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Criticality Analysis of Governance & Economic Issues

Center for Economic, Governance and Political Affairs

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Center for Policy & Education

In this issue

1 Value or Illusion? Questioning the DStv “Increased Value Offer”

2 The Culture of Import Preference and Its Cost

3 Inflation is Falling, But the Relief isn’t Uniform

4 Poultry Programme: Production and Processing Must Grow Hand-in-Hand

Criticality Analysis of Governance Issues

September 29 – October 3, 2025





What is the Criticality Analysis of Governance Issues?

The output of good governance is socioeconomic development that has greater impact on the citizens. Government takes the wheels of affairs of the state on the back of the many promises made to the electorates. Yet, it is no easy task when it comes to the processes and mechanisms required for true public services delivery. It must follow policy guidelines religiously, maintain the social contract, avoid excesses and wastages, and be an accountable steward of that which it has been entrusted.

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IMANI Centre for Policy and Education in a bid to monitor the processes and mechanisms for public services delivery has devised the Criticality Analysis to evaluate the key actions of the government in this pursuit. The Criticality Analysis follows the major news reports on the key governance issues categorised under the following six (6) themes:

1. Policy and administration.
2. Transparency and accountability.
3. Anti-corruption.
4. Peace, security and stability.
5. Human rights and justice.
6. International relations and development

During the assessment, critical attention is paid to the factual accuracy of the reports, relevance and timeliness, and impact and significance. In view of this, the reports are corroborated by analysing same from multiple sources and monitoring the trends and development. In addition, expert opinions on the key issues are analysed to inform the final output of the Criticality Analysis which includes our recommendations for policy and practice to enhance public service accountable stewardship

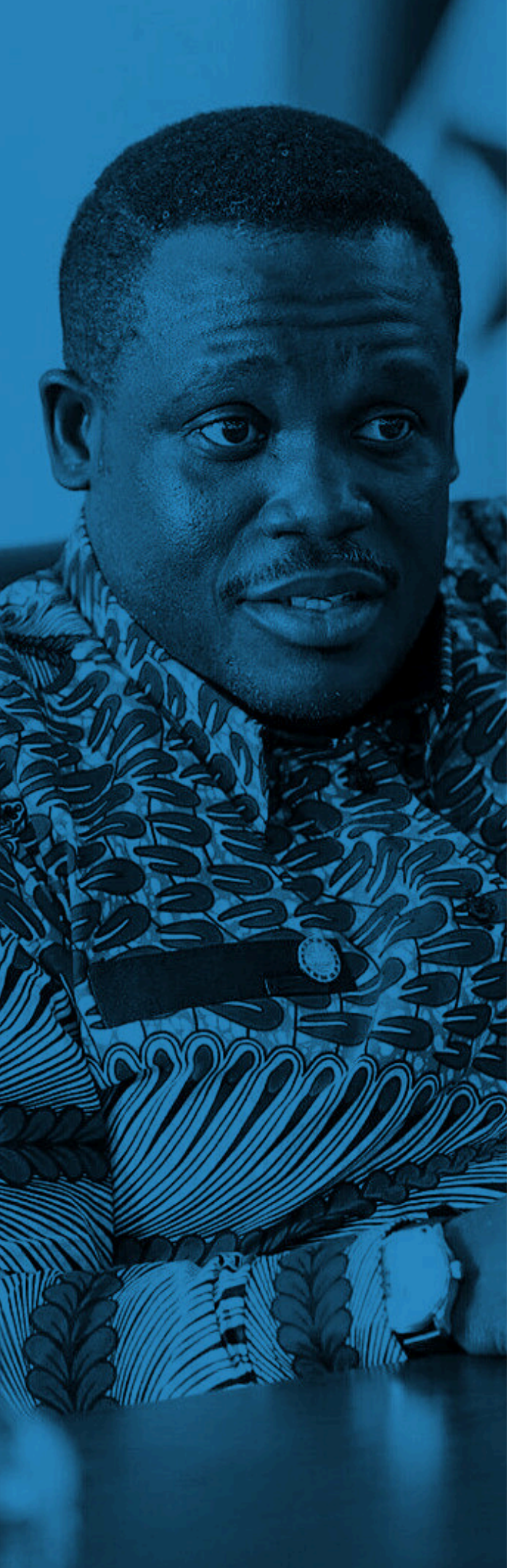


Value or Illusion? Questioning the DStv "Increased Value Offer"

What started as a fierce demand by Hon. Sam George (MP), Minister for Communications, Digital Technology and Innovation, for fair pricing of pay TV from MultiChoice Ghana Ltd in their DStv subscription fees climaxed last week, with an announcement by the Minister on DStv's price evaluation. In his address, the minister stated emphatically that he went into the negotiation seeking at least a 30 percent reduction and has managed to land an "increased value offer" of 33 percent to 50 percent, depending on the package of a subscriber. In the Minister's own words, subscribers get an "automatic upgrade" to the next higher package when they pay for or renew their package. Meaning that, a "Compact" package (GHS380) subscriber gets automatically upgraded to the next higher package, "Compact Plus" package (GHS570) at the same cost of the Compact package.

But, is increased value offer what the minister promised?

The Criticality Analysis of Governance Issues (CAGI) has followed the Sam George – DStv pricing saga since it began. When the Minister appeared on the Government Accountability Series and stated, ***"I wrote back to the NCA on Monday and directed them to suspend DStv's broadcasting license effective August 7, 2025, if the company refuses to reduce its bundle prices,"*** he was very emphatic about the goal of price evaluation. He demanded a price reduction. The CAGI of that week commented that ***"top-down mandates risk undermining the very market trust that underpins the economy's recent upswing,"*** and recommended that the Ministry should ***"convene a structured meeting at which Multichoice would disclose its cost build-up—content licensing, currency hedging, local operations—and compare cross-market pricing, which such transparency would allow both sides to negotiate in good faith, aligned with Ghana's broader commitment to market discipline."*** Indeed, the meetings happened, and the outcome of the committee's deliberation on the evaluation of DStv pricing was not MultiChoice reducing its bundle prices but rather an ***"unprecedented increased value offer"*** as announced by the Minister.



Is this increased value offer really unprecedented?

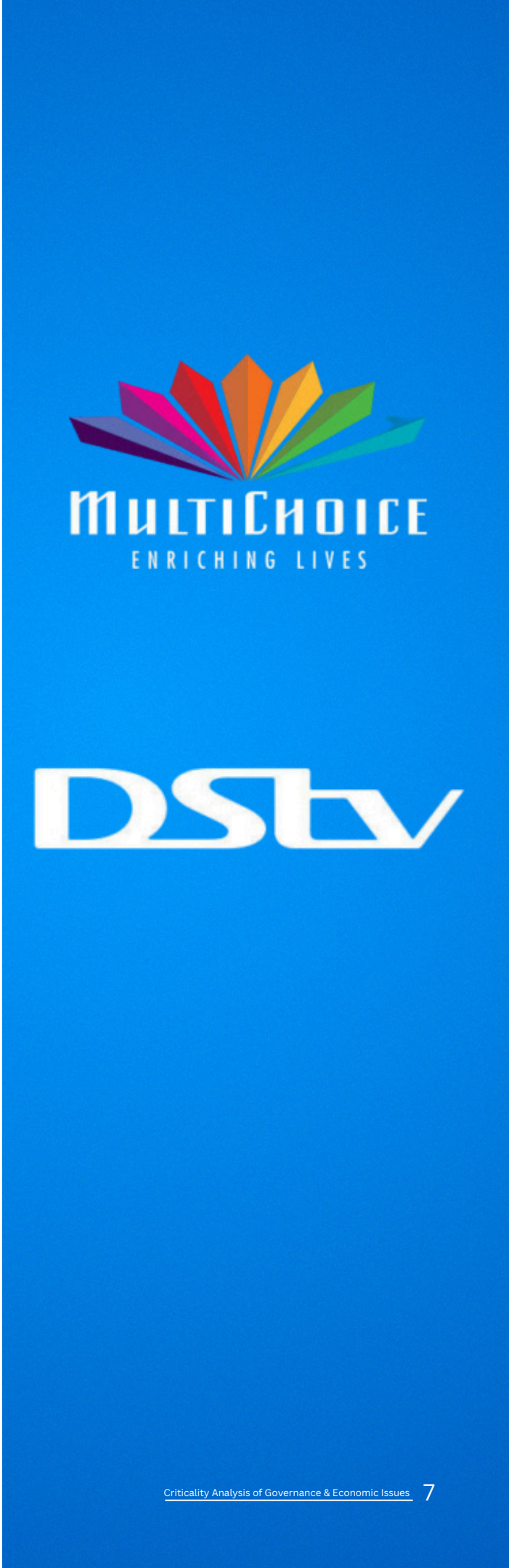
Well, unless you have never been a subscriber of MultiChoice's DStv. MultiChoice occasionally offers **upgrade promotions** just like what the Minister announced, especially when it's been a while since one reconnected their decoder. Subscribers usually get a call from MultiChoice as to why they are yet to reconnect and may offer their promotions, or an SMS that urges them to reconnect their decoder and get upgraded, or a month of extra viewing on them. Upgrades are just for the month, so it's either you stay on the new package, which means you have to pay for the package, or downgrade to your former package. This is done to attract subscribers to higher packages. What, perhaps, may be uncommon is the nationwide rollout of this upgrade promotion to DStv subscribers.

DStv is a monthly (30 days) paid subscription, so what happens after a month of enjoying the increased value offer? Since this increased value offer is expected to exist till the committee reconvenes in the next three months, the offer is available while it lasts. However, a deeper understanding of DStv's pricing system should let one know that the increased value offer upgrades a subscriber to the next higher packages, of which the prices have not changed. Padi is still GHS59, Access is GHS99, Family is GHS190, Compact is GHS380, Compact Plus is GHS570, and Premium is GHS865. If one gets upgraded to Compact Plus, it's either he/she stays on the package in the following month and pay GHS570 to get channels still running.

Unless MultiChoice clarifies that one can, in the second month, again pay for Compact (GHS380) and still get access to Compact Plus channels. Else, it's either a subscriber downgrades or pay the price of his new package to 'enjoy', per DStv's subscription system.

Essentially, what has been offered is just a nationwide upgrade promotion to all Ghanaian subscribers. It is not unprecedented, as MultiChoice usually runs this promotion. Most importantly, it is not a price reduction. Between 2021 and 2025, the monthly fee for the Access package climbed from around GHS45 to GHS99. That is about 120 percent increase. Ghanaians need to know whether the **increased value** offer means new **package values** or just upgrades to the next higher package, which you either choose to stay on by paying its full value or downgrade to your former package in the following month.

The Hon. Sam George (MP), Minister for Communications, Digital Technology and Innovation, must clarify.



Criticality Analysis of Key Economic Issues

September 29 – October 4, 2025





Introduction

The objective of this report is to provide a clear and concise evaluation of the most important economic news stories in the preceding week, focusing on their factual accuracy, relevance and timeliness, and impact and significance.

Methodology

Selected publications are grouped under five central economic themes. These include:

- Economic Stability.
- Growth and Job Creation.
- Taxation and Revenue Mobilization.
- Trade and Investment.
- Infrastructure Digital Economy.

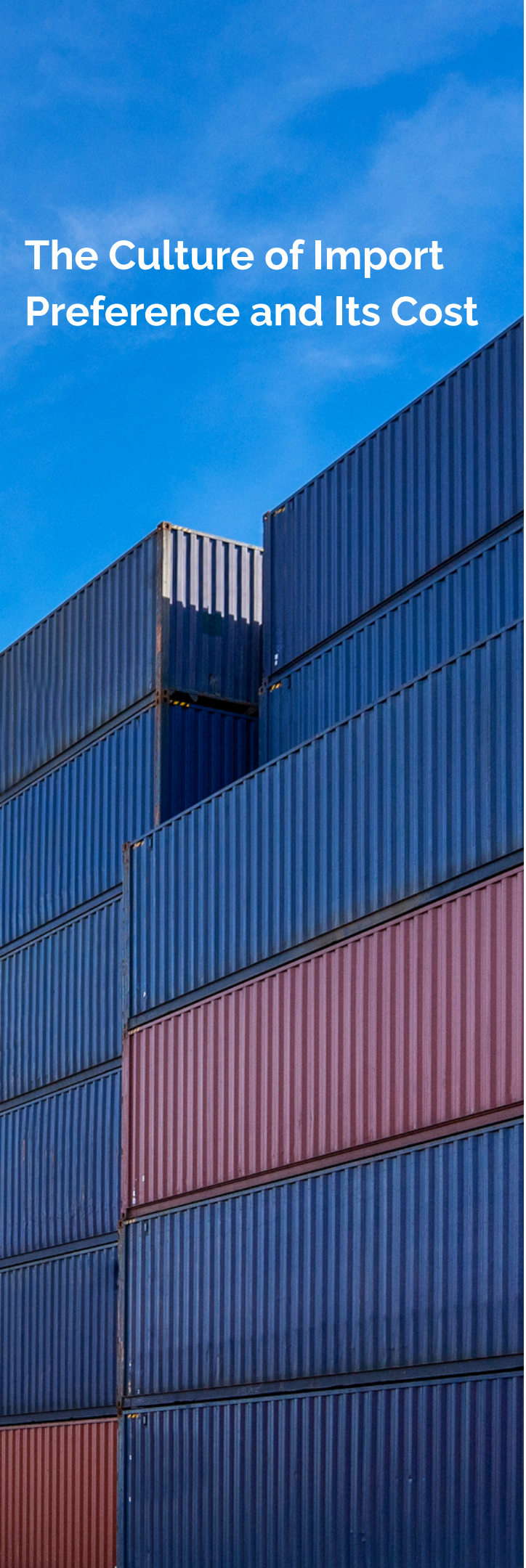
Evaluation

The analysis criteria are applied at this stage. News stories are evaluated based on the following:

Factual accuracy: can the facts in the news be verified; is the news published by other outlets; are there links and references to original sources.

Relevance and timeliness: is the news a developing story or does it provide updates on existing stories?

Impact and significance: does the news have a potential impact on society, policy and the economy; is it of high interest to the public?



The Culture of Import Preference and Its Cost

Ghana's deep-seated preference for imported goods over locally made ones continues to bleed the economy quietly but persistently. What Agriculture Minister Eric Opoku said about the rice sector goes beyond food policy[1]; it cuts to Ghana's structural economic challenges. The Minister's revelation that locally produced rice is now cheaper than imported brands should have been good news. Yet, the irony is that many consumers still reach for foreign rice. His statement was justified: by choosing imported rice, Ghanaians are "creating jobs in the country where the rice came from, at the expense of their own people."

But the issue is not limited to rice. The same pattern runs through poultry, tomato paste, textiles, and even processed foods, sectors where imported goods dominate shelves and shape consumer tastes. This preference has wide-ranging economic consequences.

Each time consumers choose imports, Ghana loses valuable foreign currency. The country spends billions of US dollars annually on food imports alone, draining reserves and putting pressure on the cedi. This persistent demand for foreign exchange weakens the local currency, drives inflation, and widens the trade deficit. It is an economic leakage that deprives domestic producers of the multiplier effect that comes from money circulating within the local economy.

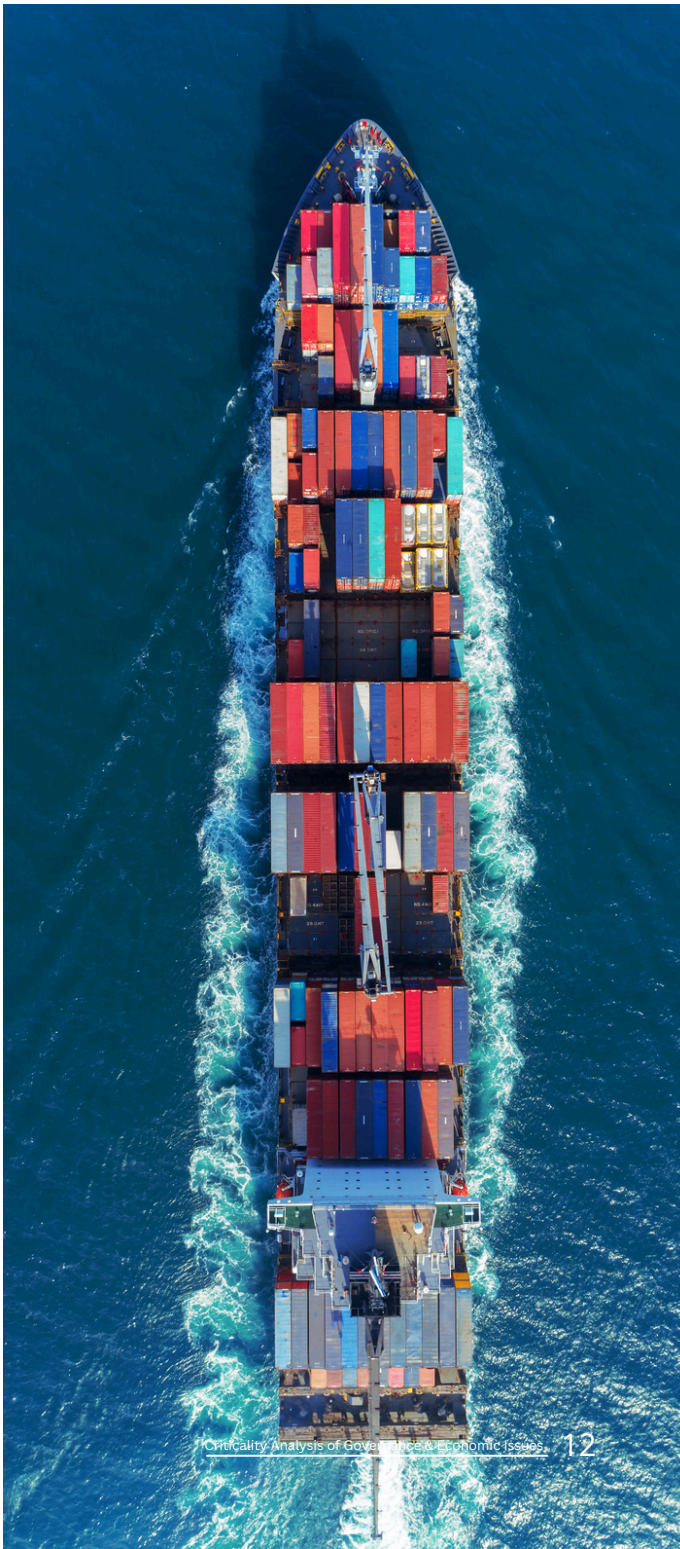
The dominance of imported products erodes the competitiveness of local industries. Local farmers, processors, and small manufacturers face shrinking markets and low profitability. This weakens incentives for investment in productivity and modernization. The result is fewer jobs, especially in rural areas where agriculture and small-scale production are primary sources of income.

Over-reliance on imported staples also exposes the economy to external shocks. When the bulk of a nation's food supply depends on imports, global disruptions from shipping delays to geopolitical tensions can easily spill over into local markets. Ghana has felt this before: global price spikes or export bans can cause sudden domestic shortages and food inflation, especially among the poor.

At the heart of this challenge lies a perception problem. Many consumers associate imported goods with higher quality and prestige, while seeing local products as inferior. This "preference gap" is cultural as much as it is economic, and it makes policy interventions less effective. Even when local goods are competitively priced, as with rice today, demand doesn't necessarily follow.

The damage runs deep in rural Ghana, where local industries should be engines of growth. When consumers turn to foreign goods, income and job opportunities in farming communities shrink, slowing down rural development and fueling migration to urban areas. This, in turn, pressures city infrastructure and employment systems. The minister's mention of growing youth participation in farming shows that the production side is gaining traction. However, sustaining these gains will depend on whether consumer choices evolve in tandem. Without that shift, production surpluses could turn into post-harvest losses, discouraging new entrants and stalling investment.

Ultimately, the Minister's call for Ghanaians to "support the effort by prioritizing local produce" is not just patriotism; it's sound economic reasoning. Sustaining the gains from agricultural initiatives will depend on matching rising production with a conscious shift in consumer behavior. Without that change, even the best production policies risk being undermined by our own spending habits.





Inflation is Falling, But the Relief isn't Uniform

Ghana's headline inflation has dropped sharply to 9.4% as of September 2025. From 23.5% in January to single digits by September, this steep decline reflects a remarkable disinflationary turnaround, driven by tighter monetary policy, exchange-rate stability, and a slowdown in food prices. At first glance, this looks like a clear victory for economic management.

Yet beneath this national success lies a more uneven reality. The headline figure tells only half the story. While the average Ghanaian is expected to be better off, many regions continue to battle stubbornly high inflation. In September 2025[1], the North East Region recorded an inflation rate of 20.1%, while Bono East stood at just 1.2%. This means households in the Northeast are seeing their cost-of-living rise over 16 times faster than those in Bono East.

Even earlier in the year, when the national inflation rate had begun its steepest descent, the Upper West Region was still recording painfully high prices of 38.1% in May, at a time when the national average had already fallen to 18.4%[2]. This stark contrast underscores how disinflation has not been evenly felt across the country.

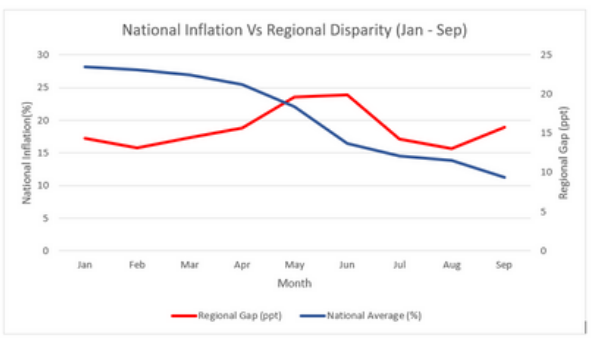
These disparities reveal a deeper structural challenge: inflation in Ghana is increasingly regionalized, not uniform. The same national policies that have stabilized prices in Accra or Kumasi have had much weaker effects in the northern and inland regions, places where food inflation, logistics costs, and supply bottlenecks dominate local price dynamics.

For millions of households, especially in the Upper East, Upper West, and Savanna Regions, the macroeconomic victory feels distant. Inflation may be falling on paper, but purchasing power remains severely eroded. These regional variations are not random. They stem from long-standing structural weaknesses:

Poor Infrastructure and High Transport Costs: Bad roads and longer supply routes mean goods take more time and fuel to reach northern and rural markets.

Weak Supply Chains and Market Access: Regions with fewer storage facilities and market linkages are more exposed to seasonal price spikes.

Food Dependence and Climate Sensitivity: Areas dependent on staple crops are more vulnerable to inflation when harvests fail or logistics break down.



Source: *Data – Price Indices: Consumer Price Index Bulletin, GSS*

Graph – IMANI CPE

The National Average (blue line) shows an almost uninterrupted success story, dropping from 23.5% to 9.4% in nine months.

The Regional Gap (red line) shows an inconsistent, volatile reality, ending September at a wider gap (18.9 ppt) than it started (17.2 ppt). The period from May to June marks the moment the national success story collided with ordinary citizens' reality. While the National Average recorded its steepest decline from 21.2% in April to 13.7% in June, the Regional Gap soared, peaking at 23.9 points (a 6-point jump from March). In other words, just as the economy was celebrating its fastest improvement, the disparity in the cost of living between the best- and worst-off regions was at its highest.

The graph captures the dual story of 2025. While national inflation declined dramatically, the regional gap remained wide and volatile, peaking at 23.9 percentage points in June. Even as prices stabilized nationwide, the inequality in inflation outcomes persisted. This means that Ghana's "disinflation success" has not been a shared success. The overall average has improved, but the experience of inflation remains vastly different across the country.

True price stability is not measured by how low the national figure goes, but by how evenly relief is distributed. Ghana's disinflation has been real but uneven. The widening gap between regions is a reminder that macroeconomic stability must be paired with structural and logistical reforms that lower costs for everyone, not just urban consumers.

Going forward, policy must focus not only on sustaining low inflation but on compressing the regional inflation gap, ensuring that no region remains trapped in a cycle of high prices while the rest of the country moves on.

Poultry Programme: Production and Processing Must Grow Hand-in-Hand



Ghana currently imports over 80% of its poultry, costing the country more than $300 million annually. The government's Nkoko Nkitinkiti Programme, set to launch in October 2025, aims to reverse this dependence by distributing 3 million birds across the country, supporting commercial, medium-scale, and local farmers. While the programme promises to boost domestic production, there is a critical dimension that cannot be overlooked: large-scale poultry production must go hand in hand with processing and cold-chain infrastructure. Without processing capacity, the increased output risks going to waste, prices could fluctuate wildly, and the broader goal of building a sustainable poultry sector would be undermined.

Farmers themselves are already highlighting the importance of this link. Kwame Anim Somuah, President of the Greater Accra Poultry Farmers Association[1], voiced the concerns of many:

"... What we are asking for is an update to farmer associations so we can plan accordingly. For instance, if I raise my birds now, in less than two months, they'll be ready. But the question is, when they are fully matured, where do I take them?"

His observation underscores the reality that production alone cannot create value. To maximize impact, the government must ensure that processing plants, cold storage, and distribution networks are scaled alongside bird production.

This integration is not just about avoiding waste. It is about building an entire domestic poultry ecosystem. Proper processing ensures consistent quality, allows urban markets to access convenient products, stabilizes prices, and creates jobs along the value chain from farming to processing, packaging, and logistics. At the same time, it strengthens backward linkages, supporting maize and soybean production for feed, and stimulating industrial growth.

Simply put, the success of the Nkoko Nkitinkiti Programme hinges on seeing poultry production and processing as two sides of the same coin. Producing millions of birds without investing in industrial-scale processing would be like building a factory with no power to run the machines; the output exists, but it cannot create the intended economic impact. For Ghana to truly reduce poultry imports, strengthen food security, and create sustainable jobs, production and processing must grow together. Every bird produced must have a clear path to market, and every processing facility must have enough output to operate efficiently. Only then will the programme deliver on its promise of import substitution and industrialization.

The galamsey debate, therefore, reveals a fundamental governance dilemma: Ghana must act with urgency, but not recklessness. The ecological, economic, and human costs of delay are mounting by the day, yet the risks of unchecked emergency powers are equally real. What is clear, however, is that incremental enforcement has failed. To save its rivers, restore its farms, secure its energy infrastructure, and protect its people's health, Ghana must treat galamsey as a national emergency, not necessarily in the legal sense of Article 31, but in the practical sense of political will, policy priority, and resource allocation. Anything less would be a dangerous gamble with the country's future.



IMANI
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IMANI Center for Policy & Education is a Think Tank of considerable local and international repute based in Ghana. Founded on the 9th of March 2004, IMANI has carved a niche in Ghana's policy environment for putting out objective, independent analysis and critique on many issues, using tried and tested techniques that apply across different disciplines

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