

Country Profile: Botswana

Botswana is one of Africa's most stable countries and has a positive strategy for addressing the impact of HIV and AIDS.

HISTORY

In the late 1800s Britain formed the protectorate of Bechuanaland, preventing territorial encroachment of Boers from the Transvaal or German expansion from South West Africa. In 1966 Bechuanaland became independent as Botswana. Botswana was a haven for refugees and anti-apartheid activists from South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s, but had to tread carefully because of its economic dependence on the white-ruled neighbour, and because of South Africa's military might.

RECENT SITUATION

Botswana protects some of Africa's largest areas of wilderness. It is sparsely populated, because it is so dry. The Kalahari Desert, home to Bushman hunter-gatherers, makes up much of the territory and most areas are too arid to sustain any agriculture other than cattle. There have been calls from the government for the remaining Bushman population of the Kalahari game reserve to move to nearby towns.

More recently, the country has seen an influx of illegal immigrants seeking respite from the economic crisis in neighbouring Zimbabwe. Botswana, which once had the world's highest rate of HIV-Aids infection, has one of Africa's most-advanced treatment programmes. Anti-retroviral drugs are readily available. However, the UN says more than one in three adults in Botswana are infected with HIV or have developed Aids. Botswana is trying to reduce its economic dependence on diamonds. The government has moved to boost local business and employment by encouraging more value to be added to diamonds locally. It launched its own diamond trading company - Diamond Trading Company of Botswana - in a joint venture with diamond giant De Beers. Safari-based tourism - tightly-controlled and often upmarket - is an important source of income.

FACTS

- **Full name:** The Republic of Botswana
- **Population:** 1.9 Million (UN 2007)
- **Capital:** Gaborone
- **Area:** 581,730 sq km (224,607 sq miles)
- **Major religion:** Christianity, Indigenous beliefs
- **Major languages:** English (official), Setswana
- **Internet domain:** .bw
- **International dialling code:** +267

- **HDI value*¹:** 124. Botswana (0.654) [1. Iceland (0.968)] (2005)
- **Human Poverty Index (HPI-1)*²:** 46. Botswana (31.4) [1. Chad (56.9)] (2005)

- **Life expectancy at birth (years) :** 48.1
- **Probability of not surviving past 40 (%):** 44%
- **Under-five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births):** 120 (2005)
- **HIV prevalence (% aged 15-49):** 23.9 (2007)



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Education

- **Combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio (%):**
 - 103. Botswana (69.5) [1. Australia (113.0)] (2005)
- **Adult Literacy Rate: (% ages 15 and older):**
 - 87. Botswana (81.2) [1. Georgia (100.0)] (2005)

Economy and Trade

- **GDP per capita:** No. of people lived below the national poverty line. (PPP US\$):
 - 54. Botswana (12,387) [1. Luxembourg (60,228)] (2005)
- **GNI Per Capita:** US \$5,180 (World Bank, 2006)
- **Gini Coefficient *³:** 5. Botswana (60.5) [126. Denmark (24.7)] (2007)
- **Monetary unit:** 1 Pula = 100 thebe
- **Main exports:** Diamonds, copper, nickel, beef
- **CO₂ emissions share of world total (%):** 4.3 (2004) [2.2 (1990)]

Water, sanitation and nutritional status

- **People without access to an improved water source (%):** 5
- **Population using improved sanitation (%):** 42 (2004) [38 (1990)]
- **Population Undernourished (% of total population):** 32 (2002-2004) [23 (1990-1992)]

Politics

- **Government:** The Botswana Democratic Party
- **President:** Seretse Khama Ian Khama
 - The son of Sir Seretse Khama, first president of Botswana - took over as president in April 2008.
- **Internally displaced people (thousands, 2006):** n/a
- **Year Women received right to vote:** 1965



*¹ The HDI provides a composite measure of three dimensions of human development: living a long and healthy life (measured by life expectancy), being educated (measured by adult literacy and enrolment at the primary, secondary and tertiary level) and having a decent standard of living (measured by purchasing power parity, PPP, income).

*² The Human Poverty Index for developing countries (HPI-1), focuses on the proportion of people below a threshold level in the same dimensions of human development as the HDI.

*³ The **Gini coefficient** is most prominently used as a measure of inequality of wealth distribution. A value of 0 represents absolute equality, and a value of 100 absolute inequality.

*⁴ Rankings are out of a total of 177.