

World

Geography

Area:

total area: 510.072 million sq km

land area: 148.94 million sq km

water area: 361.132 million sq km

Land boundaries: the land boundaries in the world total 250,883.64 km (not counting shared boundaries twice)

Coastline: 356,000 km

Maritime claims:

contiguous zone: 24 nm claimed by most but can vary

continental shelf: 200-m depth claimed by most or to depth of exploitation, others claim 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin

exclusive fishing zone: 200 nm claimed by most but can vary

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm claimed by most but can vary
territorial sea: 12 nm claimed by most but can vary
note: boundary situations with neighboring states prevent many countries from extending their fishing or economic zones to a full 200 nm; 43 nations and other areas that are landlocked include Afghanistan, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Burkina, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Czech Republic, Ethiopia, Holy See (Vatican City), Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malawi, Mali, Moldova, Mongolia, Nepal, Niger, Paraguay, Rwanda, San Marino, Slovakia, Swaziland, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uzbekistan, West Bank, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Climate: two large areas of polar climates separated by two rather narrow temperate zones from a wide equatorial band of tropical to subtropical climates

Terrain: highest elevation is Mt. Everest at 8,848 meters and lowest depression is the Dead Sea at 392 meters below sea level; greatest ocean depth is the Marianas Trench at 10,924 meters

Natural resources: the rapid using up of nonrenewable mineral resources, the depletion of forest areas and wetlands, the extinction

of animal and plant species, and the deterioration in air and water quality (especially in Eastern Europe and the former USSR) pose serious long-term problems that governments and peoples are only beginning to address

Land use:

arable land: 10%

permanent crops: 1%

meadows and pastures: 24%

forest and woodland: 31%

other: 34%

Environment:

current issues: large areas subject to overpopulation, industrial disasters, pollution (air, water, acid rain, toxic substances), loss of vegetation (overgrazing, deforestation, desertification), loss of wildlife, soil degradation, soil depletion, erosion

natural hazards: large areas subject to severe weather (tropical cyclones), natural disasters (earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions)

People

Population: 5,733,687,096 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 31.6% (female 882,809,689; male 928,121,801)

15-64 years: 62% (female 1,752,393,539; male 1,802,004,124)

65 years and over: 6.4% (female 209,437,234; male 158,246,581)
(July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.5% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 24 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 9 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 64 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 62 years

male: 61 years

female: 64 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 3.1 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Government

Administrative divisions: 265 nations, dependent areas, other, and miscellaneous entries

Legal system: varies by individual country; 186 (note including Yugoslavia) are parties to the United Nations International Court of Justice (ICJ or World Court)

Economy

Industries: industry worldwide is dominated by the onrush of technology, especially in computers, robotics, telecommunications, and medicines and medical equipment; most of these advances take place in OECD nations; only a small portion of non-OECD

countries have succeeded in rapidly adjusting to these technological forces, and the technological gap between the industrial nations and the less-developed countries continues to widen; the rapid development of new industrial (and agricultural) technology is complicating already grim environmental problems

Agriculture: the production of major food crops has increased substantially in the last 20 years; the annual production of cereals, for instance, has risen by 50%, from about 1.2 billion metric tons to about 1.8 billion metric tons; production increases have resulted mainly from increased yields rather than increases in planted areas; while global production is sufficient for aggregate demand, about one-fifth of the world's population remains malnourished, primarily because local production cannot adequately provide for large and rapidly growing populations, which are too poor to pay for food imports; conditions are especially bad in Africa where drought in recent years has intensified the consequences of overpopulation

Transportation

Railroads:

total: 1,201,337 km includes about 190,000 to 195,000 km of electrified routes of which 147,760 km are in Europe, 24,509 km in the Far East, 11,050 km in Africa, 4,223 km in South America, and 4,160 km in North America; note - fastest speed in daily service is 300 km/hr attained by France's SNCF TGV-Atlantique line

Highways:
total: NA

Ports: Chiba, Houston, Kawasaki, Kobe, Marseille, Mina' al Ahmadi (Kuwait), New Orleans, New York, Rotterdam, Yokohama

Defence Forces

Branches: ground, maritime, and air forces at all levels of technology