

Malawi

Geography

Location: Southern Africa, east of Zambia

Area:

total area: 118,480 sq km

land area: 94,080 sq km

Land boundaries: total 2,881 km, Mozambique 1,569 km, Tanzania 475 km, Zambia 837 km

Coastline: 0 km (landlocked)

Maritime claims: none; landlocked

Climate: tropical; rainy season (November to May); dry season (May to November)

Terrain: narrow elongated plateau with rolling plains, rounded hills, some mountains

Natural resources: limestone, unexploited deposits of uranium, coal, and bauxite

Land use:

arable land: 25%

permanent crops: 0%

meadows and pastures: 20%

forest and woodland: 50%

other: 5%

Irrigated land: 200 sq km (1989 est.)

Environment:

current issues: deforestation; land degradation; water pollution from agricultural runoff, sewage, industrial wastes; siltation of spawning grounds endangers fish population

natural hazards: NA

Note: landlocked

People

Population: 9,808,384 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 48% (female 2,361,309; male 2,384,679)

15-64 years: 49% (female 2,479,108; male 2,335,729)

65 years and over: 3% (female 139,632; male 107,927) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 2.63% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 49.81 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 23.53 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

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

note: the return of refugees to Mozambique is much reduced compared with 1994

Infant mortality rate: 140.2 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 39.01 years
male: 38.28 years
female: 39.76 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 7.36 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Malawian(s)

adjective: Malawian

Ethnic divisions: Chewa, Nyanja, Tumbuko, Yao, Lomwe, Sena, Tonga, Ngoni, Ngonde, Asian, European

Religions: Protestant 55%, Roman Catholic 20%, Muslim 20%, traditional indigenous beliefs

Languages: English (official), Chichewa (official), other languages important regionally

Literacy:

total population: 48%

male: 65%

female: 34%

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Republic of Malawi

conventional short form: Malawi

former: Nyasaland

Capital: Lilongwe

Independence: 6 July 1964 (from UK)

National holiday: Independence Day, 6 July (1964)

Constitution: 6 July 1966; republished as amended January 1974

Suffrage: 21 years of age; universal

Flag: three equal horizontal bands of black (top), red, and green with a radiant, rising, red sun centered in the black band; similar to the flag of Afghanistan, which is longer and has the national coat of arms superimposed on the hoist side of the black and red bands

Economy

Overview: Landlocked Malawi ranks among the world's least developed countries. The economy is predominately agricultural.

Industries: agricultural processing (tea, tobacco, sugar), sawmilling, cement, consumer goods

Agriculture: accounts for 40% of GDP; cash crops - tobacco, sugarcane, cotton, tea, and corn; subsistence crops - potatoes, cassava, sorghum, pulses; livestock - cattle, goats

Transportation

Railroads:
total: 789 km

Highways:
total: 13,135 km

Inland waterways: Lake Nyasa (Lake Malawi); Shire River, 144 km

Ports: Chipoka, Monkey Bay, Nkhata Bay, Nkotakota

Airports:
total: 47

Defence Forces

Branches: Army (includes Air Wing and Naval Detachment), Police (includes paramilitary Mobile Force Unit), paramilitary Malawi Young Pioneers