

Vanuatu

Geography

Location: Oceania, group of islands in the South Pacific Ocean, about three-quarters of the way from Hawaii to Australia

Area:

total area: 14,760 sq km

land area: 14,760 sq km

Land boundaries: 0 km

Coastline: 2,528 km

Maritime claims: measured from claimed archipelagic baselines

contiguous zone: 24 nm

continental shelf: 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: tropical; moderated by southeast trade winds

Terrain: mostly mountains of volcanic origin; narrow coastal plains

Natural resources: manganese, hardwood forests, fish

Land use:

arable land: 1%

permanent crops: 5%

meadows and pastures: 2%

forest and woodland: 1%

other: 91%

Environment:

current issues: a majority of the population does not have access to a potable and reliable supply of water

natural hazards: tropical cyclones or typhoons (January to April);

volcanism causes minor earthquakes

People

Population: 173,648 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 41% (female 34,819; male 36,128)

15-64 years: 56% (female 47,320; male 50,456)

65 years and over: 3% (female 2,217; male 2,708) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 2.22% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 31.26 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 9.06 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

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

Infant mortality rate: 66.3 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 59.71 years

male: 57.9 years

female: 61.61 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 4.14 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Ni-Vanuatu (singular and plural)

adjective: Ni-Vanuatu

Ethnic divisions: indigenous Melanesian 94%, French 4%,
Vietnamese, Chinese, Pacific Islanders

Religions: Presbyterian 36.7%, Anglican 15%, Catholic 15%,
indigenous beliefs 7.6%, Seventh-Day Adventist 6.2%, Church of
Christ 3.8%, other 15.7%

Languages: English (official), French (official), pidgin (known as
Bislama or Bichelama)

Literacy:

total population: 53%

male: 57%

female: 48%

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Republic of Vanuatu

conventional short form: Vanuatu

former: New Hebrides

Type: republic

Capital: Port-Vila

Independence: 30 July 1980 (from France and UK)

National holiday: Independence Day, 30 July (1980)

Constitution: 30 July 1980

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Flag: two equal horizontal bands of red (top) and green with a black isosceles triangle (based on the hoist side) all separated by a black-edged yellow stripe in the shape of a horizontal Y (the two points of the Y face the hoist side and enclose the triangle); centered in the triangle is a boar's tusk encircling two crossed namele leaves, all in yellow

Economy

Overview: The economy is based primarily on subsistence farming which provides a living for about 80% of the population. Fishing and tourism are the other mainstays of the economy. Mineral deposits are negligible; the country has no known petroleum deposits. A small light industry sector caters to the local market.

Industries: food and fish freezing, wood processing, meat canning

Agriculture: export crops - coconuts, cocoa, coffee, fish;
subsistence crops - taro, yams, coconuts, fruits, vegetables

Transportation

Railroads: 0 km

Highways:
total: 1,027 km

Ports: Forari, Port-Vila, Santo (Espiritu Santo)

Airports:
total: 31

Defence Forces

Branches: no regular military forces; Vanuatu Police Force (VPF;
includes the paramilitary Vanuatu Mobile Force or VMF)