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Chapter 1

85

1.1 85.guide

Texified version of data for Gabon.

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Gabon

1.2 85.guide/Gabon

Gabon

Geography (Gabon)
 People (Gabon)
 Government (Gabon)
 Government (Gabon 2. usage)
 Economy (Gabon)
 Economy (Gabon 2. usage)
 Communications (Gabon)
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1.3 85.guide/Geography (Gabon)

Geography (Gabon)

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Location:

Western Africa, bordering the Atlantic Ocean at the Equator between the Congo and Equatorial Guinea

Map references:

Africa, Standard Time Zones of the World

Area:

total area:

267,670 km²

land area:

257,670 km²

comparative area:

slightly smaller than Colorado

Land boundaries: total 2,551 km, Cameroon 298 km, Congo 1,903 km, ←
Equatorial Guinea 350 km

Coastline:

885 km

Maritime claims:

contiguous zone:

24 nm

exclusive economic zone:

200 nm

territorial sea:

12 nm

International disputes:

maritime boundary dispute with Equatorial Guinea because of disputed sovereignty over islands in Corisco Bay

Climate:

tropical; always hot, humid

Terrain:

narrow coastal plain; hilly interior; savanna in east and south

Natural resources:

petroleum, manganese, uranium, gold, timber, iron ore

Land use:

arable land:

1%

permanent crops:

1%

meadows and pastures:
 18%
 forest and woodland:
 78%
 other:
 2%
 Irrigated land:
 NA km2
 Environment:
 deforestation

1.4 85.guide/People (Gabon)

People (Gabon)

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Population:
 1,122,550 (July 1993 est.)
 Population growth rate:
 1.45% (1993 est.)
 Birth rate:
 28.63 births/1,000 population (1993 est.)
 Death rate:
 14.08 deaths/1,000 population (1993 est.)
 Net migration rate:
 0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1993 est.)
 Infant mortality rate:
 97.3 deaths/1,000 live births (1993 est.)
 Life expectancy at birth:
 total population:
 54.19 years
 male:
 51.46 years female:
 57.01 years (1993 est.)
 Total fertility rate:
 4.02 children born/woman (1993 est.)
 Nationality:
 noun:
 Gabonese (singular and plural)
 adjective:
 Gabonese
 Ethnic divisions:
 Bantu tribes including four major tribal groupings (Fang, Eshira, Bapounou, Bateke), Africans and Europeans 100,000, including 27,000 French
 Religions:
 Christian 55-75%, Muslim less than 1%, animist
 Languages:
 French (official), Fang, Myene, Bateke, Bapounou/Eschira, Bandjabi
 Literacy:
 age 15 and over can read and write (1990)
 total population:
 61%
 male:

74%
 female:
 48%
 Labor force:
 120,000 salaried
 by occupation:
 agriculture 65.0%, industry and commerce 30.0%, services 2.5%, government
 2.5%
 note:
 58% of population of working age (1983)

1.5 85.guide/Government (Gabon)

Government (Gabon)

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Names:

conventional long form:

Gabonese Republic

conventional short form:

Gabon

local long form:

Republique Gabonaise

local short form:

Gabon

Digraph:

GB

Type:

republic; multiparty presidential regime (opposition parties legalized 1990) ↔

Capital:

Libreville

Administrative divisions:

9 provinces; Estuaire, Haut-Ogooue, Moyen-Ogooue, Ngounie, Nyanga, Ogooue-Ivindo, Ogooue-Lolo, Ogooue-Maritime, Woleu-Ntem

Independence:

17 August 1960 (from France)

Constitution:

21 February 1961, revised 15 April 1975

Legal system:

based on French civil law system and customary law; judicial review of legislative acts in Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court; compulsory ICJ jurisdiction not accepted

National holiday:

Renovation Day, 12 March (1968) (Gabonese Democratic Party established)

Political parties and leaders:

Gabonese Democratic Party (PDG, former sole party), El Hadj Omar BONGO, president; National Recovery Movement - Lumberjacks (Morena-Bucherons); Gabonese Party for Progress (PGP); National Recovery Movement (Morena-Original); Association for Socialism in Gabon (APSG); Gabonese Socialist Union (USG); Circle for Renewal and Progress (CRP); Union for Democracy and Development (UDD)

Suffrage:

21 years of age; universal
 Elections:
 National Assembly:
 last held on 28 October 1990 (next to be held by NA); results - percent of
 vote NA; seats - (120 total, 111 elected) PDG 62, National Recovery ←
 Movement
 - Lumberjacks (Morena-Bucherons) 19, PGP 18, National Recovery Movement
 (Morena-Original) 7, APSG 6, USG 4, CRP 1, independents 3
 President:
 last held on 9 November 1986 (next to be held December 1993); results -
 President Omar BONGO was reelected without opposition
 Executive branch:
 president, prime minister, Cabinet
 Legislative branch:
 unicameral National Assembly (Assemblée Nationale)
 Judicial branch:
 Supreme Court (Cour Supreme)
 Leaders:
 Chief of State:
 President El Hadj Omar BONGO (since 2 December 1967)
 Head of Government:
 Prime Minister Casimir OYE-MBA (since 3 May 1990)

1.6 85.guide/Government (Gabon 2. usage)

Government (Gabon 2. usage)

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Member of:
 ACCT, ACP, AfDB, BDEAC, CCC, CEEAC, ECA, FAO, FZ, G-24, G-77, GATT, IAEA,
 IBRD, ICAO, ICC, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, ILO, IMF, IMO, INMARSAT, INTELSAT,
 INTERPOL, IOC, ITU, LORCS (associate), NAM, OAU, OIC, OPEC, UDEAC, UN,
 UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WCL, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO
 Diplomatic representation in US:
 chief of mission:
 (vacant)
 chancery:
 2034 20th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009
 telephone:
 (202) 797-1000
 US diplomatic representation:
 chief of mission: Ambassador John C. WILSON IV
 embassy:
 Boulevard de la Mer, Libreville
 mailing address:
 B. P. 4000, Libreville
 telephone:
 (241) 762003/4, or 743492
 FAX:
 [241] 745-507
 Flag:
 three equal horizontal bands of green (top), yellow, and blue

1.7 85.guide/Economy (Gabon)

Economy (Gabon)

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Overview:

The economy, dependent on timber and manganese until the early 1970s, is now ←
dominated by the oil sector. In 1981-85, oil accounted for about 45% of GDP ←
,
80% of export earnings, and 65% of government revenues on average. The high oil prices of the early 1980s contributed to a substantial increase in per capita national income, stimulated domestic demand, reinforced migration from rural to urban areas, and raised the level of real wages to among the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa. The subsequent slide of Gabon's economy, which began with falling oil prices in 1985, was reversed in 1989-90, but debt servicing obligations continue to limit prospects for further domestic development. Real growth in 1991-92 was weak because of a combination of an overstaffed bureaucracy, a large budget deficit, and the continued underdevelopment of the whole economy outside the petroleum sector.

National product:

GDP - exchange rate conversion - \$4.6 billion (1991)

National product real growth rate:

13% (1990 est.)

National product per capita:

\$4,200 (1991 est.)

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

0.7% (1991 est.)

Unemployment rate:

NA%

Budget:

revenues \$1.4 billion; expenditures \$1.4 billion, including capital expenditures of \$247 million (1990 est.)

Exports:

\$2.2 billion (f.o.b., 1991)

commodities:

crude oil 80%, manganese 7%, wood 7%, uranium 2%

partners:

France 48%, US 15%, Germany 2%, Japan 2%

Imports:

\$702 million (c.i.f., 1991 est.)

commodities:

foodstuffs, chemical products, petroleum products, construction materials, manufactures, machinery

partners:

France 64%, African countries 7%, US 5%, Japan 3%

External debt: \$4.4 billion (1991)

Industrial production:

growth rate - 10% (1988 est.); accounts for 45% of GDP, including petroleum

Electricity:

315,000 kW capacity; 995 million kWh produced, 920 kWh per capita (1991)

Industries:

petroleum, food and beverages, lumbering and plywood, textiles, mining - manganese, uranium, gold, cement

Agriculture:

accounts for 10% of GDP (including fishing and forestry); cash crops - cocoa, coffee, palm oil; livestock not developed; importer of food; small fishing operations provide a catch of about 20,000 metric tons; okoume (a tropical softwood) is the most important timber product

Economic aid:

US commitments, including Ex-Im (FY70-90), \$68 million; Western (non-US) countries, ODA and OOF bilateral commitments (1970-90), \$2,342 million; Communist countries (1970-89), \$27 million

Currency:

1 CFA franc (CFAF) = 100 centimes

1.8 85.guide/Economy (Gabon 2. usage)

Economy (Gabon 2. usage)

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Exchange rates:

Communaute Financiere Africaine francs (CFAF) per US\$1 - 274.06 (January 1993), 264.69 (1992), 282.11 (1991), 272.26 (1990), 319.01 (1989), 297.85 (1988)

Fiscal year:

calendar year

1.9 85.guide/Communications (Gabon)

Communications (Gabon)

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Railroads:

649 km 1.437-meter standard-gauge single track (Transgabonese Railroad)

Highways:

7,500 km total; 560 km paved, 960 km laterite, 5,980 km earth

Inland waterways:

1,600 km perennially navigable

Pipelines:

crude oil 270 km; petroleum products 14 km

Ports:

Owendo, Port-Gentil, Libreville

Merchant marine:

2 cargo ships (1,000 GRT or over) totaling 18,563 GRT/25,330 DWT

Airports:

total:

68

usable:

56

with permanent-surface runways:

10

with runways over 3,659 m:

0 with runways 2,440-3,659 m:

2

with runways 1,220-2,439 m:

22

Telecommunications:

adequate system of cable, radio relay, tropospheric scatter links and radiocommunication stations; 15,000 telephones; broadcast stations - 6 AM, ←
6

FM, 3 (5 repeaters) TV; satellite earth stations - 3 Atlantic Ocean ←
INTELSAT

and 12 domestic satellite

1.10 85.guide/Defense Forces (Gabon)

Defense Forces (Gabon)

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Branches:

Army, Navy, Air Force, Presidential Guard, National Gendarmerie, National Police

Manpower availability:

males age 15-49 269,066; fit for military service 135,836; reach military age (20) annually 9,680 (1993 est.)

Defense expenditures:

exchange rate conversion - \$102 million, 3.2% of GDP (1990 est.)