

OFFICIAL NAME: Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

CAPITAL: Addis Ababa

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Federal Multiparty Republic

AREA: 1,103,341 Sq Km (426,002 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION 61,558,700



LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY: Ethiopia is a landlocked country located in the horn of North East Africa. It is bound by Sudan to the west and northwest, Kenya to the south, Somalia to the east and southeast, Djibouti to the east and the Eritrea to the northeast. Geographically, the country consists of rugged mountains and isolated valleys. The Ethiopian Plateau which occupies 66% of the land, consists of a high or central plateau that is bisected diagonally by the Great Rift Valley to the west and the Somali Plateau to the east. The central or high plateau also has a number of mountain ranges including the Chercher, Aranna and Chelalo. The Somali Plateau to the southeast is a flat arid semidesert region. The Great Rift Valley is occupied by a number of lakes including the Zwai, Langano, Abiata, Shala, Awasa, Abaya and Chamo. In the northern and eastern parts of the country, the regions are relatively low lying. The Danakil Depression in the northeast dips to 116 metres (361 feet) below sea level and is said to be the hottest place on the earth. Major Cities (pop. est.); Addis Ababa 1,673,000, Dire Dawa 117,700, Gondar 95,000, Nazret 91,000 (1988). Land Use; forested 25%, pastures 40%, agricultural-cultivated 13%, other 22% (1993).

CLIMATE: Ethiopia has three climatic zones. (1.) A cool or Dega zone in the central parts of the western and eastern sections of the central plateau. (2.) The temperate zone comprising portions of the central plateau between 1,500 to 2,400 metres (5,000 to 8,000 feet) (3.) A hot or Kolla zone below 1,500 metres (5,000 feet). There are also two seasons, a wet season from mid-June to September and a dry season from mid-September to mid-June. The hot semiarid northeastern and southeastern lowlands receive less than 500 mm (20 inches) of precipitation annually and are highly susceptible to drought. Average temperature ranges in Addis Ababa are from 5 degrees Celsius (41 degrees Fahrenheit) to 25 degrees Celsius (77 degrees Fahrenheit) all year.

PEOPLE: Ethiopia has over 70 ethnic groups. The principal ethnic groups include the Oromo who account for 40% of the population, while the Amhara account for 25%, the Tigre for 12%, the Gurage for 3.3%, the Ometo for 2.7% and the Sidamo for 2.4%. Other ethnic minorities include the Falasha, Nilotic tribes, the Beja, the Agau, the Shankella, the Somali and the Afar.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 42 persons per sq km (109 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 11.0% urban, 89.0% rural (1991). Sex Distribution; 49.9% male, 50.4% female (1991). Life Expectancy at Birth; 42.4 years male, 45.6 years female (1990). Age Breakdown; 46% under 15, 23% 15 to 29, 16% 30 to 44, 9% 45 to 59, 4% 60 to 74, 2% 75 and over (1991). Birth Rate; 48.6 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 20.7 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 27.9 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 154.0 per 1,000 live births (1990).

RELIGIONS: Mostly Christians which account for 53% of the population, of which most are Ethiopian Orthodox while around 31% of the population are Muslims and 11% follow local native tribal beliefs.

LANGUAGES: The national language is Amharic, although over 70 languages and 200 dialects are also spoken. The other principal languages spoken are Guraginya, Tigrinya, Orominga, Arabic and English.

EDUCATION: Aged 25 or over and having attained: N/A. Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 1,000,000 or 4.8% (1980).

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: In 1936 the former Italian colony of Eritrea, an area in the far northern tip of Ethiopia along the Red Sea coast, as well as Ethiopia were conquered and occupied by the Italians. In 1941 after the Allies drove Italy from Ethiopia, Emperor Haile Selassie was restored to power. In 1961 Eritrean nationalists demanded independence from Ethiopia and the Ethiopian government rejected their demand which resulted in the beginning of a civil war. The Ogaden region of southeastern Ethiopia became the next trouble spot in the 1960's when large numbers of Somalis who had always lived there, revolted against Ethiopian rule. In the late 1960's and early 1970's many Ethiopians became dissatisfied with the government and demanded better living conditions for the poor as well as an end to government corruption. From 1972 to 1974 a severe drought led to widespread famine in the northeastern part of Ethiopia and resulted in some 200,000 deaths. In Sept. 1974 the military seized control of the government and removed Emperor Selassie from power promising a new constitution. In Nov. 1974 the military government or Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) was purged by junior officers and 57 senior officials were executed. In Dec. 1974 Ethiopia was declared a socialist state and established close relations with the former Soviet Union (USSR). In July 1977 Somalia invaded Ethiopia and both the USSR and Cuba providing military support by rearming Ethiopia. By Mar. 1978 Somalia had been forced out of the Ogaden region, although fighting continued until Apr. 1988. In 1987 Ethiopia adopted a new constitution which provided for the return of a civilian government. In Mar. 1988 the Eritrean and Tigrayan rebels launched a coordinated offensive and by 1989 had control of most of Eritrea, while by the end of 1989 the rebels also had control of most of Tigray. In May 1991 the long civil war came to a climax when the alliance

of four rebel groups, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), won control of the nation. The governing regime declared a cease-fire and fled. At the same time Israel had organized an airlift of 14,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel. In July 1991 the 24 different groups met in the capital and established a multi-party provisional government headed by Meles Zenawi, the Tigray Rebel Leader, to lead the country to its first free elections within two years. Also in 1991 famine relief operations were disrupted due to the upheavals throughout the country and Eritrea effectively became self-governing under the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) from May 1991. In 1992 the interim government dominated by the EPRDF experienced difficulties in establishing the promised democratic structure of government, based on the principle of ethnic federalism. The establishment of 14 new self-governing regions based on ethnic divisions in late 1991 and the formation of some 60 political parties representing the nationality of ethnic groups also complicated the political process. On June 21, 1992 the country's first multiparty elections resulted in the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) boycotting the elections and disrupting polls in the west of the country following their accusations of EPRDF intimidation. On June 23, 1992 the OLF withdrew its representatives from the interim government while the elections were postponed in three eastern regions. Western diplomatic pressure averted a slide back into civil war, although the situation remained tense. Also in 1992 famine continued to affect millions particularly in the southeastern part of the country where refugees from Somalia fled to from their civil war. On Jan. 4, 1993 a demonstration by Addis Ababa University students over a visit from UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros Ghali to discuss Eritrean independence was violently dispersed by EPRDF forces. In April 1993 some 40 members of the university's academic staff were dismissed while in the same month members of 5 parties representing various southern ethnic groups were expelled from the interim government council (Council of Representatives) after attending a conference in Paris with exiled opposition leaders and criticizing the regime. In Aug. 1993 several members of the Tigre People's Liberation Front (TPLF) were imprisoned on corruption charges which was seen as the first signs of dissension within the group. Also in 1993 there were violent clashes between EPRDF forces, which are dominated by TPLF, and opposition movements in several parts of the country. Also during the year some 50,000 people from neighboring Djibouti sought refuge in Ethiopia following conflict there while a further 40,000 Ethiopian refugees were repatriated from Kenya. The southeastern Somali-inhabited Ogaden region continued to be reliant on famine relief aid as a result of the continuing conflict in Somalia and the effect of floods in the region.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Birr (Br) divided into 100 Cents.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$5,329,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$4,530,000,000 (1993). Imports; Br 3,618,718,000 (1993). Exports; Br 800,814,000 (1993). Tourism Receipts; USD \$20,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; Br -2,325,100,000 (1993). Economically Active Population; 23,518,000 or 41.3% of total population (1992). Unemployed; 44.2% (1990).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are Saudi Arabia, Japan, the USA, Italy, Djibouti, Egypt, Germany and the UK.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Barley, Beans and Peas, Cattle, Coffee, Cotton, Copper, Gold, Maize, Millet, Platinum, Potash, Salt, Sorghum, Sugar Cane, Timber, Wheat.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, Cement, Construction, Food Processing, Textiles.

MAIN EXPORTS: Beans, Coffee, Cotton, Hides and Skins, Sesame Seeds.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 682 km (424 mi) (1989), passenger-km 297,000,000 (184,547,000 passenger-mi) (1989), cargo ton-km 128,000,000 (87,667,000 short ton-mi) (1989). Roads; length 39,482 km (24,533 mi) (1988). Vehicles; cars 42,250 (1989), trucks and buses 21,000 (1989). Merchant Marine; vessels 29 (1990), deadweight tonnage 90,981 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 1,607,940,000 (999,127,000 passenger-mi) (1989), cargo ton-km 167,940,000 (115,022,000 short ton-mi) (1989).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 3 with a total circulation of 107,000 (1994). Radio; receivers 9,000,000 (1994). Television; receivers 100,000 (1994). Telephones; units 132,500 (1993).

MILITARY: c. 120,000 (1995) while military expenditure accounted for 4.4% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).