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South Korea

Background

An independent kingdom for much of its long history, Korea was occupied by Japan beginning in 1905 following the Russo-Japanese War. In 1910, Tokyo formally annexed the entire Peninsula. Korea regained its independence following Japan's surrender to the US in 1945. After World War II, a democratic government (Republic of Korea, ROK) was set up in the southern half of the Korean Peninsula while a communist-style government was installed in the north (Democratic People's Republic of Korea, DPRK). During the Korean War (1950-53), US troops and UN forces fought alongside ROK soldiers to defend South Korea from a DPRK invasion supported by communist China and the Soviet Union. A 1953 armistice split the Peninsula along a demilitarized zone at about the 38th parallel. PARK Chung-hee took over leadership of the country in a 1961 coup. During his regime, from 1961 to 1979, South Korea achieved rapid economic growth, with per capita income rising to roughly 17 times the level of North Korea in 1979.

South Korea held its first free presidential election under a revised democratic constitution in 1987, with former ROK Army general ROH Tae-woo winning a close race. In 1993, KIM Young-sam (1993-98) became the first civilian president of South Korea's new democratic era. President KIM Dae-jung (1998-2003) won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2000 for his contributions to South Korean democracy and his "Sunshine" policy of engagement with North Korea. President PARK Geun-hye, daughter of former ROK President PARK Chung-hee, took office in February 2013 as South Korea's first female leader. In December 2016, the National Assembly passed an impeachment motion against President PARK over her alleged involvement in a corruption and influence-peddling scandal, immediately suspending her presidential authorities. The impeachment was upheld in March 2017, triggering an early presidential election in May 2017 won by MOON Jae-in. South Korea hosted the Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in February 2018, in which North Korea also participated. Discord with North Korea has permeated inter-Korean relations for much of the past decade, highlighted by the North's attacks on a South Korean ship and island in 2010, the exchange of artillery fire across the DMZ in 2015, and multiple nuclear and missile tests in 2016 and 2017. North Korea's participation in the Winter Olympics, dispatch of a senior delegation to Seoul, and three inter-Korean summits in 2018 appear to have ushered in a temporary period of respite, buoyed by the historic US-DPRK summits in 2018 and 2019.

Geography

Location

Eastern Asia, southern half of the Korean Peninsula bordering the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea

Coordinates

Latitude: 37 00 N
Longitude: 127 30 E

Area

Total: 99,720 sq km
Land: 96,920 sq km
Water: 2,800 sq km

Climate

temperate, with rainfall heavier in summer than winter; cold winters

Terrain

mostly hills and mountains; wide coastal plains in west and south

Resources

coal, tungsten, graphite, molybdenum, lead, hydropower potential

Land

Agricultural: 18.1%
Forest: 63.9%
Other:

Society

Population

51835110

Nationality

Noun: Korean(s)
Longitude: Korean

Ethnicity

homogeneous: 100%

Language

Korean(official), English

Religion

Protestant: 19.7%
Buddhist: 15.5%
Catholic: 7.9%
none: 56.9%

Age

Age group of 0-14: 12.77% of total population (3401815 male/3219589 female)
Age group of 15-24: 11.18% of total population (3030027 male/2764860 female)
Age group of 25-54: 44.66% of total population (12043626 male/11106927 female)
Age group of 55-64: 15.47% of total population (3927496 male/4089033 female)
Age group of 65+: 15.92% of total population (3572855 male/4678882 female)

Median:

Total: 43.2
Male: 41.6
Female: 45

Life expectancy:

Total: 82.6
Male: 79.4
Female: 85.9

Urbanization

People living in urban areas: 81.4% of total population

Rate of urbanization: 0.3%

SEOUL: 9.963 million
Busan: 3.465 million
Incheon: 2.801 million
Daegu: 2.199 million
Daejon: 1.566 million
Gwangju: 1.522 million

Government

Government type

presidential republic

Capital

Seoul

Chief of state

President MOON Jae-in (elected 10 May 2017)

Head of government

President MOON Jae-in (elected 10 May 2017)

Legal system

mixed legal system combining European civil law, Anglo-American law, and Chinese classical thought

Symbols

Symbols:

taegeuk (yin yang symbol), Hibiscus syriacus (Rose of Sharon), Siberian tiger

Colors:

red, white, blue, black

Anthem:

"Aegukga" (Patriotic Song)

Economy

Overview

After emerging from the 1950-53 war with North Korea, South Korea emerged as one of the 20th century's most remarkable economic success stories, becoming a developed, globally connected, high-technology society within decades. In the 1960s, GDP per capita was comparable with levels in the poorest countries in the world. In 2004, South Korea's GDP surpassed one trillion dollars.

Beginning in the 1960s under President PARK Chung-hee, the government promoted the import of raw materials and technology, encouraged saving and investment over consumption, kept wages low, and directed resources to export-oriented industries that remain important to the economy to this day. Growth surged under these policies, and frequently reached double-digits in the 1960s and 1970s. Growth gradually moderated in the 1990s as the economy matured, but remained strong enough to propel South Korea into the ranks of the advanced economies of the OECD by 1997. These policies also led to the emergence of family-owned chaebol conglomerates such as Daewoo, Hyundai, and Samsung, which retained their dominant positions even as the government loosened its grip on the economy amid the political changes of the 1980s and 1990s.

The Asian financial crisis of 1997-98 hit South Korea's companies hard because of their excessive reliance on short-term borrowing, and GDP ultimately plunged by 7% in 1998. South Korea tackled difficult economic reforms following the crisis, including restructuring some chaebols, increasing labor market flexibility, and opening up to more foreign investment and imports. These steps led to a relatively rapid economic recovery. South Korea also began expanding its network of free trade agreements to help bolster exports, and has since implemented 16 free trade agreements covering 58 countries—including the United State and China—that collectively cover more than three-quarters of global GDP.

In 2017, the election of President MOON Jae-in brought a surge in consumer confidence, in part, because of his successful efforts to increase wages and government spending. These factors combined with an uptick in export growth to drive real GDP growth to more than 3%, despite disruptions in South Korea's trade with China over the deployment of a US missile defense system in South Korea.

In 2018 and beyond, South Korea will contend with gradually slowing economic growth - in the 2-3% range - not uncommon for advanced economies. This could be partially offset by efforts to address challenges arising from its

rapidly aging population, inflexible labor market, continued dominance of the chaebols, and heavy reliance on exports rather than domestic consumption. Socioeconomic problems also persist, and include rising inequality, poverty among the elderly, high youth unemployment, long working hours, low worker productivity, and corruption.

GDP

GDP amount: \$2.035 trillion

GDP growth: 3.1%

GDP per capita: \$39,500

GDP savings: 36.6% of GDP

GDP from agriculture: 2.2%

GDP from industry: 39.3%

GDP from services: 58.3%

Agricultural products

rice, root crops, barley, vegetables, fruit, cattle, pigs, chickens, milk, eggs, fish

Industries

electronics, telecommunications, automobile production, chemicals, shipbuilding, steel

Labor force

Total amount: 27.75 million

In agriculture: 4.8%

In industry: 24.6%

In services: 70.6%

Unemployment

3.7%

Inflation

1.9%

Exports

Total amount: \$577.4 billion

Partners: China(25.1%), US(12.2%), Vietnam(8.2%), Hong Kong(6.9%), Japan(4.7%)

Commodities: semiconductors, petrochemicals, automobile/auto parts, ships, wireless communication equipment, flat displays, steel, electronics, plastics, computers

Imports

Total amount: \$457.5 billion

Partners: China(20.5%), Japan(11.5%), US(10.5%), Germany(4.2%), Saudi Arabia(4.1%)

Commodities: crude oil/petroleum products, semiconductors, natural gas, coal, steel, computers, wireless communication equipment, automobiles, fine chemicals, textiles

Energy

Electricity

Access: 100%

Production: 526 billion kWh

Consumption: 507.6 billion kWh

Exports: 0 kWh

Imports: 0 kWh

Sources:

fossil fuel: 70%

nuclear: 21%

hydroelectric: 2%

other renewable sources: 8%

Crude oil

Production: 0 bbl/day

Exports: 0 bbl/day

Imports: 3.057 million bbl/day

Refined petroleum products

Production: 3.302 million bbl/day

Consumption: 2.584 million bbl/day

Exports: 1.396 million bbl/day

Imports: 908,800 bbl/day

Natural gas

Production: 339.8 million cu m

Consumption: 45.28 billion cu m

Exports: 0 cu m

Imports: 48.65 billion cu m

Communication

Telephone

Fixed lines subscriptions: 25906849

Mobile cellular subscriptions: 66355778

Broadcast media

multiple national TV networks with 2 of the 3 largest networks publicly operated; the largest privately owned network, Seoul Broadcasting Service (SBS), has ties with other commercial TV networks; cable and satellite TV subscription services available; publicly operated radio broadcast networks and many privately owned radio broadcasting networks, each with multiple affiliates, and independent local stations

Internet

Internet code: .kr

Total users: 44.153 million

Military and security

Expenditure

2.62% of GDP

Military forces

Republic of Korea Army(ROKA), Navy(ROKN), Air Force(ROKAF)

Obligation

minimum conscript service obligation varies by service- 21 months (Army, Marines), 23 months (Navy), 24 months (Air Force)

Transportation

Airports

Total: 111
Paved: 71
Unpaved: 40

Pipelines

Gas: 3790 km
Oil: 16 km

Railways

3,979 km

Roadways

Total: 100,428 km
Paved: 92,795 km
Unpaved: 7,633 km

Waterways

1,600 km

Transnational issues

Disputes

Military Demarcation Line within the 4-km-wide Demilitarized Zone has separated North from South Korea since 1953; periodic incidents with North Korea in the Yellow Sea over the Northern Limit Line, which South Korea claims as a maritime boundary; South Korea and Japan claim Liancourt Rocks (Tok-do/Take-shima), occupied by South Korea since 1954

Namibia

Background

Namibia gained independence in 1990. Prior to independence, apartheid South Africa occupied the former German colony known as South-West Africa during World War I and administered it as a mandate until after World War II, when it annexed the territory. In 1966, the Marxist South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) guerrilla group launched a war of independence for the area that became Namibia, but it was not until 1988 that South Africa agreed to end its administration in accordance with a UN peace plan for the entire region. Namibia has been governed by SWAPO since the country won independence, though the party has dropped much of its Marxist ideology. President Hage GEINGOB was elected in 2014 in a landslide victory, replacing Hifikepunye POHAMBHA who stepped down after serving two terms. SWAPO retained its parliamentary super majority in the 2014 elections. In 2019 elections, GEINGOB was reelected but by a substantially reduced majority and SWAPO narrowly lost its super majority in parliament.

Geography

Location

Southern Africa, bordering the South Atlantic Ocean, between Angola and South Africa

Coordinates

Latitude: 22 00 S
Longitude: 17 00 E

Area

Total: 824,292 sq km
Land: 823,290 sq km
Water: 1,002 sq km

Climate

desert; hot, dry; rainfall sparse and erratic

Terrain

mostly high plateau; Namib Desert along coast; Kalahari Desert in east

Resources

diamonds, copper, uranium, gold, silver, lead, tin, lithium, cadmium, tungsten, zinc, salt, hydropower, fish, oil, coal, iron ore

Land

Agricultural: 47.2%
Forest: 8.8%
Other:

Society

Population

2630073

Nationality

Noun: Namibian(s)

Longitude: Namibian

Etnicity

Ovambo: 50%
Kavangos: 9%
Herero: 7%
Damara: 7%
mixed European and African ancestry: 6.5%
European: 6%
Nama: 5%
Caprivian: 4%
San: 3%
Baster: 2%
Tswana: 5%

Language

English(official), Oshiwambo languages, Nama/Damara, Kavango languages, Afrikaans, Herero languages, Zambezi languages

Religion

Christian: 80% to 90%
indigenous beliefs: 10% to 20%

Age

Age group of 0-14: 35.68% of total population (473937 male/464453 female)
Age group of 15-24: 20.27% of total population (267106 male/265882 female)
Age group of 25-54: 35.47% of total population (449132 male/483811 female)
Age group of 55-64: 4.68% of total population (54589 male/68619 female)
Age group of 65+: 3.9% of total population (43596 male/58948 female)

Median:

Total: 21.8
Male: 21.1
Female: 22.6

Life expectancy:

Total: 65.3
Male: 63.3
Female: 67.3

Urbanization

People living in urban areas: 52% of total population
Rate of urbanization: 4.2%
WINDHOEK: 431,000

Government

Government type

presidential republic

Capital

Windhoek

Chief of state

President Hage GEINGOB (elected 21 March 2015)

Head of government

President Hage GEINGOB (elected 21 March 2015)

Legal system

mixed legal system of uncodified civil law based on Roman-Dutch law and customary law

Symbols

Symbols:

oryx (antelope)

Colors:

blue, red, green, white, yellow

Anthem:

Namibia, Land of the Brave

Economy

Overview

Namibia's economy is heavily dependent on the extraction and processing of minerals for export. Mining accounts for about 12.5% of GDP, but provides more than 50% of foreign exchange earnings. Rich alluvial diamond deposits make Namibia a primary source for gem-quality diamonds. Marine diamond mining is increasingly important as the terrestrial diamond supply has dwindled. The rising cost of mining diamonds, especially from the sea, combined with increased diamond production in Russia and China, has reduced profit margins. Namibian authorities have emphasized the need to add value to raw materials, do more in-country manufacturing, and exploit the services market, especially in the logistics and transportation sectors.

Namibia is one of the world's largest producers of uranium. The Chinese-owned Husab uranium mine began producing uranium ore in 2017, and is expected to reach full production in August 2018 and produce 15 million pounds of uranium a year. Namibia also produces large quantities of zinc and is a smaller producer of gold and copper. Namibia's economy remains vulnerable to world commodity price fluctuations and drought.

Namibia normally imports about 50% of its cereal requirements; in drought years, food shortages are problematic in rural areas. A high per capita GDP, relative to the region, obscures one of the world's most unequal income distributions; the current government has prioritized exploring wealth redistribution schemes while trying to maintain a pro-business environment. GDP growth in 2017 slowed to about 1%, however, due to contractions in both the construction and mining sectors, as well as an ongoing drought. Growth is expected to recover modestly in 2018.

A five-year Millennium Challenge Corporation compact ended in September 2014. As an upper middle income country, Namibia is ineligible for a second compact. The Namibian economy is closely linked to South Africa with the Namibian dollar pegged one-to-one to the South African rand. Namibia receives 30%-40% of its revenues from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU); volatility in the size of Namibia's annual SACU allotment and global mineral prices complicates budget planning.

GDP

GDP amount: \$26.6 billion

GDP growth:

GDP per capita: -0.8%

GDP savings: \$11,200

GDP from agriculture: 6.7%

GDP from industry: 26.3%

GDP from services: 67%

Agricultural products

millet, sorghum, peanuts, grapes, livestock, fish

Industries

meatpacking, fish processing, dairy products, pasta, beverages, mining

Labor force

Total amount: 956,800

In agriculture: 31%

In industry: 14%

In services: 54%

Unemployment

34%

Inflation

6.1%

Exports

Total amount: \$3.995 billion

Partners: South Africa(27.1%), Botswana(14.9%), Switzerland(12%), Zambia(5.7%), China(4.6%), Italy(4.4%)

Commodities: diamonds, copper, gold, zinc, lead, uranium, cattle, white fish and mollusks

Imports

Total amount: \$5.384 billion

Partners: South Africa(61.4%)

Commodities: foodstuffs, petroleum products and fuel, machinery and equipment, chemicals

Energy

Electricity

Access: 51.8%

Production: 1.403 billion kWh

Consumption: 3.891 billion kWh

Exports: 88 million kWh

Imports: 3.073 billion kWh

Sources:

fossil fuel: 28%

nuclear: 0%

hydroelectric: 64%

other renewable sources: 8%

Crude oil

Production: 0 bbl/day

Exports: 0 bbl/day

Imports: 0 bbl/day

Refined petroleum products

Production: 0 bbl/day

Consumption: 27,000 bbl/day

Exports: 80 bbl/day
Imports: 26,270 bbl/day

Natural gas

Production: 0 cu m
Consumption: 0 cu m
Exports: 0 cu m
Imports: 0 cu m

Communication

Telephone

Fixed lines subscriptions: 154816
Mobile cellular subscriptions: 2759293

Broadcast media

1 private and 1 state-run TV station; satellite and cable TV service available; state-run radio service broadcasts in multiple languages; about a dozen private radio stations; transmissions of multiple international broadcasters available

Internet

Internet code: .na
Total users: 756,118

Military and security

Expenditure

3.35% of GDP

Military forces

Namibian Defense Force(NDF), Army, Navy, Air Force

Obligation

no conscription

Transportation

Airports

Total: 112
Paved: 19
Unpaved: 93

Pipelines

Gas: 0 km
Oil: 0 km

Railways

2,628 km

Roadways

Total: 48,875 km
Paved: 7,893 km

Unpaved: 40,982 km

Waterways

0 km

Transnational issues

Disputes

concerns from international experts and local populations over the Okavango Delta ecology in Botswana and human displacement scuttled Namibian plans to construct a hydroelectric dam on Poppa Falls along the Angola-Namibia border; the governments of South Africa and Namibia have not signed or ratified the text of the 1994 Surveyor's General agreement placing the boundary in the middle of the Orange River; Namibia has supported, and in 2004 Zimbabwe dropped objections to, plans between Botswana and Zambia to build a bridge over the Zambezi River, thereby de facto recognizing a short, but not clearly delimited, Botswana-Zambia boundary in the river

Italy

Background

Italy became a nation-state in 1861 when the regional states of the peninsula, along with Sardinia and Sicily, were united under King Victor EMMANUEL II. An era of parliamentary government came to a close in the early 1920s when Benito MUSSOLINI established a Fascist dictatorship. His alliance with Nazi Germany led to Italy's defeat in World War II. A democratic republic replaced the monarchy in 1946 and economic revival followed. Italy is a charter member of NATO and the European Economic Community (EEC) and its subsequent successors the EC and the EU. It has been at the forefront of European economic and political unification, joining the Economic and Monetary Union in 1999. Persistent problems include sluggish economic growth, high youth and female unemployment, organized crime, corruption, and economic disparities between southern Italy and the more prosperous north.

Geography

Location

Southern Europe, a peninsula extending into the central Mediterranean Sea, northeast of Tunisia

Coordinates

Latitude: 42 50 N
Longitude: 12 50 E

Area

Total: 301,340 sq km
Land: 294,140 sq km
Water: 7,200 sq km

Climate

predominantly Mediterranean; alpine in far north; hot, dry in south

Terrain

mostly rugged and mountainous; some plains, coastal lowlands

Resources

coal, antimony, mercury, zinc, potash, marble, barite, asbestos, pumice, fluorspar, feldspar, pyrite (sulfur), natural gas and crude oil reserves, fish, arable land

Land

Agricultural: 47.1%
Forest: 31.4%
Other:

Society

Population

62402659

Nationality

Noun: Italian(s)
Longitude: Italian

Ethnicity

Italian: 100%

Language

Italian(official), German, French, Slovene

Religion

Christian: 83.3%
Muslim: 3.7%
unaffiliated: 12.4%
other: 0.6%

Age

Age group of 0-14: 13.45% of total population (4292431 male/4097732 female)
Age group of 15-24: 9.61% of total population (3005402 male/2989764 female)
Age group of 25-54: 40.86% of total population (12577764 male/12921614 female)
Age group of 55-64: 14% of total population (4243735 male/4493581 female)
Age group of 65+: 22.08% of total population (5949560 male/7831076 female)

Median:

Total: 46.5
Male: 45.4
Female: 47.5

Life expectancy:

Total: 82.5
Male: 79.8
Female: 85.3

Urbanization

People living in urban areas: 71% of total population

Rate of urbanization: 0.29%

ROME: 4.257 million
Milan: 3.140 million
Naples: 2.187 million
Turin: 1.792 million
Bergamo: 892,000
Palermo: 851,000

Government

Government type

parliamentary republic

Capital

Rome

Chief of state

President Sergio MATTARELLA (elected 3 February 2015)

Head of government

Prime Minister Giuseppe CONTE (elected 1 June 2018)

Legal system

civil law system; judicial review of legislation under certain conditions in Constitutional Court

Symbols

Symbols:

white, five-pointed star

Colors:

red, white, green

Anthem:

"Il Canto degli Italiani" (The Song of the Italians)

Economy

Overview

Italy's economy comprises a developed industrial north, dominated by private companies, and a less-developed, highly subsidized, agricultural south, with a legacy of unemployment and underdevelopment. The Italian economy is driven in large part by the manufacture of high-quality consumer goods produced by small and medium-sized enterprises, many of them family-owned. Italy also has a sizable underground economy, which by some estimates accounts for as much as 17% of GDP. These activities are most common within the agriculture, construction, and service sectors.

Italy is the third-largest economy in the euro zone, but its exceptionally high public debt and structural impediments to growth have rendered it vulnerable to scrutiny by financial markets. Public debt has increased steadily since 2007, reaching 131% of GDP in 2017. Investor concerns about Italy and the broader euro-zone crisis eased in 2013, bringing down Italy's borrowing costs on sovereign government debt from euro-era records. The government still faces pressure from investors and European partners to sustain its efforts to address Italy's longstanding structural economic problems, including labor market inefficiencies, a sluggish judicial system, and a weak banking sector. Italy's economy returned to modest growth in late 2014 for the first time since 2011. In 2015-16, Italy's economy grew at about 1% each year, and in 2017 growth accelerated to 1.5% of GDP. In 2017, overall unemployment was 11.4%, but youth unemployment remained high at 37.1%. GDP growth is projected to slow slightly in 2018.

GDP

GDP amount: \$2.317 trillion

GDP growth: 1.5%

GDP per capita: \$38,200

GDP savings: 20.3% of GDP

GDP from agriculture: 2.1%

GDP from industry: 23.9%

GDP from services: 73.9%

Agricultural products

fruits, vegetables, grapes, potatoes, sugar beets, soybeans, grain, olives, beef, dairy products, fish

Industries

tourism, machinery, iron and steel, chemicals, food processing, textiles, motor vehicles, clothing, footwear, ceramics

Labor force

Total amount: 25.94 million

In agriculture: 3.9%

In industry: 28.3%

In services: 67.8%

Unemployment

11.3%

Inflation

1.3%

Exports

Total amount: \$496.3 billion

Partners: Germany(12.5%), France(10.3%), US(9%), Spain(5.2%), UK(5.2%), Switzerland(4.6%)

Commodities: engineering products, textiles and clothing, production machinery, motor vehicles, transport equipment, chemicals, foodstuffs, beverages, tobacco, minerals, nonferrous metals

Imports

Total amount: \$432.9 billion

Partners: Germany(16.3%), France(8.8%), China(7.1%), Netherlands(5.6%), Spain(5.3%), Belgium(4.5%)

Commodities: engineering products, chemicals, transport equipment, energy products, minerals and nonferrous metals, textiles and clothing, food, beverages, tobacco

Energy

Electricity

Access: 100%

Production: 275.3 billion kWh

Consumption: 293.5 billion kWh

Exports: 6.155 billion kWh

Imports: 43.18 billion kWh

Sources:

fossil fuel: 54%

nuclear: 0%

hydroelectric: 14%

other renewable sources: 32%

Crude oil

Production: 90,000 bbl/day

Exports: 13,790 bbl/day

Imports: 1.341 million bbl/day

Refined petroleum products

Production: 1.607 million bbl/day

Consumption: 1.236 million bbl/day

Exports: 615,900 bbl/day

Imports: 422,500 bbl/day

Natural gas

Production: 5.55 billion cu m

Consumption: 75.15 billion cu m

Exports: 271.8 million cu m

Imports: 69.66 billion cu m

Communication

Telephone

Fixed lines subscriptions: 20396603

Mobile cellular subscriptions: 83342486

Broadcast media

two Italian media giants dominate - the publicly owned Radiotelevisione Italiana (RAI) with 3 national terrestrial stations and privately owned Mediaset with 3 national terrestrial stations; a large number of private stations and Sky Italia - a satellite TV network; RAI operates 3 AM/FM nationwide radio stations; about 1,300 commercial radio stations

Internet

Internet code: .it

Total users: 38,025,661

Military and security

Expenditure

1.22% of GDP

Military forces

Army(EI), Navy(MMI), Italian Air Force(AMI), Carabinieri Corps(CC)

Obligation

Italian citizenship required; 1-year service obligation

Transportation

Airports

Total: 129

Paved: 98

Unpaved: 31

Pipelines

Gas: 20223 km

Oil: 1393 km

Railways

20,182 km

Roadways

Total: 487,700 km

Paved: 487,700 km

Unpaved: 0 km

Waterways

2,400 km

Transnational issues

Disputes

taly's long coastline and developed economy entices tens of thousands of illegal immigrants from southeastern Europe and northern Africa

Cuba

Background

The native Amerindian population of Cuba began to decline after the European discovery of the island by Christopher COLUMBUS in 1492 and following its development as a Spanish colony during the next several centuries. Large numbers of African slaves were imported to work the coffee and sugar plantations, and Havana became the launching point for the annual treasure fleets bound for Spain from Mexico and Peru. Spanish rule eventually provoked an independence movement and occasional rebellions were harshly suppressed. US intervention during the Spanish-American War in 1898 assisted the Cubans in overthrowing Spanish rule. The Treaty of Paris established Cuban independence from Spain in 1898 and, following three-and-a-half years of subsequent US military rule, Cuba became an independent republic in 1902 after which the island experienced a string of governments mostly dominated by the military and corrupt politicians. Fidel CASTRO led a rebel army to victory in 1959; his authoritarian rule held the subsequent regime together for nearly five decades. He stepped down as president in February 2008 in favor of his younger brother Raul CASTRO. Cuba's communist revolution, with Soviet support, was exported throughout Latin America and Africa during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Miguel DIAZ-CANEL Bermudez, hand-picked by Raul CASTRO to succeed him, was approved as president by the National Assembly and took office on 19 April 2018.

The country faced a severe economic downturn in 1990 following the withdrawal of former Soviet subsidies worth \$4-6 billion annually. Cuba traditionally and consistently portrays the US embargo, in place since 1961, as the source of its difficulties. As a result of efforts begun in December 2014 to re-establish diplomatic relations with the Cuban Government, which were severed in January 1961, the US and Cuba reopened embassies in their respective countries in July 2015. The embargo remains in place, and the relationship between the US and Cuba remains tense.

Illicit migration of Cuban nationals to the US via maritime and overland routes has been a longstanding challenge. On 12 January 2017, the US and Cuba signed a Joint Statement ending the so-called "wet-foot, dry-foot" policy – by which Cuban nationals who reached US soil were permitted to stay. Illicit Cuban migration by sea has since dropped significantly, but land border crossings continue. In FY 2018, the US Coast Guard interdicted 312 Cuban nationals at sea. Also in FY 2018, 7,249 Cuban migrants presented themselves at various land border ports of entry throughout the US.

Geography

Location

Caribbean, island between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, 150 km south of Key West, Florida

Coordinates

Latitude: 21 30 N
Longitude: 80 00 W

Area

Total: 110,860 sq km
Land: 109,820 sq km
Water: 1,040 sq km

Climate

tropical; moderated by trade winds; dry season (November to April); rainy season (May to October)

Terrain

mostly flat to rolling plains, with rugged hills and mountains in the southeast

Resources

cobalt, nickel, iron ore, chromium, copper, salt, timber, silica, petroleum, arable land

Land

Agricultural: 60.3%
Forest: 27.3%
Other:

Society

Population

11059062

Nationality

Noun: Cuban(s)
Longitude: Cuban

Ethnicity

white: 64.1%
mulatto or mixed: 26.6%
black: 9.3%

Language

Spanish(official)

Religion

Christian: 59.2%
folk: 17.4%
other: .4%
none: 23%

Age

Age group of 0-14: 16.34% of total population (929927 male/877035 female)
Age group of 15-24: 11.81% of total population (67825 male/627384 female)
Age group of 25-54: 41.95% of total population (2335680 male/2303793 female)
Age group of 55-64: 14.11% of total population (760165 male/799734 female)
Age group of 65+: 15.8% of total population (794743 male/952348 female)

Median:

Total: 42.1
Male: 40.2
Female: 43.8

Life expectancy:

Total: 79.2
Male: 76.8
Female: 81.7

Urbanization

People living in urban areas: 77.2% of total population

Rate of urbanization: 0.14%

HAVANA: 2.140 million

Government

Government type

communist state

Capital

Havana

Chief of state

President Miguel DIAZ-CANEL Bermudez (elected 10 October 2019)

Head of government

President Miguel DIAZ-CANEL Bermudez (elected 10 October 2019)

Legal system

civil law system based on Spanish civil code

Symbols

Symbols:

royal palm

Colors:

red, white, blue

Anthem:

"La Bayamesa" (The Bayamo Song)

Economy

Overview

The government continues to balance the need for loosening its socialist economic system against a desire for firm political control. In April 2011, the government held the first Cuban Communist Party Congress in almost 13 years, during which leaders approved a plan for wide-ranging economic changes. Since then, the government has slowly and incrementally implemented limited economic reforms, including allowing Cubans to buy electronic appliances and cell phones, stay in hotels, and buy and sell used cars. The government has cut state sector jobs as part of the reform process, and it has opened up some retail services to "self-employment," leading to the rise of so-called "cuentapropistas" or entrepreneurs. More than 500,000 Cuban workers are currently registered as self-employed.

The Cuban regime has updated its economic model to include permitting the private ownership and sale of real estate and new vehicles, allowing private farmers to sell agricultural goods directly to hotels, allowing the creation of non-agricultural cooperatives, adopting a new foreign investment law, and launching a "Special Development Zone" around the Mariel port.

Since 2016, Cuba has attributed slowed economic growth in part to problems with petroleum product deliveries from Venezuela. Since late 2000, Venezuela provided petroleum products to Cuba on preferential terms, supplying at times nearly 100,000 barrels per day. Cuba paid for the oil, in part, with the services of Cuban personnel in Venezuela, including some 30,000 medical professionals.

GDP

GDP amount: \$93.79 billion

GDP growth: 1.6%

GDP per capita: \$12,300

GDP savings: 11.4% of GDP

GDP from agriculture: 4%

GDP from industry: 22.7%

GDP from services: 73.4%

Agricultural products

sugar, tobacco, citrus, coffee, rice, potatoes, beans, livestock

Industries

petroleum, nickel, cobalt, pharmaceuticals, tobacco, construction, steel, cement, agricultural machinery, sugar

Labor force

Total amount: 4.691 million

In agriculture: 18%

In industry: 10%

In services: 72%

Unemployment

2.6%

Inflation

5.5%

Exports

Total amount: \$2.63 billion

Partners: Venezuela(17.8%), Spain(12.2%), Russia(7.9%), Lebanon(6.1%), Indonesia(4.5%), Germany(4.3%)

Commodities: petroleum, nickel, medical products, sugar, tobacco, fish, citrus, coffee

Imports

Total amount: \$11.06 billion

Partners: China(22%), Spain(14%), Russia(5%), Brazil(5%), Mexico(4.9%), Italy(4.8%), US(4.5%)

Commodities: petroleum, food, machinery and equipment, chemicals

Energy

Electricity

Access: 100%

Production: 19.28 billion kWh

Consumption: 16.16 billion kWh

Exports: 0 kWh

Imports: 0 kWh

Sources:

fossil fuel: 91%

nuclear: 0%

hydroelectric: 1%

other renewable sources: 8%

Crude oil

Production: 50,000 bbl/day

Exports: 0 bbl/day

Imports: 112,400 bbl/day

Refined petroleum products

Production: 104,100 bbl/day

Consumption: 175,000 bbl/day

Exports: 24,190 bbl/day
Imports: 52,750 bbl/day

Natural gas

Production: 1.189 billion cu m
Consumption: 1.189 billion cu m
Exports: 0 cu m
Imports: 0 cu m

Communication

Telephone

Fixed lines subscriptions: 1444480
Mobile cellular subscriptions: 5373316

Broadcast media

Government owns and controls all broadcast media: five national TV channels (Cubavision, Tele Rebelde, Multivision, Educational Channel 1 and 2,) 2 international channels (Cubavision Internacional and Caribe,) 16 regional TV stations, 6 national radio networks and multiple regional stations; the Cuban government beams over the Radio-TV Marti signal; although private ownership of electronic media is prohibited, several online independent news sites exist; those that are not openly critical of the government are often tolerated; the others are blocked by the government; there are no independent TV channels, but several outlets have created strong audiovisual content (El Toque, for example); a community of young Youtubers is also growing, mostly with channels about sports, technology and fashion; Christian denominations are creating original video content to distribute via social media

Internet

Internet code: .cu
Total users: 4,334,022

Military and security

Expenditure

2.87% of GDP

Military forces

Revolutionary Armed Forces(FAR), Revolutionary Army(ER), Revolutionary Navy(MGR), Revolutionary Air and Air Defense Forces(DAAFAR), Youth Labor Army(EJT), Territorial Militia Troops(MTT)

Obligation

2-year service obligation for males, optional for females

Transportation

Airports

Total: 133
Paved: 64
Unpaved: 69

Pipelines

Gas: 41 km
Oil: 230 km

Railways

8,367 km

Roadways

Total: 60,000 km

Paved: 20,000 km

Unpaved: 40,000 km

Waterways

240 km

Transnational issues

Disputes

US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay is leased to US and only mutual agreement or US abandonment of the facility can terminate the lease