 infections in the country. A recovery to pre-pandemic mobility levels could be positive for participation in the economy but poses a challenge in containing COVID-19 outbreaks".

"This analysis reinforces the urgency of a successful vaccination campaign. There is a risk of this increased mobility leading to increased infection rates unless people continue adhering to measures like mask wearing, hand washing and physical distancing and that they have the vaccine when it is their turn."

By February 2021, half of the country's regions - or more - had recovered to their pre-COVID in-region travel patterns, and the remaining is close to have recovered, including the two most populous regions (Greater Accra and Ashanti) that seem to be experiencing a comparatively slower recovery.

"Large scale changes in mobility are both a cause and an effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. Vodafone's data, which is anonymised and processed in a way that maintains the privacy of the subscribers, is helping the government better understand how people's travel patterns have changed over the past year, which can be used to support upcoming policy decisions and keep control of the epidemic," said Patricia Obo-Nai, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Vodafone Ghana.

While the analysis provides insights on how people have been moving nationally and regionally compared to the start of 2020 and to 2019, limitations inherent to the data need to be considered.

"The analysis relies on data from Vodafone Ghana, which provides a good indicator of changes in a population's movements as a significant proportion of the population is included in the dataset, but changes in phone usage behaviour over time also play a role in the analysis. These can make the comparison of current mobility with last year's mobility difficult," explained Wole Ademola Adewole, Implementation Coordinator at Flowminder.



The report can be downloaded from GSS' website at <https://statsghana.gov.gh/mobilityanalysis>.

Methods used to produce these indicators are available on Flowminder's website dedicated to supporting the COVID-19 pandemic response at covid19.flowminder.org.

This work is part of the long-standing Data For Good partnership between the Ghana Statistical Services, Vodafone Ghana, the Flowminder Foundation, Vodafone Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. This mobility report follows two previous analyses produced by the partnership in April and May 2020 which estimated how population movements had been affected by mobility restrictions and lockdown measures.

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-Notes for Editors-

About the GSS - Vodafone Ghana - Flowminder partnership

At the start of 2018, Ghana Statistical Services, Vodafone Ghana, and the Flowminder Foundation embarked on a unique partnership to produce official statistics using de-identified telecommunications data, to strengthen humanitarian and development decision-making in the country. The project is funded by Vodafone Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and has the potential to save lives by providing accurate and relevant insights to the government of Ghana.

About data privacy

This project uses aggregated (group-level statistics) and anonymised and aggregated telecommunications network data from Vodafone Ghana to gain an understanding of how people in Ghana move between districts and regions using advanced analytical methods which fully preserve the privacy of all mobile subscribers. This project does not use individual-level data for individual contact tracing or to track the movements of single individuals. Data are anonymised before they are analysed, removing any personal information to protect individuals' identities. The data are then looked at as a whole to see the big picture of how groups of people are moving (e.g. percentage of subscribers travelling between any two districts on a given day), rather than individuals' activities.

About Ghana Statistical Service

Ghana Statistical Service produces some of the nation's most important numbers – on the economy and business, people, population and communities. Operating impartially and free of political control, we are mobilising the power of data to help Ghana make better decisions, improve lives and continue building a successful economy. Follow our latest news and get an insight into the work behind the numbers by following [@StatsGhana](#) on Twitter, [Ghana Statistical Service](#) on Facebook or [Ghana Statistical Service](#) on YouTube.

About the Flowminder Foundation

Flowminder is a non-profit foundation that specialises in the analysis of anonymised mobile phone data, satellite imagery, and household survey data for humanitarian and international development purposes. Flowminder was the first organisation to respond to a large-scale infectious disease epidemic (the Haiti cholera outbreak in 2010) using mobile operator data, and Flowminder's researchers were the first to show that mobile operator data can predict the spatial spread of an infectious disease. The foundation provides information to governments, non-governmental organisations, inter-governmental organisations, and researchers, and has developed sustainable partnerships with numerous mobile network operators in low- and middle-income countries. Flowminder's



multidisciplinary team of experts includes epidemiological researchers, data scientists, software developers, and humanitarian practitioners. Flowminder is one of the implementing partners of the GRID3 programme, currently active in Ghana.

www.flowminder.org | covid19.flowminder.org | www.grid3.org

About Vodafone Ghana

Vodafone Ghana is an operating company of Vodafone Group Plc - the world's leading mobile telecommunications company. In Ghana, Vodafone is a leading total communications solutions provider, delivering services such as mobile data and voice; fixed voice and broadband, mobile financial services and a fibre backbone service for the West Africa sub-region. It is the second ranked operator in the country and the best in voice clarity and data speed. Vodafone Ghana has close to 10 million customers with a deep sense of responsibility and commitment to social development in Ghana. This it achieves by conducting all operations in a responsible manner with a relentless dedication to regulatory compliance. For more information, please visit: www.vodafone.com.gh

About Vodafone Foundation

Vodafone Foundation's strategy of 'Connecting for Good' combines Vodafone's charitable giving and technology to address some of the world's most pressing problems. Established in 1991, Vodafone Foundation is at the centre of a network of global and local social investment programmes. Vodafone Foundation is an independent UK registered charity, registered charity number 1089625.

For more information, visit: www.vodafonefoundation.org