

OFFICIAL NAME: Republic of Namibia

CAPITAL: Windhoek

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Unitary Multiparty Republic

AREA: 823,146 Sq Km (317,818 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION: 1,850,700



LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY: Namibia is located in South West Africa. It is bound by Angola to the north, Zambia to the northeast, Botswana to the east, South Africa to the south and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. The country is divided into three topographical regions. (1.) The coastal desert region which includes the Namib Desert and follows the entire length of the coastline. (2.) The inland plateau region which is a continuation of the South African Plateau and also contains the isolated massifs of the Tsaris Mountains in the southwest, the Anas Mountains in the central area and the Erongo Mountains in the west. (3.) The dune and grass covered Kalahari Desert to the east and south of the inland plateau region. The principal rivers are the Orange, Rio Okavango and Fish or Vis Rivers. Major Cities (pop. est.); Windhoek 125,000, Swakopmund 15,500, Rundu 15,000 Rehoboth 15,000 (1990). Land Use; forested 22%, pastures 46%, agricultural-cultivated 1%, other 31% (1993).

CLIMATE: Namibia has a temperate and subtropical climate characterized by hot and dry conditions with little rainfall along the coast. Temperatures are moderated by cold Benguela currents while periods of winter drought alternate with excessive summer rainfall between October and March with the interior experiencing slightly higher rainfall. Average annual precipitation in Windhoek is 360 mm (14 inches) and average temperature ranges are from 6 to 20 degrees Celsius (43 to 68 degrees Fahrenheit) in July to 17 to 29 degrees Celsius (63 to 84 degrees Fahrenheit) in January.

PEOPLE: The principal ethnic majority are the Black Africans who account for 85.6% of the population, of which half are from the Ovambo tribe. Other principal tribes include the Damara, Herero, Okavango, Nama, East Caprivian, Bushmen, Rehoboth Baster, Kaokovelder and Tswana. The remainder are Whites who account for 6.4% of the population and include South Africans, British as well as Germans while Coloreds, who are of mixed race, account for 6.9% of the population.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 1.6 persons per sq km (4.2 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 27.8% urban, 72.2% rural (1990). Sex Distribution; 49.8% male, 50.2% female (1990). Life Expectancy at Birth; 55.0 years male, 57.5 years female (1990). Age Breakdown; 46% under 15, 25% 15 to 29, 15% 30 to 44, 9% 45 to 59, 4% 60 to 74, 1% 75 and over (1990). Birth Rate; 44.0 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 12.2 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 31.8 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 106.0 per 1,000 live births (1990).

RELIGIONS: Mostly Christians of the Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Anglican and Dutch Reformed Churches which combined account for 90% of the population. The remainder follow local native tribal beliefs.

LANGUAGES: The official language is English, although German, Afrikaans and a variety of Bantu dialects are also spoken.

EDUCATION: Economically active population having attained: no formal schooling 59.8%, primary 33.2%, secondary 5.0%, higher 2.0% (1977). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 474,000 or 72.5% (1985).

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: In 1946 South Africa refused to accept the legal authority of the UN and rejected its request to place South West Africa (Namibia) under UN trusteeship. Instead South Africa continued to treat the territory as a province and in 1950 the International Court of Justice declared South Africa's control of Namibia illegal. In 1958 the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) was formed and began to launch guerrilla attacks against the South African security forces in Oct. 1966. In 1966 South Africa extended its apartheid laws to Namibia. In 1973 the UN recognized SWAPO as the authentic representative of the Namibian people. In 1977 South Africa was preparing to grant Namibia independence, under a plan that would give local political leadership to an assembly dominated by White Namibians, which the UN strongly opposed. In 1978 the UN passed a resolution that called for UN supervised elections before Namibia's independence. On Dec. 22, 1988 South Africa agreed to the terms which were initiated in Apr. 1989. In the same month clashes with the South African forces broke out as SWAPO guerrillas returned to Namibia and a ceasefire was arranged so elections could take place in Nov. 1989. Under UN supervision the elections took place and the constitution was inaugurated on Mar 21, 1990 with Sam Nujoma, leader of the SWAPO, as the country's first President. Since that time South Africa and Namibia have held talks regarding Walvis Bay the principal port which is owned by South Africa. During 1991 an agreement was reached over Walvis Bay for joint administration while South Africa was in transition. In June 1991 500 delegates attended a land policy conference in which resolutions were passed for the reallocation of abandoned land, limits on ownership, taxes on commercial land and full rights for women to own land. Also in 1991 Namibia seized Spanish fishing boats for illegally fishing within its territory. In 1992 unemployment rose to an estimated 50% of the economically active population while by March 1992 inflation had spiraled to 20.4% from 10.9% in 1990. The economic situation also suffered as a result of the country's worst drought this century as well as a weakening of the uranium and diamond markets. In Dec. 1992 the SWAPO won regional and local elections. On June 6, 1993 Pres. Nujoma visited US Pres. Bill Clinton and in July 1993 farmers staged a demonstration in Windhoek to protest the government's new taxes. Also in July

1993 police dispersed a clash between rival tribal groups in Katima Mulilo with tear gas. In Aug. 1993 a South African forum announced that Walvis Bay would be handed over to Namibia on Mar. 1, 1994. In Sept. 1993 the government introduced its own currency, the Dollar and announced generous tax incentives for manufacturers. Also in 1993 the severe drought continued to affect the economy and food harvests and a Labor Advisory Council was established to help fight rising unemployment.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Namibian Dollar (ND) *formerly South African Rand (R)* divided into 100 Cents.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$2,598,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$3,180,000 (1993). Imports; USD \$1,157,100,000 (1994). Exports; USD \$1,322,200,000 (1994). Tourism Receipts; USD \$91,000,000 (1992). Balance of Trade; USD \$165,000,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 493,580 or 34.9% of total population (1991). Unemployed; 20.1% (1991).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are South Africa, Germany, the USA and the UK.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Cattle, Copper, Diamonds, Fish, Lead, Maize, Millet, Salt, Sheep, Sorghum, Tin, Uranium, Vanadium.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Fishing, Food Processing, Mining, Ore Smelting, Stock Refining, Textiles.

MAIN EXPORTS: Beef, Cattle, Copper, Diamonds, Fish, Karakul Fur Pelts, Lead, Sheep, Uranium

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 2,383 km (1,481 mi) (1989), passenger-km N/A., cargo ton-km N/A. Roads; length 69,804 km (43,374 mi) (1987). Vehicles; N/A. Merchant Marine; nil. Air Transport; passenger-km 561,565,000 (348,940,000 passenger-mi) (1990), cargo ton-km 3,309,000 (2,266,000 short ton-mi) (1990).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 6 with a total circulation of 43,300 (1994). Radio; receivers 240,000 (1993). Television; receivers 39,500 (1993). Telephones; units 69,800 (1993).

MILITARY: 8,100 (1995) total active duty personnel with 98.8% army, 1.2% navy and 0.0% air force while military expenditure accounts for 2.3% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).