

Election 2016: Greenstreet's Claims Fact-Checked – 50% Completely False



In a speech presented by CPP's Ivor Greenstreet to outline his vision for the country, some of the claims he made did not stand the test of scrutiny. Out of six claims that were fact-checked by the MFWA team, three were found to be completely false. Furthermore, two claims were found to be mostly true, and one claim entirely true.

1. Claim: Just look around you, despite all the shouting about poverty declining, **recent statistics show that 30% of the population is poor with 19% extremely poor.**

Verdict: Completely False

Explanation: National poverty rates are an essential defining characteristic of development and living standards that countries and societies have to continually contend with. Poverty rates can be measured in either absolute or relative terms. Relative poverty interprets poverty as socially defined

and dependent on social context. In contrast, absolute poverty, an approach adopted by Ghana refers to a set standard which is consistent over time and between countries.

Ghana's national poverty rate is an estimate of the percentage of the population living below the national poverty line. As in many countries, Ghana uses two poverty lines; an upper one below which an individual is viewed as unable to meet all his/her food and non-food needs, and a lower poverty line below which an individual cannot even meet their food needs. Households below the lower poverty line are referred to as "extremely poor". National poverty rates are based on population-weighted subgroup estimates from a national household survey (Ghana Living Standards Survey) conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service. Other international bodies also monitor the national poverty rate.

To subject Greenstreet's claim about Ghana's poverty rate to critical examination, two important questions were asked. Firstly, what are the latest estimates on the percentage of the population deemed to be poor and extremely poor, and secondly, has Ghana's poverty rates been steadily declining? In answering these questions, Greenstreet's claim was found to be false.

According to the report of the [6th Ghana Living Standards Survey](#) (GLSS 6) conducted in 2013, the latest of such surveys, **24.2%** of the Ghanaian population were deemed poor. Again, as at 2013, **8.4%** of the population were defined as being extremely poor. These estimates are corroborated by latest available figures from the [World Bank](#), [UNICEF](#), and the [World Fact Book](#). Also, the "**Most Recent**" UNICEF [Ghana Poverty and Inequality Report](#) (2016), establishes that Ghana's national level of poverty fell by more than half (**from 56.5% to 24.2%**), between 1992 and 2013 thereby achieving the MDG. Also, the rate of reduction of extreme poverty has not slowed since the 1990s and impressive progress in cutting extreme poverty was achieved even since 2006 (**cut from 16.5% to 8.4%**).

So, contrary to Greenstreet's claim, poverty rates in Ghana has indeed been steadily declining, and the latest national poverty rates are also lower than he claimed.

2. Claim: Do you know that recent statistics show that 48% of Ghanaians between the ages of 15 to 24 have no job? And that figure they say is worse for women: 48% and I repeat 48% of Ghanaians between the ages of 15 to 24 are jobless.

Verdict: Completely False

Explanation: Generally, the 15-24 age group is the conventional definition of youth. Unemployment rates largely refer to the percentage of a population that is available for work but are without jobs. In Ghana, the Ghana Statistical service through the labour force model of the Ghana living Standards Survey (GLSS) collects work-related statistics from selected households to track employment and labour related developments in the country. According to the most recent report ([GLSS 6](#)) covering 2013, unemployment rate among the 15-24 age group was **10.9%**. This figure contradicts the 48% cited by Greenstreet in his IEA speech.

Greenstreet's figure may or may not be related to several [news reports](#) that emerged earlier this year. In these stories which were supposed to be based on a 2016 World Bank report, it was claimed that 52% of persons in Ghana aged 15-24 were employed as against about 90% of 25-64 age group. This led to the erroneous conclusion that 48% of the Ghanaian population aged 15-24 were unemployed. What these news reports failed to highlight was that many young people within this age bracket were less likely to hold jobs because they were schooling.

In fact, a 2016 [World Bank report](#) on youth employment in Ghana presented below sheds light on this point. According to the report, about a third (31%) of the 15-24 age group were economically inactive because they were in school. Further, only 4% of the 15-24 age group were considered unemployed even though 14% of this age group were not working while also being out of school. The crux of the World Bank's report is that youth who are out of school and economically active generally have access to jobs, but these jobs are of poor quality.

So, in light of the above current and credible evidences, Greenstreet's claim of 48% unemployment among 15-24 aged persons in Ghana is actually false.

3. Claim: Look at our educational profile. In South Korea 60% of the population has higher education while ours is 3%.

Verdict: Completely False

Explanation: According to the National Analytical Report (on the 2010 Population and Housing Census) of the Ghana Statistical Service (2013), 56.3% of the population 6 years and older had had basic education comprising of primary (26.6%), JSS/JHS (20.6%) and middle (9.1%). About 7.5 percent of the population had had higher education beyond the secondary school level and less than 0.5 percent of the population reported post-graduate education. Also the 2014 Labour Force Report puts the figure at 20.7%.

Additionally, it is somewhat misleading to compare Ghana with South Korea, since South Korea is categorized by the World Bank as a high income country and now the world's 15th largest economy, while Ghana is a lower middle income country. It is therefore a case of comparing apples to oranges.

4. Claim: Inflation is up to 19% with interest rates at 35% and the cost of living is so so high for basic day to day things.

Verdict: Entirely True

Explanation: According to the Ghana statistical Service, inflation for the month of May, 2016 (figure was given in June) was 18.9% approximately 19%. Also while the Bank of Ghana was quoting daily interest rate at 25.5%, the average rates for the Commercial Banks was 30%.

5. Claim: We also have a creeping urbanization, sanitation and housing crisis. For example, just imagine, 53% of households in Accra occupy a single room

Verdict: Mostly True

Explanation: The 2014 Demographic and Health Survey states 65% and not 53% of households in Accra occupy a single room.

6. Claim: 5 million Ghanaians don't have access to toilets.

Verdict: Mostly True

Explanation: According to the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (2014) Seventeen percent of households in Ghana have no toilet facility and still use the bush or open field for defecation. As expected, rural households are much more likely to have no toilet facilities than urban households (29 percent versus 7 percent). This is supported by the 2015 UNICEF/WHO Joint Monitoring Programme on the MDG's report.

The claims made by Greenstreet were subjected to fact-checking by a dedicated team of seasoned journalists and researchers put together by Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) with support from the DW Akademie. The goal of this venture is to promote issue-based campaigning where political parties, their main actors, and other key stakeholders in the electioneering process become circumspect and factual in the claims they make.