

Kiribati

Geography

Location: Oceania, group of islands in the Pacific Ocean, straddling the equator and the International Date Line, about one-half of the way from Hawaii to Australia

Area:

total area: 717 sq km

land area: 717 sq km

Land boundaries: 0 km

Coastline: 1,143 km

Maritime claims:

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: tropical; marine, hot and humid, moderated by trade winds

Terrain: mostly low-lying coral atolls surrounded by extensive reefs

Natural resources: phosphate (production discontinued in 1979)

Land use:

arable land: 0%

permanent crops: 51%

meadows and pastures: 0%

forest and woodland: 3%

other: 46%

Environment:

natural hazards: typhoons can occur any time, but usually

November to March; occasional tornadoes

Note: 20 of the 33 islands are inhabited; Banaba (Ocean Island) in Kiribati is one of the three great phosphate rock islands in the Pacific Ocean - the others are Makatea in French Polynesia and Nauru

People

Population: 79,386 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: NA

15-64 years: NA

65 years and over: NA

Population growth rate: 1.95% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 31.25 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 12.31 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: 0.56 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 98.4 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 54.16 years

male: 52.56 years

female: 55.78 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 3.73 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: I-Kiribati (singular and plural)

adjective: I-Kiribati

Ethnic divisions: Micronesian

Religions: Roman Catholic 52.6%, Protestant (Congregational) 40.9%, Seventh-Day Adventist, Baha'i, Church of God, Mormon 6% (1985)

Languages: English (official), Gilbertese

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Republic of Kiribati

conventional short form: Kiribati

former: Gilbert Islands

Capital: Tarawa

Independence: 12 July 1979 (from UK)

National holiday: Independence Day, 12 July (1979)

Constitution: 12 July 1979

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Flag: the upper half is red with a yellow frigate bird flying over a yellow rising sun, and the lower half is blue with three horizontal wavy white stripes to represent the ocean

Economy

Overview: A remote country of 33 scattered coral atolls, Kiribati has few national resources. Copra and fish now represent the bulk of production and exports.

Industries: fishing, handicrafts

Agriculture: accounts for 23% of GDP (including fishing); copra and fish contribute about 65% to exports; subsistence farming predominates; food crops - taro, breadfruit, sweet potatoes, vegetables; not self-sufficient in food

Transportation

Railroads: 0 km

Highways:
total: 640 km

Inland waterways: small network of canals, totaling 5 km, in Line Islands

Ports: Banaba, Betio, English Harbor, Kanton

Airports:
total: 21

Defence Forces

Branches: Police Force (carries out law enforcement functions and paramilitary duties; there are small police posts on all islands); no military force is maintained