

Netherlands Antilles

(part of the Dutch realm)

Geography

Location: Caribbean, two island groups in the Caribbean Sea - one includes Curacao and Bonaire north of Venezuela and the other is east of the Virgin Islands

Area:

total area: 960 sq km

land area: 960 sq km

Land boundaries: 0 km

Coastline: 364 km

Maritime claims:

exclusive fishing zone: 12 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: tropical; ameliorated by northeast trade winds

Terrain: generally hilly, volcanic interiors

Natural resources: phosphates (Curacao only), salt (Bonaire only)

Land use:

arable land: 8%

permanent crops: 0%

meadows and pastures: 0%

forest and woodland: 0%

other: 92%

Environment:

natural hazards: Curacao and Bonaire are south of Caribbean hurricane belt, so rarely threatened; Sint Maarten, Saba, and Sint Eustatius are subject to hurricanes from July to October

People

Population: 203,505 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 26% (female 25,349; male 26,577)

15-64 years: 67% (female 69,273; male 67,485)

65 years and over: 7% (female 8,599; male 6,222) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.06% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 16.23 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 5.26 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: -0.38 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 9 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 76.94 years

male: 74.67 years

female: 79.33 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 1.9 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Netherlands Antillean(s)

adjective: Netherlands Antillean

Ethnic divisions: mixed African 85%, Carib Indian, European, Latin, Oriental

Religions: Roman Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Seventh-Day Adventist

Languages: Dutch (official), Papiamentu a Spanish-Portuguese-Dutch-English dialect predominates, English widely spoken, Spanish

Literacy:
total population: 98%
male: 98%
female: 99%

Government

Names:
conventional short form: Netherlands Antilles

local long form: none

local short form: Nederlandse Antillen

Type: part of the Dutch realm; full autonomy in internal affairs granted in 1954

Capital: Willemstad

Independence: none (part of the Dutch realm)

National holiday: Queen's Day, 30 April (1938)

Constitution: 29 December 1954, Statute of the Realm of the Netherlands, as amended

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Flag: white with a horizontal blue stripe in the center superimposed on a vertical red band also centered; five white five-pointed stars are arranged in an oval pattern in the center of the blue band; the five stars represent the five main islands of Bonaire, Curacao, Saba, Sint Eustatius, and Sint Maarten

Economy

Overview: Tourism and offshore finance are the mainstays of the economy. The islands enjoy a high per capita income and a well-developed infrastructure as compared with other countries in the region. Almost all consumer and capital goods are imported, with Venezuela and the US being the major suppliers. Poor soils and inadequate water supplies hamper the development of agriculture.

Industries: tourism (Curacao and Sint Maarten), petroleum refining (Curacao), petroleum transshipment facilities (Curacao and Bonaire), light manufacturing (Curacao)

Agriculture: chief products - aloes, sorghum, peanuts, vegetables, tropical fruit

Illicit drugs: money-laundering center; transshipment point for South American cocaine and marijuana bound for the US and Europe

Transportation

Railroads: 0 km

Highways:
total: 950 km

Ports: Kralendijk, Philipsburg, Willemstad

Airports:
total: 5

Defence Forces

Branches: Royal Netherlands Navy, Marine Corps, Royal
Netherlands Air Force, National Guard, Police Force