

OFFICIAL NAME: Republic of Bolivia

CAPITAL: Sucre (Judicial) La Paz (Administrative)

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Unitary Multiparty Republic

AREA: 1,098,579 Sq KM (424,164 Sq ML)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION 9,110,400



LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY: Bolivia is a landlocked country in the heart of South America. It is bound by Brazil to the north and east, Peru to the northwest, Chile to the southwest, Argentina to the south and Paraguay to the southeast. The country can be divided into three topographical zones, (1.) the Altiplano, which is a high plateau that crosses the country from the northwest to the southeast and splits the Andes into two mountain chains or cordilleras. The plateau cradles the highest navigable lake in the world called Lake Titicaca. (2.) The Yungas which are made up of sharply tilted mountain valleys that separate the higher plateau from the lowland plains. (3.) The Llanos which is the lowland plain in the southern region and is also a highly developed agricultural region, in addition to having Bolivia's major deposits of oil, natural gas and iron ore. To the northeast of the Llanos region, the plains form part of the Amazon River Basin containing tropical forests and dense vegetation mixed with open savannah. Several rivers including the Beni, the Itonomas and the Paraguay flow from the Andes to meet the Guapore which follows the frontier with Brazil. Major Cities (pop. est.); La Paz 711,000, Santa Cruz 695,000, El Alto 404,000, Cochabamba 404,000, Oruro 183,000 (1992). Land Use; forested 54%, pastures 24%, agricultural-cultivated 2%, other 20% (1993).

CLIMATE: Bolivia has a tropical climate, although the difference in altitude produces a variety of different climatic conditions. Generally, both temperature and rainfall increase from west to east. The Altiplano is inhospitable for most of the year while the Yungas has a semitropical climate and the Llanos becomes drier to the south. The wet season is from December to January and because of the country's seasonal variations both floods and droughts are common. The prevailing winds include the

rain bearing winds from the Amazon Basin and the Surazos which is a dust laden wind that blow across the plains. Average temperature ranges in La Paz are from 1 to 17 degrees Celsius (34 to 63 degrees Fahrenheit) in July to 6 to 19 degrees Celsius (43 to 66 degrees Fahrenheit) in November.

PEOPLE: The principal ethnic majority are the AmerIndians who account for around 42% of the population, of which 25% are Quechua and 17% are Aymara. In addition, 32% of the population are Mestizos who are of mixed AmerIndian and Spanish descent while 15% are Whites mainly Spanish and 2% are Black Africans.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 7 persons per sq km (18 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 51.1% urban, 48.9% rural (1989). Sex Distribution; 49.3% male, 50.7% female (1990). Life Expectancy at Birth; 51.0 years male, 55.0 years female (1987). Age Breakdown; 41% under 15, 26% 15 to 29, 17% 30 to 44, 10% 45 to 59, 5% 60 to 74, 1% 75 and over (1988). Birth Rate; 43.0 per 1,000 (1987). Death Rate; 14.0 per 1,000 (1987). Increase Rate; 29.0 per 1,000 (1987). Infant Mortality Rate; 102.0 per 1,000 live births (1988).

RELIGIONS: The official religion is Roman Catholicism which accounts for 93% of the population while around 2.6% are Baha'i.

LANGUAGES: The official languages are Spanish, Aymara and Quechua, although only 36% of the population speak Spanish as their native tongue. The principal AmerIndian languages are Quechua, Aymara and Guarani

EDUCATION: Aged 25 or over and having attained: no formal schooling 25.6%, some primary 23.2%, primary 23.5%, some secondary

7.0%, secondary 13.5%, higher 6.2%, unspecified 1.0% (1988). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 77.5% (1990).

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: Great political disorder followed Bolivia's defeat in the Chaco War with Paraguay from 1932 to 1935. From 1935 to 1952 Bolivia had 10 presidents as one political leader after the other seized control of the government. Tin miners formed unions and held strikes for better working conditions and the miners supported a political party called National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) which backed their demands. In 1952 the MNR overthrew the military rulers in power. During the 1960's military uprisings forced a return to military rule in 1964. The government changed hands repeatedly after revolts by rival military officers. The military government violated civil rights and permitted no opposition to their rule while they imprisoned their enemies. In the mid 1960's Ernesto "Che" Guevara a communist leader from Cuba tried to stir up a revolt in Bolivia and was subsequently shot dead in 1967. Numerous further military coups took place over the next 13 years. In 1980 an election was held for civilian government, however, before the new leader could be inaugurated the military, led by Gen. Luis Garcia Meza, again took control of the government. In 1982 the military removed Meza and allowed the return of civilian government under Siles Suazo. The 1980's saw many problems for Bolivia. Major debt, increases in inflation, droughts and floods which caused severe food shortages as well as workers repeatedly going on strike formed the basis of their problems. In 1985 elections were won by Paz Estonsoro until 1989 when Jaime Paz Zamora was elected by the Congress as President of a coalition government. In 1990 the main thrust of economic policy was to increase investment in the private sector and many investment projects were approved, mainly for mining. In Feb. 1991 relations with the US soured when Col. Faustino Rico Toro, a former commander of military intelligence during the Meza regime, was appointed as head of the anti-narcotics police. In March 1991, Rico Toro, Police Chief Felipe Carvajal and Interior Minister Guillermo Capobianco resigned after US newspapers accused them of involvement in the cocaine trade. In Apr. 1991 a new mining law was approved which allowed local firms to establish joint ventures with foreign companies. In

Aug. 1991 Pres. Zamora reshuffled his cabinet replacing 8 of the 17 ministers and the government embarked on a program of privatization of state owned enterprises. In Dec. 1991 municipal elections were announced as the "cleanest on record". Also during 1991 the US sent 56 military advisors to train two Bolivian Army battalions to support the anti-narcotics police which provoked fierce protest from the political, labor and church organizations. On Jan. 2, 1992 a national strike led by the Confederation of Bolivian Workers protested the government's privatization program, although the government continued with its plan with most interest shown in the energy sector. On Jan. 24, 1992 Pres. Paz and Peruvian Pres. Alberto Fujimori signed an agreement granting Bolivia access to the Pacific while in return Bolivia promised to help Peru gain access to the Atlantic through Brazil via Puerto Suarez. During 1992 relations with the US again soured as a result of rumors that US soldiers were building a secret Drug Enforcement Agency base in the Beni district while the joint US-Bolivian operations to eradicate 7,000 ha (17,290 ac) of coca crops resulted in the destruction of only 1,000 ha by May 1992. On Mar. 1, 1993 members of the Bolivian Labor Federation began a hunger strike and general strike aimed at wage increases. In April 1993, Gen. Luis Garcia Meza who as dictator in 1980 had been associated with drug trafficking was sentenced to 30 years in jail. In June 1993 presidential elections were won by Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada of the NRM, although his party fell short of the number of seat required for an absolute majority in the Congress. In 1993 the cocaine trade continued to be a major contributor to the economy, although joint US-Bolivian operations announced some success in limiting the cultivation and illegal export of coca paste and cocaine. Also during 1993, Pres. Sanchez de Lozada announced a plan for capitalization by selling a 49% stake in state enterprises, rather than privatization.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Boliviano (Bs) divided into 100 Centavos.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$5,472,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$3,687,000,000 (1993). Imports; USD \$1,205,900,000

(1993). Exports; USD \$754,500,000 (1993). Tourism Receipts; USD \$115,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; USD \$ - 89,300,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 2,530,409 or 33.6% of total population (1992). Unemployed; 2.5% (1992).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are Argentina, Brazil, the USA, the UK and Japan.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Alpacas, Antimony, Barley, Bismuth, Cassava, Coffee, Copper, Cotton, Gold, Iron Ore, Lead, Llamas, Maize,, Natural Gas, Oil, Potatoes, Quinol, Rice, Silver, Sugar Beets, Sugar Cane, Sulfur, Tin, Tungsten, Zinc.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Cement, Food Processing, Handicrafts, Mining and Smelting, Oil and Gas Production, Plastics, Textiles.

MAIN EXPORTS: Antimony, Coffee, Lead, Natural Gas, Petroleum, Silver, Tin, Tungsten, Zinc.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 3,652 km (2,269 mi) (1989), passenger-km 381,600,000 (237,115,000 passenger-mi) (1989), cargo ton-km 512,600,000 (351,080,000 short ton-mi) (1989). Roads; length 40,987 km (25,468 mi) (1984). Vehicles; cars 83,741 (1988), trucks and buses 150,898 (1988). Merchant Marine; vessels 1 (1990), deadweight tonnage 15,765 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 1,280,000,000 (795,000,000 passenger-mi) (1990), cargo ton-km 31,968,000 (21,895,000 short ton-mi) (1990).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 16 with a total circulation of 390,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 4,250,000 (1994). Television; receivers 775,000 (1992). Telephones; units 234,400 (1993).

MILITARY: 33,500 (1994) total active duty personnel with 74.6% army, 13.4% navy and 12.0% air force while military expenditure accounts for 2.4% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).