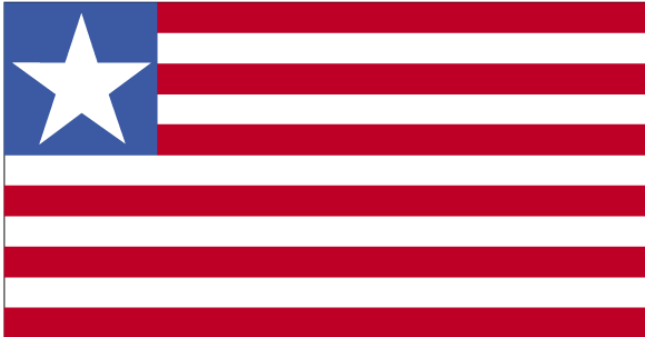


LIBERIA COUNTRY PROFILE

Capital: Monrovia



Quick Facts

Population: 3,042,004

GDP (Purchasing Power Parity): \$2.755 billion

GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity): \$1,000

GDP composition by sector:

Agriculture: 76.9%

Industry: 5.4%

Services: 17.7%

Size of labor force: No Information

Labor force: by occupation:

Agriculture: 70%

Industry: 8%

Services: 22%

Unemployment Rate: 85%

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

Life expectancy at birth: 39.65 years

HIV/AIDS – adult prevalence rate: 5.9%

Adult Literacy Rate (age 15 and over):

Male: 73.3%

Female: 41.6%

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

Political History

Liberia first became a political entity upon the arrival of freed American slaves in 1822, which was enabled by the American Colonialization Society. Upon arrival, the returnees began to look down upon local populations, calling themselves Americans and seeing the locals as uncivilized and backward. On July 26, 1847, American settlers declared independence for the Republic of Liberia. With the support of the United States, especially during World War II, Liberia was able to progress socially and economically throughout the 1900s. This progress came to a screeching halt on April 12, 1980. On that day, Liberian president William R. Tolbert Jr. was killed and Samuel Doe came to power. Through authoritarian rule, Doe banned newspapers and opposition parties, conducted

staged elections, and threw the country into a spiral of economic recession. In 1989, at the onset of a brief civil war, Doe was killed by a group led by Yormie Johnson. In order to end this conflict, interim president Amos Sawyer resigned from his post in 1994. Famous rebel leader Charles Taylor was elected in 1997 and began his reign of terror on Liberia. He targeted opposition groups and political activists. Anyone who spoke against him was targeted and punished, often with their life. Taylor led Liberia into civil war in 1999 and is responsible for an estimated 200,000 lives that were lost during this conflict. By mid 2003 the intensified conflict had spread to the capital in Monrovia. Due to international pressure, Taylor was given political asylum in Nigeria, where he lived until March 2006, when he was captured and arrested at the Nigeria – Cameroon boarder. He is currently awaiting his trial at The Hague where he faces 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. In 2005, with the help of UN and ECOMOG peacekeepers, Liberians held peaceful elections and famous footballer George Weah was defeated in a run-off election by Africa's first women elected president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. Johnson-Sirleaf faces enormous challenges, but is focused on rebuilding Liberia from the ground up. Johnson-Sirleaf has also implemented a truth and reconciliation commission to help Liberians come to terms with their painful past.

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

The Economy

Civil war and government mismanagement have destroyed much of Liberia's economy, especially the infrastructure around the countries. Most district capitals (including Monrovia) are without electricity and clean water. Because of the recent civil wars many of the most educated Liberians have fled the country, taking their capital and expertise with them. Few have returned. Without basic infrastructure it will be very difficult for the Johnson-Sirleaf administration to create an environment capable of creating international investment opportunities.

Liberia is located on the Western Coast of the African Continent, with weather perfect for agriculture. The country is richly endowed in natural resources and had been a producer and exporter of basic products - primarily raw timber and rubber. At this time, the primary agricultural products include rubber, coffee, cocoa, rice, cassava (tapioca), palm oil, sugarcane, bananas; sheep, goats; and timber. The main industries in Liberia are rubber processing, palm oil processing, timber, and diamonds. The development of these industries and of the country as a whole will largely depend on International donors and how well they allocate the money they are willing to spend. At this time, the economy seems to be growing at a very health rate of 8%. After a very difficult decade and a half, the future is bright for the Republic of Liberia.