

Gabon

Geography

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

Area:

total area: 267,670 sq km

land area: 257,670 sq km

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

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 sq km

Environment:

current issues: deforestation; poaching

People

Population: 1,155,749 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 34% (female 193,859; male 194,761)

15-64 years: 61% (female 347,839; male 359,997)

65 years and over: 5% (female 30,218; male 29,075) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.46% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 28.34 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 13.72 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

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

Infant mortality rate: 92.4 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 55.14 years

male: 52.31 years

female: 58.06 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 3.93 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Gabonese (singular and plural)

adjective: Gabonese

Ethnic divisions: Bantu tribes including four major tribal groupings (Fang, Eshira, Bapounou, Bateke), other 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 est.)

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%

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Gabonese Republic

conventional short form: Gabon

local long form: Republique Gabonaise

local short form: Gabon

Capital: Libreville

Independence: 17 August 1960 (from France)

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

Constitution: adopted 14 March 1991

Suffrage: 21 years of age; universal

Flag: three equal horizontal bands of green (top), yellow, and blue

Economy

Overview: Notwithstanding its serious ongoing economic problems, Gabon enjoys a per capita income more than twice that of most nations of sub-Saharan Africa. Gabon depended on timber and manganese until oil was discovered offshore in the early 1970s. The oil sector now accounts for 50% of GDP. Despite an abundance of natural wealth, and a manageable rate of population growth, the economy is hobbled by poor fiscal management.

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

Agriculture: cash crops - cocoa, coffee, palm oil; livestock raising 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

Transportation

Railroads:

total: 649 km single track (

Highways:
total: 7,500 km

Inland waterways: 1,600 km perennially navigable

Pipelines: crude oil 270 km; petroleum products 14 km

Ports: Cape Lopez, Kango, Lambarene, Libreville, Owendo, Port-Gentil

Airports:
total: 69

Defence Forces

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