

Congo

Geography

Location: Western Africa, bordering the South Atlantic Ocean, between Angola and Gabon

Map references: Africa

Area:

total area: 342,000 sq km

land area: 341,500 sq km

Land boundaries: total 5,504 km, Angola 201 km, Cameroon 523 km, Central African Republic 467 km, Gabon 1,903 km, Zaire 2,410 km

Coastline: 169 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 200 nm

Climate: tropical; rainy season (March to June); dry season (June to October); constantly high temperatures and humidity; particularly enervating climate astride the Equator

Terrain: coastal plain, southern basin, central plateau, northern basin

Natural resources: petroleum, timber, potash, lead, zinc, uranium, copper, phosphates, natural gas

Land use:

arable land: 2%

permanent crops: 0%

meadows and pastures: 29%

forest and woodland: 62%

other: 7%

Irrigated land: 40 sq km (1989)

Environment:

current issues: air pollution from vehicle emissions; water pollution from the dumping of raw sewage; tap water is not potable;

deforestation

natural hazards: seasonal flooding

Note: about 70% of the population lives in Brazzaville, Pointe Noire, or along the railroad between them

People

Population: 2,504,996 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 44% (female 543,324; male 548,840)

15-64 years: 53% (female 682,927; male 645,045)

65 years and over: 3% (female 49,879; male 34,981) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 2.32% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 39.86 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 16.7 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: 0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 109.4 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 47.09 years
male: 45.23 years
female: 49 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 5.23 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:
noun: Congolese (singular and plural)
adjective: Congolese or Congo

Ethnic divisions:
south: Kongo 48%
north: Sangha 20%, M'Bochi 12%
center: Teke 17%, Europeans 8,500 (mostly French)

Religions: Christian 50%, animist 48%, Muslim 2%

Languages: French (official), African languages (Lingala and Kikongo are the most widely used)

Literacy: age 15 and over can read and write (1984)
total population: 60%
male: 71%
female: 49%

Labor force: 79,100 wage earners
by occupation: agriculture 75%, commerce, industry, and
government 25%

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Republic of the Congo

conventional short form: Congo

local long form: Republique Populaire du Congo

local short form: Congo

former: Congo/Brazzaville

Type: republic

Capital: Brazzaville

Administrative divisions: 9 regions (regions, singular - region) and 1
commune*; Bouenza, Brazzaville*, Cuvette, Kouilou, Lekoumou,
Likouala, Niari, Plateaux, Pool, Sangha

Independence: 15 August 1960 (from France)

National holiday: Congolese National Day, 15 August (1960)

Legal system: based on French civil law system and customary law

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Flag: red, divided diagonally from the lower hoist side by a yellow band; the upper triangle (hoist side) is green and the lower triangle is red; uses the popular pan-African colors of Ethiopia

Economy

Overview: Congo's economy is a mixture of village agriculture and handicrafts, an industrial sector based largely on oil, support services, and a government characterized by budget problems and overstaffing. A reform program, supported by the IMF and World Bank, ran into difficulties in 1990-91 because of problems in changing to a democratic political regime and a heavy debt-servicing burden. Oil has supplanted forestry as the mainstay of the economy, providing about two-thirds of government revenues and exports. In the early 1980s rapidly rising oil revenues enabled Congo to finance large-scale development projects with growth averaging 5% annually, one of the highest rates in Africa. Subsequently, growth has slowed to an average of roughly 1.5% annually, only two-thirds of the population growth rate. Political

turmoil and misguided government investment have derailed economic reform programs sponsored by the IMF and World Bank. Even with these difficulties Congo enjoys one of the highest incomes per capita in sub-Saharan Africa
Industries: petroleum, cement, lumbering, brewing, sugar milling, palm oil, soap, cigarette

Agriculture: accounts for 12% of GDP (including fishing and forestry); cassava accounts for 90% of food output; other crops - rice, corn, peanuts, vegetables; cash crops include coffee and cocoa; forest products important export earner; imports over 90% of food needs

Transportation

Railroads:

total: 797 km (includes 285 km that are privately owned)

Highways:

total: 11,960 km

Inland waterways: the Congo and Ubangi (Oubangui) Rivers provide 1,120 km of commercially navigable water transport; the rest are used for local traffic only

Pipelines: crude oil 25 km

Ports: Brazzaville, Impfondo, Ouessou, Oyo, Pointe-Noire

Airports:

total: 41

Defence Forces

Branches: Army, Navy (includes Marines), Air Force, National Police