

OFFICIAL NAME: Dominican Republic
CAPITAL: Santo Domingo
SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Multiparty Republic
AREA: 48,422 Sq Km (18,696 Sq Mi)
ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION 8,338,100



LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY: The Dominican Republic is located in the Caribbean Sea and occupies 66% of the island of Hispaniola while the territory also includes the islands of Beata Catalina, Saona, Alto Velo and Catalinita. It is bound by Haiti to the west, the Atlantic Ocean to the north and the Caribbean Sea to the south. The country can be divided into two main topographical regions. (1.) The highlands which consist of four parallel mountain ranges, the Cordillera Central which is a heavily wooded mountain range, the Cordillera Septentrional, the Sierra de Neiba and the Sierra de Baoruco. (2.) The lowlands which consist of long parallel valleys which lie in a northwest direction. The most extensive valley is the Cibao with another being the Neiba Valley while there are also other numerous small valleys each with its own drainage system. The largest lake on the island is Lake Enriquillo. Major Cities (pop. est.); Santo Domingo 2,100,000, Santiago de los Caballeros 690,000, La Vega 189,000, San Pedro de Macoris 137,000 (1993). Land Use; forested 13%, pastures 43%, agricultural-cultivated 30%, other 14% (1993).

CLIMATE: The Dominican Republic has a tropical maritime climate with trade winds moderating the heat. The wet or rainy season is from May to November in the south and from December to April in the north. Hurricanes can also occur between June and November. In general, rainfall is heaviest in the north and diminishes towards the south and west. Average annual precipitation varies between 1,390 mm (55 inches) and 1,520 mm (60 inches). Average temperature ranges in Santo Domingo are from 19 to 29 degrees Celsius (66 to 84 degrees Fahrenheit) in January to 23 to 31 degrees Celsius (73 to 88 degrees Fahrenheit) in August.

PEOPLE: The Mulattoes who are of mixed European and African descent account for 75% of the population followed by the Whites who account for 15% while Black Africans account for 10%. The White population includes pure Spanish, Lebanese and German Jews while other ethnic aliens include Chinese and Japanese.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 151 persons per sq km (391 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 60.4% urban, 39.6% rural (1990). Sex Distribution; 50.8% male, 49.2% female (1990). Life Expectancy at Birth; 63.9 years male, 68.1 years female (1990). Age Breakdown; 38% under 15, 30% 15 to 29, 18% 30 to 44, 9% 45 to 59, 4% 60 to 74, 1% 75 and

over (1990). Birth Rate; 31.3 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 6.8 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 9.9 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 65.0 per 1,000 live births (1990).

RELIGIONS: Mostly Christians with around 92% of the population Roman Catholic. Other religious minorities include Protestants, Haitian Voodooists, Cultists and a small number of Jews.

LANGUAGES: The official language is Spanish which is spoken by 98% of the population while the remaining 2% of the population speak a Haitian Creole.

EDUCATION: Aged 25 or over and having attained: no formal schooling 48.0%, incomplete primary 31.7%, primary 4.0%, secondary 14.0%, higher 2.3% (1981). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 83.3% (1990).

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: In 1930 Gen. Rafael Trujillo Molina was elected President. He established and ruled a ruthless dictatorship through a number of "Puppet" Presidents until he was assassinated in May 1961. The then President Dr Joaquin Balaguer remained in office until Jan. 1962 and during this time a power struggle began among the military, the upper class and the people who wanted a democracy, as well as those who preferred communism. In Dec. 1962 Dr Juan Bosch was elected President, although in Sept. 1963 the military ousted him and then formed a three member Junta to govern the country. In Apr. 1965 a pro-Bosch revolt overthrew the Junta and a civil war followed. This resulted in US Pres. Johnson sending US troops to the Dominican Republic to intervene in the fighting and maintain order. A truce was arranged in May 1965 and fresh elections took place in June 1966, which were won by Balaguer. In 1978 Antonio Guzman won office from Balaguer, however, Guzman committed suicide in 1982 after allegations of fraud were made against his family and Dr Jorge Salvador Blanco was elected his successor. In 1979 a hurricane killed more than 2,000 people and destroyed the homes of about 200,000 others. In 1984 and 1985 there were serious disturbances after price increases of essential goods and in 1986 after some violence Balaguer was reelected President. In 1988 former Pres. Blanco was convicted and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for corruption. In July 1990 Pres. Balaguer was re-elected for another term and in August a two day strike in protest to an austerity package announced on Aug. 8, resulted in the deaths of at least 12 people, 100 injuries and 5,000 arrests when the protests were repressed. In Nov. 1990 another general strike followed in protest to rising unemployment. In June 1991 relations with Haiti were strained as Pres. Balaguer decreed the deportation of all illegal Haitian immigrants under 16 or over 60. In July 1991 Pres. Balaguer signed a \$113 million IMF standby arrangement that resulted in several strikes in protest to the arrangement which included numerous austerity measures. By the end of July 1991 some 3,000 Haitian workers had been deported while another 15,000 had fled the country that led to serious labor shortages for the sugar

plantation and construction industries. In 1992 there were deep divisions within the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) when 47 members resign while several others were also expelled and later formed a new party, the Alliance for Democracy, over the PLD's stance on the proposed new Labor Code. In May 1992 the new Labor Code was ratified by both houses of the Congress and the President. In Sept. and Oct. 1992 there were violent demonstrations in protest to the planned Oct. 12, 1992 celebrations for the 500th anniversary of Columbus' landing on Hispaniola. On Sept. 30, 1992 secret police killed the head of the Dominican Committee for Human Rights during a march with 10 police later being arrested. Also during 1992 the US Drug Enforcement Agency alleged that high-ranking Dominican officials were engaged in drug trafficking, although Pres. Balaguer denied an knowledge of involvement by members of his staff. In Mar. 1993 the state-owned Rosario Dominicana temporarily shut-down its gold mining operations and suspended 70 employees. In 1993 political campaigning intensified in anticipation of 1994 presidential elections with the leader of the Dominican Revolutionary Party, Jose Francisco Pena Gomez, accusing the ruling Social Christian Reformist Party of mounting a racist campaign by calling him a Haitian and raising fears of a French-sponsored campaign to unite the country with Haiti. Also during the year Pres. Balaguer spent two weeks in Florida, USA recovering from an operation.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Peso (P) divided into 100 Centavos.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$8,039,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$3,763,000,000 (1993). Imports; USD \$2,118,000,000 (1993). Exports; USD \$644,000,000 (1994). Tourism Receipts; USD \$1,148,000,000 (1994). Balance of Trade; USD \$ - 1,631,000,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 2,758,000 or 37.6% of total population (1991 est.). Unemployed; 28.0% (1994).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are the USA, Switzerland, Puerto Rico, Spain, Japan, Belgium, the Netherlands and Venezuela.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Bauxite, Cocoa, Coffee, Cotton, Flowers, Gold, Mangoes, Maize, Nickel, Oranges, Platinum, Rice, Salt, Silver, Sugar Beets, Tobacco, Tomatoes.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, Cement, Food Processing, Metal Refining, Mining, Petroleum Products, Textiles, Tobacco Products, Tourism.

MAIN EXPORTS: Bauxite, Cocoa, Coffee, Ferronickel, Gold, Meats, Nickel, Silver, Sugar, Tobacco.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 1,654 km (1,028 mi) (1987), passenger-km N/A., cargo ton-km N/A. Roads; length 11,400 km (7,084 mi) (1986). Vehicles; cars 114,000 (1989),

trucks and buses 72,000 (1989). Merchant Marine; vessels 31 (1990), deadweight tonnage 51,765 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 247,880,000 (154,025,000 passenger-mi) (1988), cargo ton-km 3,965,000 (2,716,000 short ton-mi) (1988).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 11 with a total circulation of 265,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 1,180,000 (1994). Television; receivers 728,000 (1994). Telephones; units 552,400 (1993).

MILITARY: 24,500 (1995) total active duty personnel with 61.2% army, 16.3% navy and 22.5% air force while military expenditure accounts for 1.4% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).