

A VISION FOR PROGRESS: ANALYSING MAHAMA'S 'THE GHANA WE WANT' FOR UNEMPLOYMENT AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH: (BY NORA DZAKPASU)

Introduction

In recent years, Ghana has grappled with significant challenges, such as unemployment and economic stagnation. John Dramani Mahama, the former President of Ghana, has introduced a strategic framework titled "The Ghana We Want." This vision is designed to address these issues by propelling the nation towards sustainable development and substantially reducing unemployment rates. This essay aims to dissect the potential impacts of Mahama's initiatives on Ghana's unemployment issues and sustainable growth. The analysis will evaluate the comprehensiveness of the strategies proposed and their feasibility in the context of Ghana's economic and political landscape. As posited in this thesis, while Mahama's vision presents a holistic approach to economic revitalization, the effectiveness of these strategies will largely depend on their robust implementation and the mitigation of possible economic and political barriers (MyJoyOnline, 2023).

Articulation of 'The Ghana We Want'

Mahama's vision for Ghana is a bold recalibration of the nation's development agenda aimed at transforming it into a beacon of prosperity through innovative and inclusive growth strategies. Central to this vision is the enhancement of key sectors such as industrialization, information technology, and sustainable agriculture. These sectors are expected to generate employment opportunities and promote environmentally sustainable economic practices. Mahama's blueprint suggests a future where Ghana boasts a diversified and resilient economy capable of supporting all societal segments (MyJoyOnline, (2023).

Specifically, the vision includes significant improvements in educational outcomes, the creation of a favourable business environment, and increased agricultural productivity to ensure food security and employment growth. This multifaceted approach is designed to leverage technological innovation, substantial infrastructure development, and sustainable agricultural methods to drive economic growth and stability (MyJoyOnline, (2023).

Ghana's current economic landscape is marked by high unemployment rates and slow economic growth, a situation exacerbated by both global economic pressures and local governance issues. Historical attempts to address these challenges have often resulted in temporary spurts of growth but lacked the consistency needed for sustained improvement. This section examines the historical efforts within the country to provide a comprehensive background for evaluating the ambitious nature of Mahama's recent proposals. Understanding these past initiatives is critical to grasping the full scope

of the challenges and opportunities that Mahama's vision aims to address, and it sets the stage for assessing the potential efficacy of his strategies (De Sherbinin, 1993).

Analysis

Mahama's vision for Ghana includes several proactive policies aimed at revitalizing the economy. These policies encompass strengthening the manufacturing sector, enhancing agricultural productivity with advanced technologies, and investing in sustainable projects like renewable energy. This section delves into these proposals, exploring their theoretical underpinnings and the empirical evidence from similar global initiatives. The analysis seeks to determine how these policies might align with sustainable growth objectives, considering their potential impact on employment and economic stability in Ghana. Key areas such as digital infrastructure enhancement and green energy solutions are highlighted, evaluating their alignment with global sustainable development goals and their feasibility within the Ghanaian context (Nyasapoh et al., 2022; Baffoe et al, 2021).

SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis to assess the potential impacts of John Dramani Mahama's vision for Ghana:

- **Strengths:** Mahama's strategies leverage innovative uses of technology and renewable energy, which are likely to attract international support and foster sustainability. This focus positions Ghana as a potential regional leader in green economic practices and technological innovation (Yang et al., 2021).

- **Weaknesses:** The vision faces potential challenges such as bureaucratic inertia that could hinder swift implementation and funding shortfalls which may impede reaching full operational scale. Additionally, a high dependence on external funding and technology transfer could pose risks if these external supports falter (Fusheini, 2016).

- **Opportunities:** There are significant opportunities to enhance Ghana's international profile and attract foreign investment by promoting the country as a hub for sustainable practices and technology-driven development. Strengthening regional ties could also bolster economic resilience and integration (Gidiglo, 2023).

- **Threats:** Economic volatility on a global scale and local political instability are potential threats that could disrupt the policy implementation process. These external and internal pressures underscore the vulnerability of Ghana's economic reforms to broader geopolitical and economic shifts (Gidiglo, 2023).

Evidence-Based Evaluation

Drawing on global case studies, this section evaluates the feasibility of implementing Mahama's vision in Ghana. Comparative insights from countries like Rwanda, which has harnessed technology for development, and Singapore, known for its strategic urban planning, are particularly pertinent. These examples help to justify the relevance of Mahama's proposed policies within the Ghanaian context. Similarly, parallels are drawn with Kenya's technology investments and Estonia's digital transformation, providing a broader perspective on the potential for success and challenges faced by such initiatives (Nkubito and Baiden-Amissah., 2019).

Potential Impact on Unemployment

Mahama's proposed policies aim to significantly impact Ghana's unemployment rate through both direct and indirect job creation mechanisms. Infrastructure projects and support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are expected to generate numerous employment opportunities. This section explores the sustainability and inclusivity of these jobs, critically assessing whether the initiatives can indeed fulfill the promise of reducing unemployment sustainably. Further, it examines how improved education and training systems under Mahama's policies could equip the workforce with the necessary skills to thrive in a modern, technology-driven economy (Mwakalila, 2023).

Potential for Sustainable Growth

The long-term economic prospects under Mahama's strategic plan hold promise if executed properly. This analysis delves into the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability, highlighting the integration of green technologies and the pursuit of equitable economic policies. The potential for sustainable growth is substantial, with Mahama's policies aiming to harmonize economic development with environmental conservation and social inclusion. These strategies are designed to ensure that economic growth does not come at the expense of ecological health or societal equity, forming a balanced approach to modern development challenges (Khahigana,, 2018).

Critiques and Counterarguments

This section offers a balanced perspective by exploring critiques related to the feasibility of rapid technological adoption in Ghana, the risk of increasing national debt, and the complexities involved in reforming public sector governance. Drawing insights from economists, sociologists, and environmentalists, this part of the analysis addresses the practical challenges of implementing advanced technological solutions in a country facing significant infrastructural deficits. It also incorporates counterarguments from various stakeholders, such as local businesses, international

economists, and environmental groups, providing a comprehensive view of the potential obstacles and opposition to Mahama's policies (World Bank., 2021).

Triangulation of Findings:

1. Siddiquee et al. (2022) study indicates that China, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, and Thailand show significant progress toward sustainable economic growth and unemployment reduction goals, with varying degrees of success and challenges across Asian countries.

2. Ng et al. (2023) highlight the struggle of OECD countries to balance economic growth with environmental sustainability, noting the invalidity of the Environmental Kuznets Curve (EKC) but confirming the Environmental Phillips Curve (EPC). This introduces a complexity in sustainable development that involves a trade-off between unemployment and environmental degradation, which is pertinent to Mahama's green growth strategies.

3. Ngubane et al. (2023) reveal a direct relationship between economic growth and poverty reduction in South Africa, indicating that unemployment exacerbates poverty a challenge Ghana also faces under Mahama's proposed policies aimed at economic revitalization.

Justification and Critique:

- Comparative Methodologies: The studies use diverse methodologies suitable to their specific economic contexts ARDL in South Africa for poverty analysis and CCEMG/AMG in OECD for cross-sectional dependency in environmental impacts. Ghana's policies could benefit from such robust and diversified methodological approaches to tackle its multifaceted economic and environmental challenges.

- Critiques of Applicability: While the findings from Asian and OECD countries provide broad insights, the direct applicability to Ghana is limited by differing economic structures, governance levels, and technological advancements. Ghana's reliance on international aid and technology, as highlighted by World Bank (2021) poses risks not extensively covered in the other studies.

Comparative Analysis:

- Mahama's policies aiming for industrial and agricultural growth echo the technological and sustainable emphases seen in Rwanda and Singapore. However, Ghana's challenges with bureaucratic inertia and funding as mentioned in the SWOT analysis (Ulrich and Thomas., 2014) parallel the infrastructural and financial constraints highlighted in the South African and OECD contexts.

- The critiques and counterarguments from Ghanaian stakeholders regarding technological feasibility and debt risks mirror the environmental-economic trade-offs discussed in the OECD study. This points to a universal challenge in aligning rapid modernization with sustainable and inclusive economic policies (Choi, 2019).

Evaluative Synthesis:

- Policy Optimization for Ghana: Drawing on the successes and pitfalls observed in these varied contexts, Ghana should prioritize creating adaptive policy frameworks that can accommodate both technological advancements and sustainable growth without exacerbating unemployment or environmental degradation. This involves integrating feedback mechanisms, improving governance structures, and fostering private sector partnerships, as suggested for policy optimization in Ghana (McCarthy et al., 2023).

- Need for Localized Solutions: Given the varied economic successes and environmental challenges described, Ghana's strategy should also include localized solutions tailored to its unique socio-economic landscape, similar to the bespoke strategies employed in Malaysia and Costa Rica for sustainable development (World Bank., 2011).

Recommendations

To solidify the success of "The Ghana We Want," it is crucial that the execution of Mahama's vision incorporates dynamic policy monitoring and iterative evaluation. This adaptive approach ensures that the policies remain effective and relevant amidst evolving economic and environmental landscapes. To achieve this, the following detailed recommendations are proposed:

1. Enhanced Policy Monitoring Framework: Establish a comprehensive policy monitoring framework that employs both traditional and innovative metrics to continuously assess the progress of implemented strategies. This framework should include clear, measurable objectives for each policy initiative, with regular reporting intervals to track progress against these goals. Utilize technologies such as data analytics and blockchain to enhance the accuracy and transparency of reporting (Alaerts et al., 2019).

2. Iterative Policy Evaluation: Develop an iterative evaluation process that allows for the modification of strategies in response to feedback and changing conditions. This should involve periodic policy reviews involving stakeholders from various sectors, including economic experts, community leaders, and international advisors, to provide diverse perspectives on policy effectiveness and necessary adjustments (Alaerts et al., 2019).

3. Increased Government Spending Transparency: Implement more stringent measures to ensure transparency in government spending. This can be achieved by publicizing all government contracts and expenditures online in a comprehensible format, allowing for public scrutiny and accountability. Additionally, independent audits should be conducted regularly, with findings made available to the public to foster trust and credibility (Antwi and Gyamfi, 2023).

4. Emphasis on Skill Development in Education: Revamp the educational curriculum to include skills that are critical for the future economy, such as digital literacy, environmental stewardship, and entrepreneurial skills. Partner with technology firms and higher education institutions to facilitate knowledge exchange and ensure that the educational system aligns with industry needs. This strategy not only enhances employability but also supports the infrastructure required for a technology-driven economy (Chakrabarty, 2012).

5. Strengthening Environmental Regulatory Frameworks: Strengthen regulatory frameworks to protect the environment while promoting sustainable growth. This includes stricter enforcement of existing environmental laws, the introduction of incentives for businesses to adopt green technologies, and substantial investment in renewable energy projects. Such frameworks should be designed to balance economic growth with ecological preservation, creating a sustainable model for future generations (Ma et al., 2023).

6. Fostering Private Sector and Civil Society Partnerships: Encourage active collaboration between the government, private sector, and civil society to leverage diverse resources and expertise. Partnerships should focus on areas such as technology transfer, sustainable agricultural practices, and the development of green infrastructure. These collaborations can enhance innovation, spread risk, and increase the scalability of sustainable initiatives (Kruk et al., 2018).

Conclusion

"The Ghana We Want" envisions progressive solutions for Ghana's challenges, reliant on meticulous planning, robust policies, and inclusive governance. These elements are essential for transforming economic and social structures effectively. The recommendations aim to fortify governance, ensuring policies are efficient and adaptable to future needs and global dynamics.

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