

## HAITI COUNTRY PROFILE

Capital: Port-au-Prince



### **Quick Facts**

Population: 8,308,504

GDP (Purchasing Power Parity): \$14.15 billion

GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity): \$1,700

GDP composition by sector:

Agriculture: 28%

Industry: 20%

Services: 52%

Size of labor force: 3.6 million

Labor force: by occupation:

Agriculture: 66%

Industry: 9%

Services: 25%

Unemployment Rate: Widespread. More than two thirds of labor force do not have formal jobs.

Population below poverty line (\$2/day): 80%

Life expectancy at birth: 53.23 years

HIV/AIDS – adult prevalence rate: 5.6%

Adult Literacy Rate (age 15 and over):

Male: 54.8%

Female: 51.2%

For more information: <http://cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ha.html>

### **Political History**

A former French colony, Haiti was the second country in the Americas to gain independence in 1804, the first being the United States. It became the first independent black republic in the world. Haiti was one of the richest colonies in the world, exporting large amounts of sugar and coffee around the world. This was only possible however, with the presence of over 500,000 African-born slaves. After over a century of independence, Haiti was invaded and occupied by the United States in 1914. The occupation led to many positive developments, but sparked a massive wave of rural to

urban migration with the centralization of government and industry to Port-au-Prince. The United States also helped establish the Armée d'Haiti which would eventually commit atrocities on its own people. The United States left Haiti in 1934. In 1957, after Haiti's first universal suffrage elections, François Duvalier (known as "Papa Doc") became president for life. After his death in 1971, his 19 year old son ("Baby Doc") Jean-Claude Duvalier became president for life. After a corrupt reign, young Duvalier was deposed in 1986. After a period of political upheaval, Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected president in 1991. He was quickly deposed in a coup, which led to three years of military rule. Three years later, the United States again invaded and returned Aristide to the presidency, who proceeded to disband the army. In 1996, Aristide was succeeded by his close ally, René Préval. In 2001, Préval stepped down at the end of his term. Aristide was again elected president in 2001 after many of his opponents boycotted elections on the grounds that his party, Fanmi Lavalas, used intimidation and improper ballot counting during the elections. In February 2004, Aristide was overthrown by armed rebel groups consisting of disenfranchised ex-soldiers and Fanmi Lavalas workers. After intense political upheaval, the United States again sent Marines into Port-au-Prince. Haitian elections were held in February 2006, and René Préval was re-elected as president of Haiti, where he continues to lead today.

For more information: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haiti>

### **The Economy**

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, with 80% of the population living on less than \$2 a day. Haiti's economy was first crippled when after independence in 1804, the French government required Haiti to pay 150 million francs to compensate the losses experienced by French planters. Two-thirds of Haitians depend on a vulnerable, small-scale subsistence level of farming. Frequent natural disasters along side massive deforestation have made life very difficult for the majority of Haitians. In 2005, Haiti's economy grew at a rate of 1.5%, the highest since 1999. High levels of inflation, lack of foreign investment, and a massive trade deficit (\$1.471 billion imports. \$390.7 million export) results in a government reliance on foreign assistance. In 2005, nearly a quarter of GDP came from Remittances. Haiti's primary agricultural products are coffee, mangoes, sugarcane, rice, corn, sorghum; and wood. The primary industries include: sugar refining, flour milling, textiles, cement, and light assembly industries based on imported parts. It is evident that the work that Partners Worldwide is doing in Haiti is much needed life blood for the Haitian economy.

For more information: <http://cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ha.html>