

OFFICIAL NAME: Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

CAPITAL: Port of Spain

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Multiparty Republic

AREA: 5,128 Sq Km (1,980 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION: 1,364,300



LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY: Trinidad and Tobago are the two southern most islands of the Lesser Antilles in the Caribbean Sea. Trinidad Island's most prominent natural feature is the three mountain ranges called the Northern, Central and Southern Ranges which run east to west. Between these ranges are broad plains while extensive swamps cover the east, south and west coasts. Tobago Island has an uneven terrain dominated by a main ridge, which is a series of volcano mountains while an extensive coral platform is located to the southwest. Both islands have numerous rivers of which the Ortoire and Caroni Rivers are Trinidad's longest and Tobago's is the Courland River. Major Cities (pop. est.); Chaguanas 56,600, Port of Spain 50,900, San Fernando 30,100, Arima 29,700, Point Fortin 20,000 (1990). Land Use; forested 46%, pastures 2%, agricultural-cultivated 24%, other 28% (1993).

CLIMATE: Trinidad and Tobago has a tropical climate influenced and modified by the surrounding sea and the trade winds. The climate is characterized by a dry season from January to May and a wet season from June to December, with the warmest month July and the coolest January. The wettest months are June through to November and average annual precipitation varies from 2,540 mm (100 inches) to 3,810 mm (150 inches) depending on the region. Average temperature ranges on the coast are from 24 degrees Celsius (75 degrees Fahrenheit) to 26 degrees Celsius (79 degrees Fahrenheit) all year.

PEOPLE: The population consists of as many as 13 ethnic groups, of which two form the majority. (1.) The Black Africans who account for around 41% of the population and (2.) the East Indians who also account for around 41%. The remainder are Whites, Chinese, Caribs, Arawaks, Arabs and Jews.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 244 persons per sq km (631 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 69.1% urban, 30.9% rural (1990). Sex Distribution; 50.1% male, 49.9% female (1990). Life Expectancy at Birth; 69.7 years male, 74.7 years female (1993). Age Breakdown; 31% under 15, 26% 15 to 29, 22% 30 to 44, 13% 45 to 59, 8% 60 and over (1991). Birth Rate; 18.1 per 1,000 (1991). Death Rate; 6.6 per 1,000 (1991). Increase Rate; 11.5 per 1,000 (1991). Infant Mortality Rate; 18.0 per 1,000 live births (1991).

RELIGIONS: Mostly Christians which account for 70% of the population, of which 36% are Roman Catholic and 13% are Protestant. Other religious minorities include Hindus which account for 23% and Muslims for 6% of the population.

LANGUAGES: The official language is English with different varieties ranging from Creole to the standard English. Other minority languages include a French and Spanish Patois as well as numerous AmerIndian languages.

EDUCATION: Aged 25 or over and having attained: no formal schooling 7.1%, primary 66.5%, secondary 21.7%, higher 2.7%, unspecified 2.0% (1980). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 751,600 or 96.1% (1985).

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: In 1961 Britain granted Trinidad and Tobago internal self-government and on Aug. 31, 1962 full independence was achieved with Dr. Eric Williams as the country's first Prime Minister. In the early 1970's "Black Power" supporters protested against widespread unemployment as well as social and economic inequality. Supported by a mutiny in the army, violent demonstrations broke out which resulted in the declaration of two States of Emergency. On Aug. 1, 1976 Trinidad and Tobago became a republic within the Commonwealth. Since the early 1970's there has been a political movement on Tobago to make the island independent from the rest of the country. In Mar. 1981 Williams died and was succeeded by George Chambers. In Feb. 1986 four opposition parties formed the National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR). In Dec. 1986 the NAR won elections and A.N.R. Robinson became Prime Minister. In 1987 the NAR suffered internal divisions and three ministers were dismissed, only to form another opposition party. On July 27, 1990 a small Black Muslim sect, the Jamaat al Muslimeem with around 120 extremists, attempted to overthrow the government and seized 55 hostages including Prime Minister Robinson. The coup attempt resulted in the deaths of 30 people which led to widespread looting in the capital. On Aug. 1, 1990 the rebels surrendered and were subsequently imprisoned on charges of murder and treason. In 1991 the government's economic liberalization program led to widespread protests throughout the year. On Dec. 16, 1991 the People's National Movement (PNM) was returned to power with Patrick Manning as Prime Minister after five years in opposition. In Jan. 1992 the government introduced its first budget which resulted in increased income taxes. In May 1992 Prime Minister Manning met with US Pres. George Bush in Washington, D.C. to discuss among other things joint cooperation in fighting the drug trade. In July 1992 the members of the Jamaat al Muslimeem were released from prison after the High Court had upheld the validity of an amnesty granted by the acting President. In Sept. 1992 the PNM won the majority of seats in local government elections, although the NAR retained control of the House of Assembly following elections on Dec. 7, 1992. Also in 1992 the NAR elected Carson Charles as its new leader. In Jan. 1993 a US steel company, Nucor Corp Inc., agreed to establish a iron carbide plant in an industrial estate in Trinidad. In March 1993 the government sold its 51% interest in the country's ammonia

plant as well as its 100% stake in the Trinidad and Tobago Urea Co. for US \$175 million. The government also announced plans to privatise a further 28 state-owned companies. In April 1993 the government removed currency controls and allowed it to float on the foreign exchange market which led to an immediate 26% devaluation against the Green Back. In Aug. 1993 Prime Minister Manning with four other Caribbean leaders met with US Pres. Bill Clinton to discuss their community policy of establishing closer ties with Cuba.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Dollar (TTD) divided into 100 Cents.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$4,776,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$1,704,000,000 (1993). Imports; TTD \$7,495,000,000 (1993). Exports; TTD \$8,801,000,000 (1993). Tourism Receipts; USD \$80,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; TTD \$4,354,000,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 504,500 or 40.5% of total population (1993). Unemployed; 19.8% (1993).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are the USA, the EU and CARICOM countries.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Asphalt, Bananas, Citrus Fruits, Cocoa, Coffee, Oil and Natural Gas, Rice, Sugar.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, Cement, Fertilizers, Food Processing, Oil and Natural Gas Production and Refining, Paints, Plastics, Steel, Tourism.

MAIN EXPORTS: Chemicals, Cocoa, Coffee, Crude Oil, Fruit, Petroleum

TRANSPORT: Railroads; nil. Roads; length 7,900 km (4,909 mi) (1985). Vehicles; cars 269,238 (1989), trucks and buses 68,759 (1989). Merchant Marine; vessels 49 (1990), deadweight tonnage 12,549 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 2,691,000,000 (1,672,000,000 passenger-mi) (1989), cargo ton-km 14,381,000 (9,850,000 short ton-mi) (1989).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 3 with a total circulation of 96,000 (1990). Radio; receivers 700,000 (1993). Television; receivers 250,000 (1993). Telephones; units 192,500 (1993).

MILITARY: 2,600 (1994) total active duty personnel with 76.9% army and 23.1% coast guard while military expenditure accounts for 1.8% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).

