

Country Profile: Namibia

Namibia has a low average population density of 2.2 per sq km, compared with an average for Sub-Saharan Africa of 28 per sq km, and an average household size of 5.1 persons, according to the 2001 census.

HISTORY

Namibia, a large and sparsely populated country on Africa's south-west coast, enjoyed more than a decade of stability under its founding president Sam Nujoma, who led the long fight against rule by South Africa. Germany took control of the area which it called South West Africa in the late 1800s. The discovery of diamonds in 1908 prompted an influx of Europeans. South Africa seized it during World War I and administered it under a League of Nations mandate. Germany has apologised to Namibia for the colonial-era killings of thousands of members of the Herero ethnic group; their descendants have asked Berlin for financial compensation. Namibians achieved independence in 1990 after a bush war of almost 25 years. Inter-racial reconciliation encouraged the country's white people to remain and they still play a major role in farming and other economic sectors.

RECENT SITUATION

President Pohamba took over from independence fighter Sam Nujoma, who led the ruling SWAPO party until 2007. The opposition has only minor representation in parliament. In recent years supporters of land reform have become more vocal. The expropriation of white-owned farms began in 2005 and the government says it aims to resettle many thousands of landless citizens. Like its neighbours, Namibia's wellbeing is being threatened by the HIV/Aids epidemic, which is estimated to affect 25% of Namibians. Mr Nujoma made the fight against the disease a national priority. In the late 1990s secessionist troubles in the Caprivi Strip, in eastern Namibia, prompted thousands to flee to Botswana. In 2002 the government declared that the area was safe for tourists. Deserts occupy much of the country; their dunes take on shapes and colours according to the elements. The country also boasts game-rich grasslands and a semi-arid Central Plateau, large tracts of which are given over to livestock farming.

FACTS



- **Full name:** The Republic of Namibia
- **Population:** 2 Million (UN 2007)
- **Capital:** Windhoek
- **Area:** 824,292 sq km (318,261 sq miles)
- **Internet domain:** .na
- **International dialling code:** +264
- **Major religion:** Christianity
- **Major languages:** English (official), Afrikaans, German, Oshivambo, Herero, Nama

- **HDI value*¹:** 125. Namibia (0.650) [1. Iceland (0.968)] (2005)
- **Human Poverty Index (HPI-1)*²:** 51. Namibia (26.5) [1. Chad (56.9)] (2005)

- **Life expectancy at birth (years) :** 51.6
- **Probability of not surviving past 40 (%):** 35.9
- **Under-five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births):** 62 (2005)
- **HIV prevalence (% aged 15-49):** 15.3 (2007)

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Education

- **Combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio (%):**
 - **120. Namibia (64.7)** [1. Australia (113.0)] (2005)
- **Adult Literacy Rate: (% ages 15 and older):**
 - **75. Namibia (85.0)** [1. Georgia (100.0)] (2005)

Economy and Trade

- **GDP per capita:** No. of people lived below the national poverty line. (PPP US\$):
 - **78. Namibia (7,586)** [1. Luxembourg (60,228)] (2005)
- **GNI Per Capita:** **US \$2,370** (World Bank, 2005)
- **Gini Coefficient *³:** **1. Namibia (74.3) World's Largest.** [126. Denmark (24.7)] (2007)
- **Monetary unit:** 1 Namibian dollar = 100 cents
- **Main exports:** Diamonds, copper, gold, zinc, lead, uranium, livestock
- **CO₂ emissions share of world total (%):** **2.5 (2004)** [n/a (1990)]

Water, sanitation and nutritional status

- **Population without access to an improved water source (%):** **13**
- **Population using improved sanitation (%):** **25 (2004)** [24 (1990)]
- **Population Undernourished (% of total population):** **24 (2002-2004)** [34 (1990-1992)]

Politics

- **Government:** Swapo party
- **President:** Hifikepunye Pohamba
 - President Pohamba won a landslide victory in presidential elections in November 2004. Opposition parties disputed the outcome and demanded a recount.
- **Year Women received right to vote:** **1989**
- **Internally displaced people (thousands, 2006):** **n/a**



*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.