

Yemen

Geography

Location: Middle East, bordering the Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Red Sea, between Oman and Saudi Arabia

Area:

total area: 527,970 sq km

land area: 527,970 sq km

Land boundaries: total 1,746 km, Oman 288 km, Saudi Arabia 1,458 km

Coastline: 1,906 km

Maritime claims:

contiguous zone: 18 nm in the North; 24 nm in the South

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

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: mostly desert; hot and humid along west coast; temperate in western mountains affected by seasonal monsoon; extraordinarily hot, dry, harsh desert in east

Terrain: narrow coastal plain backed by flat-topped hills and rugged mountains; dissected upland desert plains in center slope into the desert interior of the Arabian Peninsula

Natural resources: petroleum, fish, rock salt, marble, small deposits of coal, gold, lead, nickel, and copper, fertile soil in west

Land use:

arable land: 6%

permanent crops: 0%

meadows and pastures: 30%

forest and woodland: 7%

other: 57%

Irrigated land: 3,100 sq km (1989 est.)

Environment:

current issues: very limited natural fresh water resources;
inadequate supplies of potable water; overgrazing; soil erosion;
desertification

natural hazards: sandstorms and dust storms in summer

Note: controls Bab el Mandeb, the strait linking the Red Sea and
the Gulf of Aden, one of world's most active shipping lanes

People

Population: 14,728,474 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 50% (female 3,551,953; male 3,776,358)

15-64 years: 48% (female 3,505,735; male 3,508,229)

65 years and over: 2% (female 216,210; male 169,989) (July 1995
est.)

Population growth rate: 4.02% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 44.85 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 8.01 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: 3.39 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 58.2 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 62.51 years

male: 61.57 years

female: 63.5 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 7.15 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Yemeni(s)

adjective: Yemeni

Ethnic divisions: predominantly Arab; Afro-Arab concentrations in western coastal locations; South Asians in southern regions; small European communities in major metropolitan areas

Religions: Muslim including Sha'fi (Sunni) and Zaydi (Shi'a), small numbers of Jewish, Christian, and Hindu

Languages: Arabic

Literacy:

total population: 38%

male: 53%

female: 26%

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Republic of Yemen

conventional short form: Yemen

local long form: Al Jumhuriyah al Yamaniyah

local short form: Al Yaman

Type: republic

Capital: Sanaa

Independence: 22 May 1990 Republic of Yemen was established on 22 May 1990 with the merger of the Yemen Arab Republic

{Yemen (Sanaa) or North Yemen} and the Marxist-dominated People's Democratic Republic of Yemen {Yemen (Aden) or South Yemen}; previously North Yemen had become independent on 11 November 1918 (from the Ottoman Empire) and South Yemen had become independent on 30 November 1967 (from the UK)

National holiday: Proclamation of the Republic, 22 May (1990)

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Flag: three equal horizontal bands of red (top), white, and black; similar to the flag of Syria which has two green stars and of Iraq which has three green stars (plus an Arabic inscription) in a horizontal line centered in the white band; also similar to the flag of Egypt which has a symbolic eagle centered in the white band

Economy

Overview: Whereas the northern city Sanaa is the political capital of a united Yemen, the southern city Aden, with its refinery and port facilities, is the economic and commercial capital. Future economic

development depends heavily on Western-assisted development of the country's moderate oil resources. The low level of domestic industry and agriculture has made northern Yemen dependent on imports for practically all of its essential needs. Once self-sufficient in food production, northern Yemen has become a major importer. Land once used for export crops - cotton, fruit, and vegetables - has been turned over to growing a shrub called qat, whose leaves are chewed for their stimulant effect by Yemenis and which has no significant export market.

Industries: crude oil production and petroleum refining; small-scale production of cotton textiles and leather goods; food processing; handicrafts; small aluminum products factory; cement

Agriculture: accounts for 26% of GDP; products - grain, fruits, vegetables, qat (mildly narcotic shrub), coffee, cotton, dairy, poultry, meat, fish; not self-sufficient in grain

Transportation

Railroads: 0 km

Highways:

total: 51,390 km

Pipelines: crude oil 644 km; petroleum products 32 km

Ports: Aden, Al Hudaydah, Al Mukalla, Mocha, Nishtun

Airports:

total: 46

Defence Forces

Branches: Army, Navy, Air Force, paramilitary (includes Police)