In general, information available as of 1 January 2003 was used in the preparation of The World Factbook 2003.

This page was last updated on 18 December, 2003.
Background:
Formerly the British protectorate of Bechuanaland, Botswana adopted its new name upon independence in 1966. Four decades of uninterrupted civilian leadership, progressive social policies, and significant capital investment have created one of the most dynamic economies in Africa. Mineral extraction, principally diamond mining, dominates economic activity, though tourism is a growing sector due to the country's conservation practices and extensive nature preserves. Botswana has the world's highest known rate of HIV/AIDS infection, but also one of Africa's most progressive and comprehensive programs for dealing with the disease.

Geography

Botswana

Location: Southern Africa, north of South Africa

Geographic coordinates: 22 00 S, 24 00 E

Map references: Africa

Area: total: 600,370 sq km
water: 15,000 sq km
land: 585,370 sq km

Area - comparative: slightly smaller than Texas

Land boundaries: total: 4,013 km
border countries: Namibia 1,360 km, South Africa 1,840 km, Zimbabwe 813 km

Coastline: 0 km (landlocked)

Maritime claims: none (landlocked)

Climate: semiarid; warm winters and hot summers

Terrain: predominantly flat to gently rolling tableland; Kalahari Desert in southwest

Elevation extremes: lowest point: junction of the Limpopo and Shashe Rivers 513 m
highest point: Tsodilo Hills 1,489 m

Natural resources: diamonds, copper, nickel, salt, soda ash, potash, coal, iron ore, silver

Land use: arable land: 0.61%
permanent crops: 0.01%
other: 99.38% (1998 est.)

Irrigated land: 10 sq km (1998 est.)
Natural hazards: periodic droughts; seasonal August winds blow from the west, carrying sand and dust across the country, which can obscure visibility

Environment - current issues: overgrazing; desertification; limited fresh water resources


signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note: landlocked; population concentrated in eastern part of the country

People - Botswana

Population: 1,573,267

note: estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2003 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 39.5% (male 314,764; female 307,024)
15-64 years: 56% (male 424,726; female 455,967)
65 years and over: 4.5% (male 30,599; female 40,187) (2003 est.)

Median age:
total: 19.1 years
male: 18.4 years
female: 19.8 years (2002)

Population growth rate: -0.55% (2003 est.)

Birth rate: 25.5 births/1,000 population (2003 est.)

Death rate: 31 deaths/1,000 population (2003 est.)

Net migration rate: 0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2003 est.)

Sex ratio:
at birth: 1.03 male(s)/female
under 15 years: 1.03 male(s)/female
15-64 years: 0.93 male(s)/female
65 years and over: 0.76 male(s)/female
total population: 0.96 male(s)/female (2003 est.)

Infant mortality rate:
total: 67.34 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 66.28 deaths/1,000 live births (2003 est.)
male: 68.36 deaths/1,000 live births
Life expectancy at birth:
- total population: 32.26 years
- male: 32.2 years
- female: 32.32 years (2003 est.)

Total fertility rate: 3.27 children born/woman (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate: 38.8% (2001 est.)

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS: 330,000 (2001 est.)

HIV/AIDS - deaths: 26,000 (2001 est.)

Nationality:
- noun: Motswana (singular), Batswana (plural)
- adjective: Motswana (singular), Batswana (plural)

Ethnic groups: Tswana (or Setswana) 79%, Kalanga 11%, Basarwa 3%, other, including Kgalagadi and white 7%

Religions: indigenous beliefs 85%, Christian 15%

Languages: English (official), Setswana

Literacy:
- definition: age 15 and over can read and write
- total population: 79.8%
- male: 76.9%
- female: 82.4% (2003 est.)

Government

Country name:
- conventional long form: Republic of Botswana
- conventional short form: Botswana
- former: Bechuanaland

Government type: parliamentary republic

Capital: Gaborone

Administrative divisions: 9 districts and four town councils*; Central, Francistown*, Gaborone*, Ghanzi, Kgalagadi, Kgatleng, Kweneng, Lobatse*, Northwest, Northeast, Selebi-Pikwe*, Southeast, Southern

Independence: 30 September 1966 (from UK)

National holiday:
Independence Day (Botswana Day), 30 September (1966)

**Constitution:**

March 1965, effective 30 September 1966

**Legal system:**

based on Roman-Dutch law and local customary law; judicial review limited to matters of interpretation; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

**Suffrage:**

18 years of age; universal

**Executive branch:**

*chief of state:* President Festus MOGAE (since 1 April 1998) and Vice President Seretse Ian KHAMA (since 13 July 1998); note - the president is both the chief of state and head of government  
*head of government:* President Festus MOGAE (since 1 April 1998) and Vice President Seretse Ian KHAMA (since 13 July 1998); note - the president is both the chief of state and head of government  
*cabinet:* Cabinet appointed by the president  
*elections:* president elected by the National Assembly for a five-year term; election last held 16 October 1999 (next to be held NA October 2004); vice president appointed by the president  
*election results:* Festus MOGAE elected president; percent of National Assembly vote - 54.3%

**Legislative branch:**

bicameral Parliament consists of the House of Chiefs (a largely advisory 15-member body consisting of the chiefs of the eight principal tribes, four elected subchiefs, and three members selected by the other 12 members) and the National Assembly (44 seats, 40 members are directly elected by popular vote and 4 are appointed by the majority party; members serve five-year terms)  
*elections:* National Assembly elections last held 16 October 1999 (next to be held NA October 2004)  
*election results:* percent of vote by party - BDP 54.3%, BNF 24.7%, other 21%; seats by party - BDP 33, BNF 6, other 1

**Judicial branch:**

High Court; Court of Appeal; Magistrates' Courts (one in each district)

**Political parties and leaders:**

Botswana Democratic Party or BDP [Festus MOGAE]; Botswana National Front or BNF [Otswaletse MOUPO]; Botswana Congress Party or BCP [Mokgweetsi KGOSIPULA]; Botswana Alliance Movement or BAM [Ephraim Lepetu SETSHWAEO]

*note:* a number of minor parties joined forces in 1999 to form the BAM but did not capture any parliamentary seats; the BAM parties are: the United Action Party [Ephraim Lepetu SETSHWAEO], the Independence Freedom Party or IFP [Motsamai MPHO], and the Botswana Progressive Union [D. K. KWELE]

**Political pressure groups and leaders:**

NA

**International organization participation:**

ACP, AfDB, C, ECA, FAO, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICCt, ICFTU, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, ILO, IMF, Interpol, IOC, ISO, ITU, NAM, OAU, OPCW, SACU, SADC, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WCO, WFTU,
Diplomatic representation in the US:

* chief of mission: Ambassador Lapologang Caesar LEKOA
  * chancery: 1531-1533 New Hampshire Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20036
  * FAX: [1] (202) 244-4164
  * telephone: [1] (202) 244-4990

Diplomatic representation from the US:

* chief of mission: Ambassador Joseph HUGGINS
  * embassy: address NA, Gaborone
  * mailing address: Embassy Enclave, P. O. Box 90, Gaborone
  * telephone: [267] 353982
  * FAX: [267] 312782

Flag description:
light blue with a horizontal white-edged black stripe in the center

Economy Botswana

Economy - overview:
Botswana has maintained one of the world's highest growth rates since independence in 1966. Through fiscal discipline and sound management, Botswana has transformed itself from one of the poorest countries in the world to a middle-income country with a per capita GDP of $9,500 in 2002. Two major investment services rank Botswana as the best credit risk in Africa. Diamond mining has fueled much of the expansion and currently accounts for more than one-third of GDP and for nine-tenths of export earnings. Tourism, subsistence farming, and cattle raising are other key sectors. On the downside, the government must deal with high rates of unemployment and poverty. Unemployment officially is 21%, but unofficial estimates place it closer to 40%. HIV/AIDS infection rates are the highest in the world and threaten Botswana's impressive economic gains. Long-term prospects are overshadowed by the prospects of a leveling off in diamond mining production.

GDP:
- purchasing power parity - $13.48 billion (2002 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:
- 4.2% (2002 est.)

GDP - per capita:
- purchasing power parity - $8,500 (2002 est.)

GDP - composition by sector:
- agriculture: 4%
- industry: 44% (including 36% mining)
- services: 52% (2001 est.)

Population below poverty line:
- 47%

Household income or consumption by percentage share:
- lowest 10%: NA%
- highest 10%: NA%

Inflation rate (consumer prices):
- 8.1% (2002 est.)
Labor force: 264,000 formal sector employees (2000)

Labor force - by occupation: NA

Unemployment rate: 40% (official rate is 21%) (2001 est.)

Budget: revenues: $2.3 billion
  expenditures: $2.4 billion, including capital expenditures of $NA (FY 01/02)

Industries: diamonds, copper, nickel, salt, soda ash, potash; livestock processing; textiles

Industrial production growth rate: 2.4% (2001 est.)

Electricity - production: 409.8 million kWh (2001)

Electricity - production by source: fossil fuel: 100%
  hydro: 0%
  other: 0% (2001)
  nuclear: 0%

Electricity - consumption: 1.564 billion kWh (2001)

Electricity - exports: 0 kWh (2001)

Electricity - imports: 1.183 billion kWh (2001)

Oil - production: 0 bbl/day (2001 est.)

Oil - consumption: 16,000 bbl/day (2001 est.)

Oil - exports: NA (2001)

Oil - imports: NA (2001)

Agriculture - products: livestock, sorghum, maize, millet, beans, sunflowers, groundnuts

Exports: $2.4 billion f.o.b. (2002 est.)

Exports - commodities: diamonds 90%, copper, nickel, soda ash, meat, textiles

Exports - partners: European Free Trade Association (EFTA) 87%, Southern African Customs Union
Imports: $1.9 billion f.o.b. (2002 est.)

Imports - commodities: foodstuffs, machinery, electrical goods, transport equipment, textiles, fuel and petroleum products, wood and paper products, metal and metal products

Imports - partners: Southern African Customs Union (SACU) 74%, EFTA 17%, Zimbabwe 4% (2000)

Debt - external: $360 million (2002)


Currency: pula (BWP)

Currency code: BWP


Fiscal year: 1 April - 31 March

Communications  Botswana

Telephones - main lines in use: 131,000 (September 2001)

Telephones - mobile cellular: 270,000 (September 2001)

Telephone system: general assessment: the system is expanding with the growth of mobile cellular service and participation in regional development
domestic: small system of open-wire lines, microwave radio relay links, and a few radiotelephone communication stations; mobile cellular service is growing fast
international: two international exchanges; digital microwave radio relay links to Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa; satellite earth station - 1 Intelsat (Indian Ocean)

Radio broadcast stations: AM 8, FM 13, shortwave 4 (2001)

Television broadcast stations: 1 (2001)

Internet country code: .bw

Internet Service Providers (ISPs): 11 (2001)

Internet users: 6/13/04 4:52 PM
Transportation

**Botswana**

**Railways:**
- total: 888 km
- narrow gauge: 888 km 1.067-m gauge (2002)

**Highways:**
- total: 10,217 km
- paved: 5,619 km
- unpaved: 4,598 km (1999)

**Waterways:**
- none

**Ports and harbors:**
- none

**Airports:**
- 86 (2002)

**Airports - with paved runways:**
- total: 10
  - 2,438 to 3,047 m: 2
  - 1,524 to 2,437 m: 7
  - 914 to 1,523 m: 1 (2002)

**Airports - with unpaved runways:**
- total: 76
  - 1,524 to 2,437 m: 3
  - 914 to 1,523 m: 55
  - under 914 m: 18 (2002)

Military

**Botswana**

**Military branches:**
- Botswana Defense Force (including Army and Air Wing), Botswana National Police

**Military manpower - military age:**
- 18 years of age (2003 est.)

**Military manpower - availability:**
- males age 15-49: 381,056 (2003 est.)

**Military manpower - fit for military service:**
- males age 15-49: 201,402 (2003 est.)

**Military manpower - reaching military age annually:**
- males: 20,476 (2003 est.)

**Military expenditures - dollar figure:**
- $207.3 million (FY02)
Military expenditures - percent of GDP:
3.5% (FY02)

Transnational Issues

Botswana

Disputes - international:
established a commission with Namibia to resolve small residual disputes along the Caprivi Strip, including the Situngu marshlands along the Linyanti River; downstream Botswana residents protest Namibia's planned construction of the Okavango hydroelectric dam on Popa Falls; dormant dispute remains where Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe boundaries converge

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