

Economy

Overview: A per capita income of \$9,200 gives Barbados one of the highest standards of living of all the small island states of the eastern Caribbean. Historically, the economy was based on the cultivation of sugarcane and related activities. In recent years, however, the economy has diversified into manufacturing and tourism. A moderate recovery that began in late 1993 after 3 years of contraction is mainly due to increased tourism and expansion in the construction sector. Economic prospects for 1995 depend mostly on continued growth in the industrialized countries, especially in Europe, which would spur further expansion in tourism.

National product: GDP - purchasing power parity - \$2.4 billion (1994 est.)

National product real growth rate: 3% (1994 est.)

National product per capita: \$9,200 (1994 est.)

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 2% (1994 est.)

Unemployment rate: 20.5% (1994 est.)

Budget:

revenues: \$509 million

expenditures: \$636 million, including capital expenditures of \$86 million (FY94/95 est.)

Exports: \$161 million (f.o.b., 1993 est.)

commodities: sugar and molasses, rum, other foods and beverages, chemicals, electrical components, clothing

partners: US 13%, UK 10%, Trinidad and Tobago 9%, Windward Islands 8%

Imports: \$703 million (c.i.f., 1993 est.)

commodities: consumer goods, machinery, foodstuffs, construction materials, chemicals, fuel, electrical components

partners: US 36%, UK 11%, Trinidad and Tobago 11%, Japan 3%

External debt: \$652 million (1991 est.)

Industrial production: growth rate 2% (FY93/94 est.); accounts for about 10% of GDP

Electricity:

capacity: 152,100 kW

production: 510 million kWh

consumption per capita: 1,841 kWh (1993)

Industries: tourism, sugar, light manufacturing, component assembly for export

Agriculture: accounts for 6% of GDP; major cash crop is sugarcane; other crops - vegetables, cotton; not self-sufficient in food

Illicit drugs: one of many Caribbean transshipment points for narcotics bound for the US and Europe

Economic aid:

recipient: US commitments, including Ex-Im (FY70-89), \$15 million;
Western (non-US) countries, ODA and OOF bilateral commitments (1970-89), \$171 million

Currency: 1 Barbadian dollar (Bds\$) = 100 cents

Exchange rates: Barbadian dollars (Bds\$) per US\$1 - 2.0113 (fixed rate)

Fiscal year: 1 April - 31 March