

Zaire

Geography

Location: Central Africa, northeast of Angola

Area:

total area: 2,345,410 sq km

land area: 2,267,600 sq km

Land boundaries: total 10,271 km, Angola 2,511 km, Burundi 233 km, Central

African Republic 1,577 km, Congo 2,410 km, Rwanda 217 km, Sudan 628 km,

Uganda 765 km, Zambia 1,930 km

Coastline: 37 km

Maritime claims:

exclusive economic zone: boundaries with neighbors

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: tropical; hot and humid in equatorial river basin; cooler and drier in southern highlands; cooler and wetter in eastern highlands; north

of Equator - wet season April to October, dry season December to February;

south of Equator - wet season November to March, dry season April to October

Terrain: vast central basin is a low-lying plateau; mountains in east

Natural resources: cobalt, copper, cadmium, petroleum, industrial and gem

diamonds, gold, silver, zinc, manganese, tin, germanium, uranium, radium,

bauxite, iron ore, coal, hydropower potential

Land use:

arable land: 3%

permanent crops: 0%

meadows and pastures: 4%

forest and woodland: 78%

other: 15%

Irrigated land: 100 sq km (1989 est.)

Environment:

current issues: poaching threatens wildlife populations; water pollution;

deforestation; 1.2 million Rwandan refugees are responsible for significant

deforestation, soil erosion, and wildlife poaching in eastern Zaire

natural hazards: periodic droughts in south; volcanic activity

Note: straddles Equator; very narrow strip of land that controls the lower

Congo River and is only outlet to South Atlantic Ocean; dense tropical rain

forest in central river basin and eastern highlands

People

Population: 44,060,636 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 48% (female 10,522,368; male 10,527,451)

15-64 years: 50% (female 11,211,353; male 10,630,118)

65 years and over: 2% (female 647,307; male 522,039) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 3.18% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 48.33 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 16.57 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 108.7 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 47.54 years

male: 45.68 years

female: 49.46 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 6.7 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Zairian(s)

adjective: Zairian

Ethnic divisions: over 200 African ethnic groups, the majority are Bantu;
four largest tribes - Mongo, Luba, Kongo (all Bantu), and the Mangbetu-Azande (Hamitic) make up about 45% of the population

Religions: Roman Catholic 50%, Protestant 20%, Kimbanguist 10%, Muslim 10%,
other syncretic sects and traditional beliefs 10%

Languages: French, Lingala, Swahili, Kingwana, Kikongo, Tshiluba

Literacy:
total population: 72%
male: 84%
female: 61%

Government

Names:
conventional long form: Republic of Zaire
conventional short form: Zaire

local long form: Republique du Zaire

local short form: Zaire

former: Belgian Congo Congo/Leopoldville Congo/Kinshasa

Capital: Kinshasa

Independence: 30 June 1960 (from Belgium)

National holiday: Anniversary of the Regime (Second Republic), 24
November
(1965)

Constitution: 24 June 1967, amended August 1974, revised 15
February 1978;
amended April 1990; new transitional constitution promulgated in
April 1994

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal and compulsory

Flag: light green with a yellow disk in the center bearing a black arm
holding a red flaming torch; the flames of the torch are blowing
away from
the hoist side; uses the popular pan-African colors of Ethiopia

Economy

Industries: mining, mineral processing, consumer products (including textiles, footwear, cigarettes, processed foods and beverages), cement, diamonds

Agriculture: cash crops - coffee, palm oil, rubber, quinine; food crops - cassava, bananas, root crops, corn

Illicit drugs: illicit producer of cannabis, mostly for domestic consumption

Transportation

Railroads:
total: 5,138 km

Highways:

total: 146,500 km

Inland waterways: 15,000 km including the Congo, its tributaries,
and

unconnected lakes

Pipelines: petroleum products 390 km

Ports: Banana, Boma, Bukavu, Bumba, Goma, Kalemie, Kindu,
Kinshasa,
Kisangani, Matadi, Mbandaka

Airports:

total: 270

Defence Forces

Branches: Army, Navy, Air Force, National Gendarmerie,
paramilitary Civil
Guard, Special Presidential Division