

## **AFRICA REVIEW AN UP-TO-DATE GEOGRAPHICAL, HISTORICAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SUMMARY OF THE AFRICAN COUNTRIES**

Prepared by: F. Pauwels, P. Van Damme, D. Theeten, C. De Keyser,  
S. Hoste, P. Wymeersch

---

### **GHANA**

1. Official name: Republic of Ghana

2. Geography:

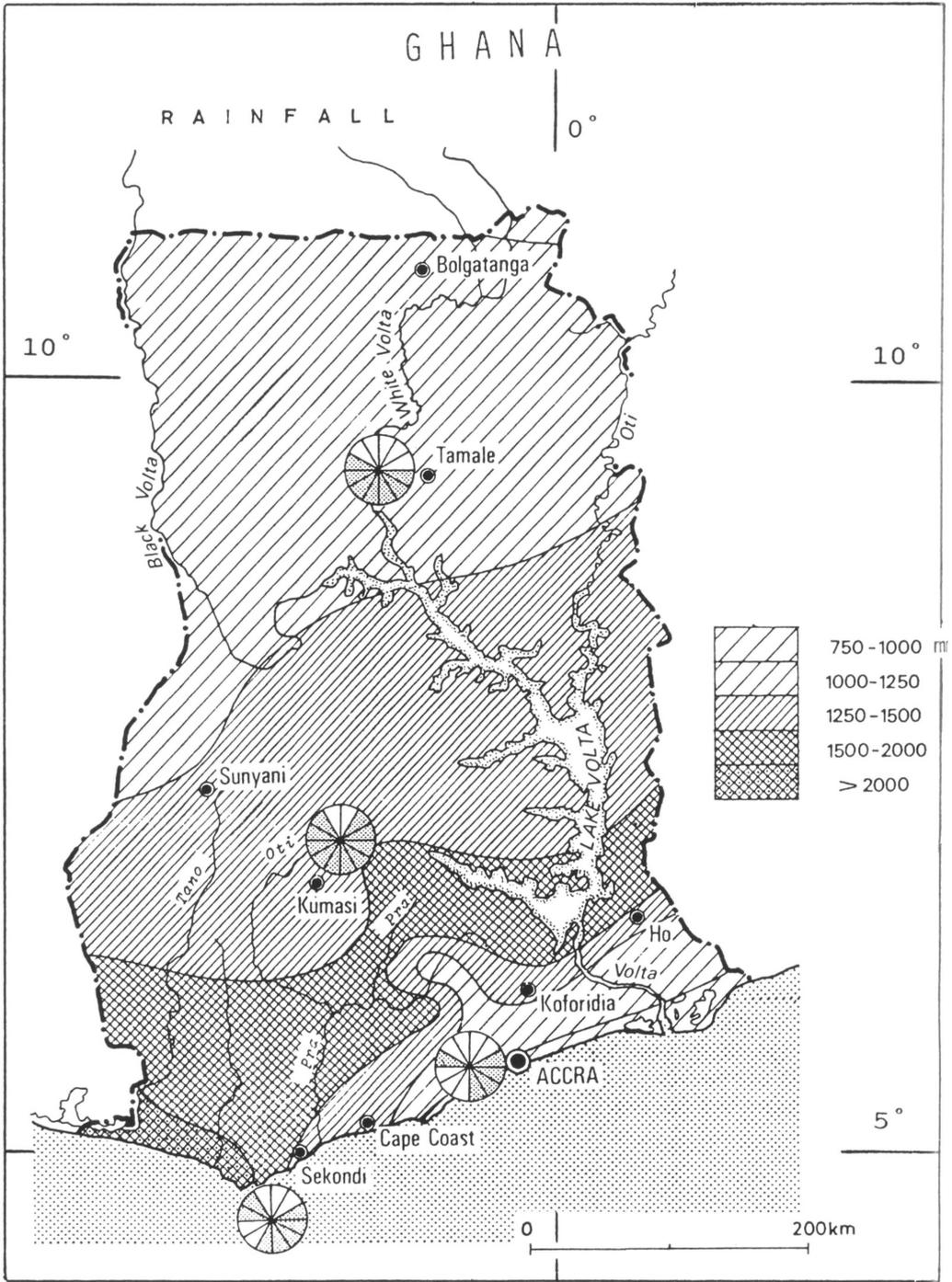
2.1. Situation:

Ghana lies on the west coast of Africa, between 4°45'N and 11°11'N, 3°W and 1°15'E.

2.2. Total area: 238 537 km<sup>2</sup>.

2.3. Natural regions: Highlands along the coast, low plains stretch 25-30 km inland, continuing eastward as the Volta delta and lagoons. Hill ranges and peneplain remnants, separated by wide, flatbottomed valleys rise inland to 300 m, higher ranges reach 760 m. The River Volta system, with a gentle relief in its basin, dominates the drainage.

2.4. Climate: The seasonal rhythm of climate is governed by the fluctuations of the Intertropical Convergence Zone. Temperatures are high with little variation throughout the year. The amounts of rainfall decrease generally towards the north and the east. The southern half of the country has two rainy seasons, the northern half has one.



### 3. Population:

3.1. Total population: 15.2 mln (1990), urban population: 32%.

3.2. Population density: 62 per km<sup>2</sup>.

3.3. Population growth rate: 2.92 % a year.

3.4. Capital: ACCRA, 965 000 inh. (1989).

3.5. Languages: English (official), Abron, Akwapim, Ashanti, Fanti, Kwahu, Twi, Tyokosi etc.

In fact Ghana is divided into two distinct linguistic families: the languages from the North belong to the Voltaic family also called Gur; those from the South are from Kwa origin i.e. Akan, Ewe and Ga-Adangme.

3.6. Religion: traditional religions (40%), Christians (40%), Islam.

### 4. History:

There are two main cultural areas: the North or savannah belt culture area and the South or Guinea Coast culture area. Neither of these areas are entirely homogeneous but cultures within each area tend to have more in common and share similar usages. This is particularly evident with birth rituals, marriages and funerals or social and political systems. These tend to follow different patterns in the North and the South.

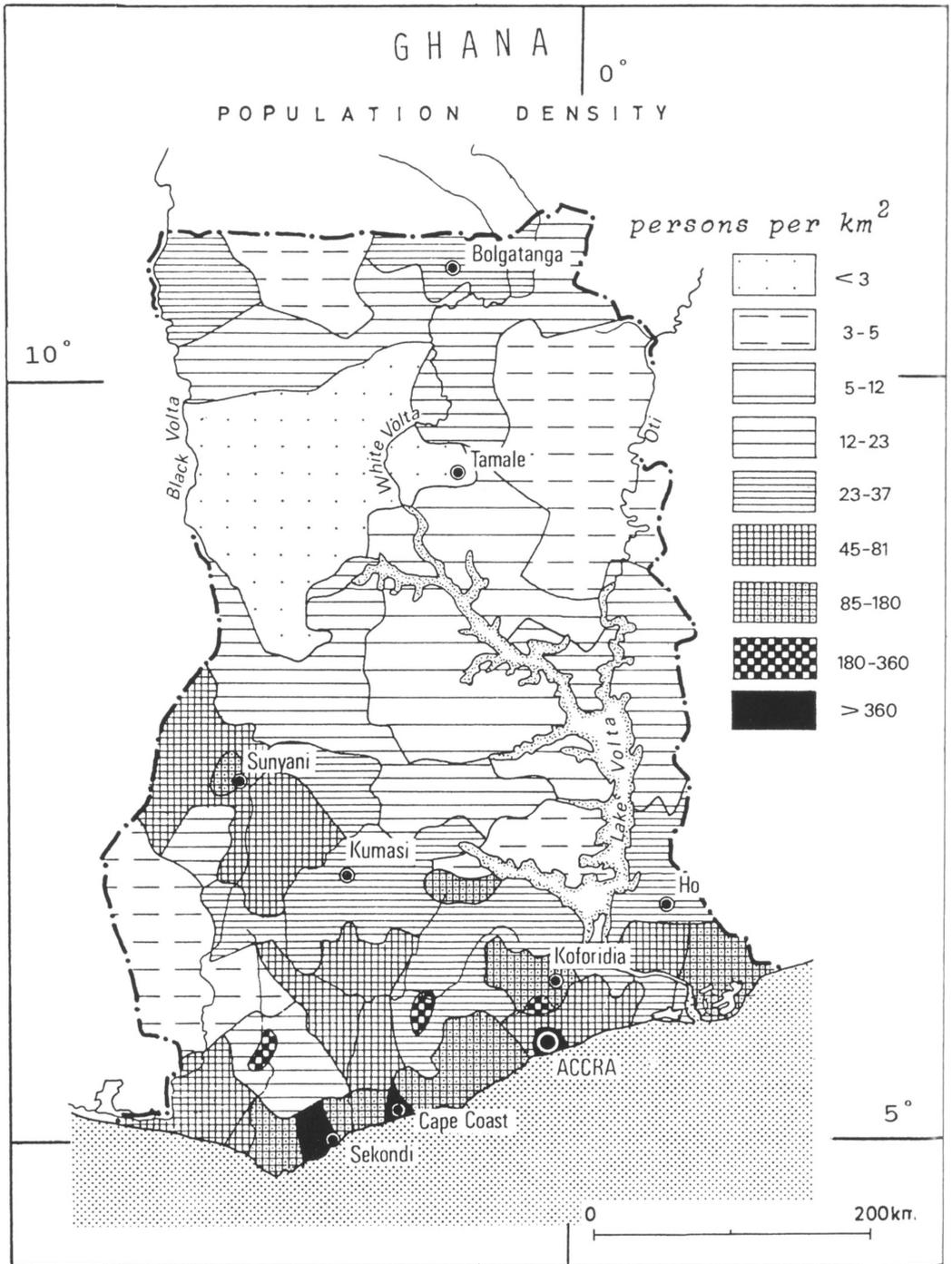
The peoples of the North are among others: Foulani, Tyokosi, Konkomba, Basari, Busanse, Kasena, Dagari, Birifor, Gonja and Mamprusi. Important ethnic groups in the South are: Fanti, Ashanti, Ewe and Akim.

In spite of their differences the social system heavily rests on kinship and secret associations. These govern marriage, acquisition and disposal of property.

Chiefs of villages and towns form the broad basis of the socio-political system. Above these are divisional chiefs who have under them a number of subordinate chiefs. Paramount chiefs form the apex of the political pyramid. Among them, in Northern Ghana, there is the Na-Yiri (Mamprusi), Ya-Na (Dagomba), Yabum-Wuru (Gonja) and Bimbila-Na (Nanumba). All of them sit on a skin. In the South

# GHANA

## POPULATION DENSITY



we find three types of political systems among the so-called Akan. The Ga-Adangme live in social units known as lineages (We). A confederation of lineages is grouped in a city (Man). The Ewe are the founders of city-states (Du). Around the city there are satellite villages (Kope). Confederated kingdoms occurred among the Akwamu, Denkyera, Fanti and of course the Ashanti. All of them sit on a stool.

Chieftaincy and the whole traditional political system are heavily linked with religious functions are centred mainly in the ancestral sacred stools, symbols of power and authority.

The Asantehene is the supreme king of the Ashanti. The queen mother plays also an important role in government. Gold is the symbol of the eternal spirit of the sun (Kra Nyame). Each clan-chief (Omanhene) possesses an ancestral sacred stool, symbol of the relation between the people and the ancestors. The sacred golden stool from the Asantehene is guarded in a special palace (Amanhene) and symbolizes the unity of the Ashanti nation. King Osei Tutu succeeded in unifying the kingdom in the beginning of the 18th century. Kumasi is still the capital.

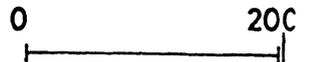
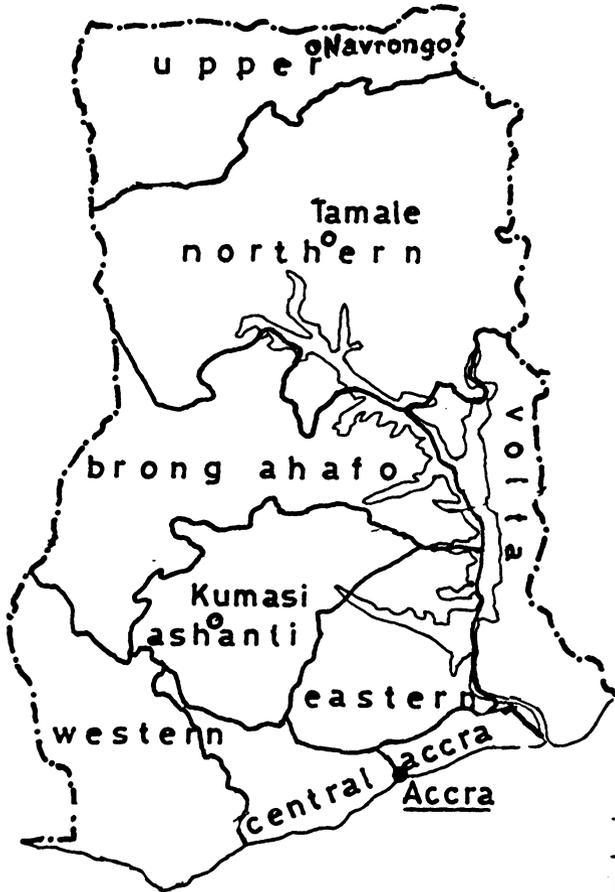
The so-called Akan peoples are matrilineal (Abusua). The residence after marriage is uxori-local.

In the pre-colonial period, North and South were linked by trade routes. They interacted politically and borrowed certain items of material culture and usages from one another.

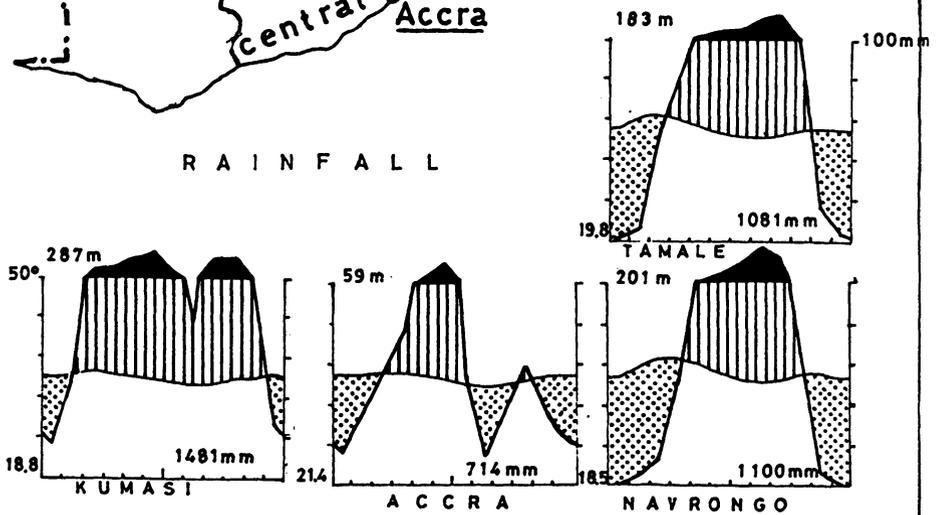
After its discovery by the Europeans, Ghana was called the Gold Coast and was partially occupied by the Netherlands and by Britain. After consecutive wars with the Ashanti and the end of slavery, the borders were fixed and it became a British colony, consisting of Gold Coast, Ashanti, Northern Territory and British Togoland.

The country received its present name in 1957 when it became independent under Kwame Nkrumah. In 1966, while Nkrumah was abroad, the army seized power and Nkrumah's party, the Convention People's Party (CCP) was abolished and replaced by the National Liberation Council (NLC). In 1969 national elections brought the Progress Party (PP) of Kofi Busia in power.

# GHANA REGIONS



## RAINFALL



## 5. Nature of political system:

After the military coup in 1972, parliament and all parties have been dissolved. Several military coups succeeded. The military rule was interrupted by a short civil regime in 1979. Since 1981, Flight Lieutenant J.J. Rawlings is chairman of the Provisional National Defense Council. Again, the parliament was dissolved and all political parties were proscribed. Since 1991 a schedule for the establishment of multi-party system is in debate. Ghana republic is subdivided in 9 provinces and 47 districts.

## 6. Economy:

GDP: agriculture: 51%, industry: 16%, services: 33% (1989). Employment: agriculture: 56%, industry: 18%, services: 26% (1980).

### 6.1. Mining:

Ghana is a large producer of gold (1989: 9 311 kg) and diamonds (1989: 0.65 mln carats). There is also an important production of bauxite (1989: 170 000 t) and manganese (1982: 160 000 t). The oil production has risen to 5000 b/d. Also present / exploited: iron ore, limestone, clay.

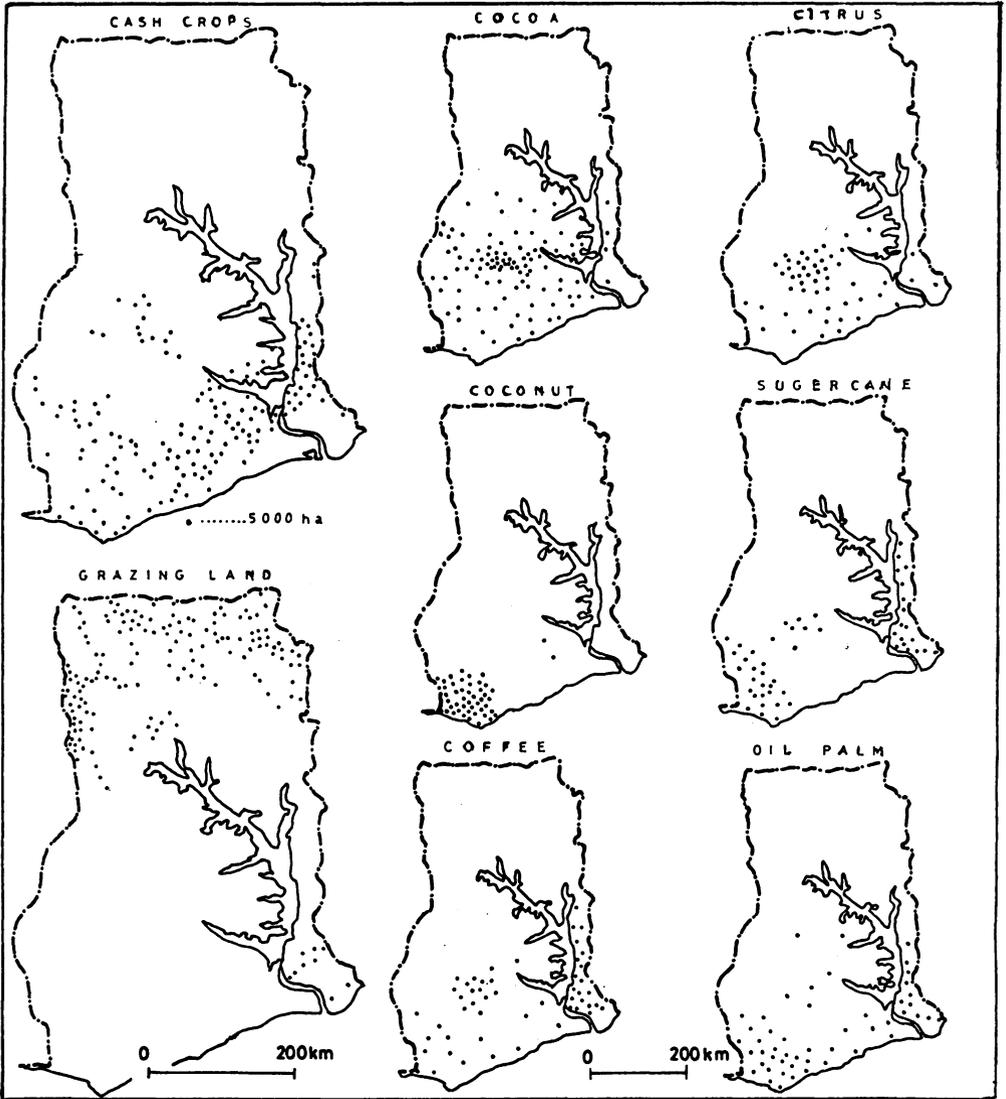
### 6.2. Agriculture:

11% of the total area is arable land or cultivated with permanent crops (1984). In spite of diversification programmes of the government, cacao remains the main agricultural product and export crop. Most of the cacao is grown in south Ghana as a monoculture. Coffee and groundnuts are exported too. Main food crops are cassava, taro, sweet potato, maize, millet, sorghum and rice. Production of fruit and vegetables has a growing importance. Government favours the production of tobacco, rubber, cotton and sisal.

### 6.3. Livestock:

15% of the total area is permanent pasture (1984). Livestock breeding has to overcome problems such as a long dry season with insufficient water and food supply, the tsétsé-fly and trypanosomiasis. Most of the livestock is concentrated in north Ghana. There are about 2 mln goats, 1.65 mln sheep, 925 000 heads of cattle, 400 000 pigs, 28 000 horses and donkeys, 11 mln poultry.

# GHANA



#### 6.4. Forestry and woodland:

38% of the total area (1984). Most of the commercial timber processing plants are situated in a triangle along the Pra river (Cape Coast-Kumasi-Sehandi). The annual log production amounts to 1 mln m<sup>3</sup>, with as main species obeché (*Trylochyton scleroxylon*), utilé (*Entandrophragma utile*), mahogany (*Khaya ivorensis*), sapelli (*Entandrophragma cylindricum*), mahoré (*Mimusops heckelii*) and kokrodua (*Pericopsis elata*). Utilé is mostly exported as sawn timber, the tree regenerates successfully. Ghana is the sole supplier of kokrodua (*Pericopsis elata*, substitute for teak). The export of iroko (*Chlorophora excelsa*) is forbidden.

#### 6.5. Fishery:

Estimates of annual catches vary between 190 - 265000 t. Most of the fish caught in inland waters ( $\pm$  40 000 t) comes from the Volta Lake (where an estimated 24000 fishermen from over 900 villages operate). Salt water catches include tunny, bream, sardines, mackerel. Fish farms have been set up in the Northern and Upper Regions.

#### 6.6. Industry:

Is well developed. There is a big variety of industrial activity, ranging from transformation of agricultural products and timber over petroleum refineries and chemical plants to textile and car assembly halls. Tourism is becoming more important.

#### 6.7. Weights, measures and currency:

pound, foot

1 Cedi (C) = 100 Pesew

1 US \$ = 361 C (March 1991)

#### 7. Trade:

Total exports amount to 617 mln US \$ (1985). Cacao and cocoa butter remain the most important export commodity. Main clients are the EEC, the USA, Switzerland, and the USSR.

Total imports amount to 727 mln US \$ (1985), mainly food and machinery. Main suppliers are the EEC, the USA, Norway, Canada, Nigeria and China.

#### 8. Miscellaneous:

Literacy: 30% in English.

World Bank classification: Ghana belongs to the low-income economies with a GDP per capita of 389 US \$ (1989).

#### Membership of international organisations:

GATT, ILO, IMF, OAU, UN, UNESCO, WHO, African Development Bank, Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (recipient), Commonwealth, Economic Commission for Africa, Economic Community of West African States, International Cocoa Organisation, World Bank.

#### Ghanaian Embassy in Belgium:

Gachardstraat 44  
1050 Brussel  
Tel. 02/649.01.64

#### Belgian Embassy:

Bd. Circulaire 294  
B.P. 294  
Lomé, Togo