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Chapter 1

259

1.1 259.guide

Texified version of data for Western Sahara.

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Western Sahara

1.2 259.guide/Western Sahara

Western Sahara

Geography (Western Sahara)
 People (Western Sahara)
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1.3 259.guide/Geography (Western Sahara)

Geography (Western Sahara)

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Location:

Northern Africa, along the Atlantic Ocean, between Morocco and Mauritania

Map references:

Africa, Standard Time Zones of the World

Area:

total area:

266,000 km²

land area:

266,000 km²

comparative area:

slightly smaller than Colorado

Land boundaries:

total 2,046 km, Algeria 42 km, Mauritania 1,561 km, Morocco 443 km

Coastline:

1,110 km

Maritime claims:

contingent upon resolution of sovereignty issue

International disputes:

claimed and administered by Morocco, but sovereignty is unresolved and the UN is attempting to hold a referendum on the issue; the UN-administered cease-fire has been currently in effect since September 1991

Climate:

hot, dry desert; rain is rare; cold offshore air currents produce fog and heavy dew

Terrain:

mostly low, flat desert with large areas of rocky or sandy surfaces rising to small mountains in south and northeast

Natural resources:

phosphates, iron ore

Land use:

arable land:

0%

permanent crops:

0%

meadows and pastures:

19%

forest and woodland:

0%

other:

81%
 Irrigated land:
 NA km2
 Environment:
 hot, dry, dust/sand-laden sirocco wind can occur during winter and spring;
 widespread harmattan haze exists 60% of time, often severely restricting
 visibility; sparse water and arable land

1.4 259.guide/People (Western Sahara)

People (Western Sahara)

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Population:
 206,629 (July 1993 est.)
 Population growth rate:
 2.52% (1993 est.)
 Birth rate:
 47.54 births/1,000 population (1993 est.)
 Death rate:
 19.57 deaths/1,000 population (1993 est.)
 Net migration rate:
 -2.79 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1993 est.)
 Infant mortality rate:
 155.5 deaths/1,000 live births (1993 est.)
 Life expectancy at birth:
 total population:
 44.88 years
 male:
 43.98 years
 female:
 46.06 years (1993 est.)
 Total fertility rate:
 7.01 children born/woman (1993 est.)
 Nationality: noun:
 Sahrawi(s), Sahraoui(s)
 adjective:
 Sahrawian, Sahraouian
 Ethnic divisions:
 Arab, Berber
 Religions:
 Muslim
 Languages:
 Hassaniya Arabic, Moroccan Arabic
 Literacy:
 total population:
 NA%
 male:
 NA%
 female:
 NA%
 Labor force:
 12,000

by occupation:
 animal husbandry and subsistence farming 50%

1.5 259.guide/Government (Western Sahara)

Government (Western Sahara)

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Names:

conventional long form:
 none

conventional short form:
 Western Sahara

Digraph:

WI

Type:

legal status of territory and question of sovereignty unresolved; territory contested by Morocco and Polisario Front (Popular Front for the Liberation of the Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro), which in February 1976 formally proclaimed a government in exile of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR); territory partitioned between Morocco and Mauritania in April 1976, with Morocco acquiring northern two-thirds; Mauritania, under pressure from Polisario guerrillas, abandoned all claims to its portion in August 1979; Morocco moved to occupy that sector shortly thereafter and has since asserted administrative control; the Polisario's government in exile was seated as an OAU member in 1984; guerrilla activities continued sporadically, until a UN-monitored cease-fire was implemented 6 September 1991

Capital:

none

Administrative divisions:

none (under de facto control of Morocco)

Leaders:

none

Member of:

none

Diplomatic representation in US:

none

US diplomatic representation:

none

1.6 259.guide/Economy (Western Sahara)

Economy (Western Sahara)

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Overview:

Western Sahara, a territory poor in natural resources and having little

rainfall, has a per capita GDP of roughly \$300. Pastoral nomadism, fishing, and phosphate mining are the principal sources of income for the population ←

Most of the food for the urban population must be imported. All trade and other economic activities are controlled by the Moroccan Government.

National product:

GDP - exchange rate conversion - \$60 million (1991 est.)

National product real growth rate:

NA%

National product per capita:

\$300 (1991 est.)

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

NA%

Unemployment rate:

NA%

Budget:

revenues \$NA; expenditures \$NA, including capital expenditures of \$NA

Exports:

\$8 million (f.o.b., 1982 est.)

commodities:

phosphates 62%

partners:

Morocco claims and administers Western Sahara, so trade partners are included in overall Moroccan accounts

Imports:

\$30 million (c.i.f., 1982 est.)

commodities:

fuel for fishing fleet, foodstuffs

partners:

Morocco claims and administers Western Sahara, so trade partners are included in overall Moroccan accounts

External debt:

\$NA

Industrial production:

growth rate NA%

Electricity:

60,000 kW capacity; 79 million kWh produced, 425 kWh per capita (1989)

Industries:

phosphate mining, fishing, handicrafts

Agriculture:

limited largely to subsistence agriculture; some barley is grown in nondrought years; fruit and vegetables are grown in the few oases; food imports are essential; camels, sheep, and goats are kept by the nomadic natives; cash economy exists largely for the garrison forces

Economic aid:

NA

Currency:

1 Moroccan dirham (DH) = 100 centimes

Exchange rates:

Moroccan dirhams (DH) per US\$1 - 9.034 (January 1993), 8.538 (1992), 8.707 (1991), 8.242 (1990), 8.488 (1989), 8.209 (1988)

Fiscal year:

NA

1.7 259.guide/Communications (Western Sahara)

Communications (Western Sahara)

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Highways:

6,200 km total; 1,450 km surfaced, 4,750 km improved and unimproved earth roads and tracks

Ports:

El Aaiun, Ad Dakhla

Airports:

total:

14

usable:

14

with permanent-surface runways:

3

with runways over 3,659 m:

0

with runways 2,440-3,659 m:

3

with runways 1,220-2,439 m:

5

Telecommunications:

sparse and limited system; tied into Morocco's system by microwave radio relay, troposcatter, and 2 Atlantic Ocean INTELSAT earth stations linked to Rabat, Morocco; 2,000 telephones; broadcast stations - 2 AM, no FM, 2 TV

1.8 259.guide/Defense Forces (Western Sahara)

Defense Forces (Western Sahara)

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Branches:

NA

Manpower availability:

NA

Defense expenditures:

exchange rate conversion - \$NA, NA% of GDP