

Bioko (Eri, Fernando Poo)

Overview:

Bioko is a volcanic Island which is part of the African country of Equatorial Guinea.

Territory:

It is one of five islands, that together with the mainland territory, comprise the country of Equatorial Guinea. The 195-kilometer (120-mi.) coastline is steep and rugged in the south but lower and more accessible in the north. Bioko Island is roughly rectangular in shape, measuring 69 km from north to south, and 32km from east to west.

Location:

Bioko Island is part of a volcanic chain that extends diagonally across the Gulf of Guinea from the British island of St. Helena in the South Atlantic northeast toward Lake Chad. It is located 32 km off the coast of Cameroon in west central Africa and hosts the capital city of Malabo.

Latitude and Longitude:

3 50 N, 8 70 E

Time Zone:

GMT +1

Total Land Area:

2

EEZ:

0

Climate:

Bioko's high mountains lead to great variations in rainfall and temperature on the island. Because it is near the equator, the island is generally warm with temperatures near sea level varying between 17 and 34 degrees Celsius (63 to 92 degrees F), though it may get as low as 4 degrees C (39 F) at the top of Pico Basile. The single dry season runs from November through February. Prevailing winds from the southeast bring heavy rains to the southern end of the island, averaging 1,090 cm (429.1 in) per year. The northern end, shielded by the three peaks, is much drier with 193 cm (76.0 in) per year. Mean relative humidity along the coast is a muggy 84-90%.

Natural Resources:

Significant oil and natural gas fields. Alba, the country's largest natural gas field, contains 1.3 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of proven reserves, with probable reserves estimated at 4.4 Tcf or more. Recent production improvements at Alba resulted in average production of 50,000 bbl/d of natural gas by the end of 2004. This tropical island is one of the most beautiful and most biologically-significant places in all of Africa. It is home to Africa's greatest concentration of endangered primates and to more than fifty unique species of plants. During the dry season (November to February), butterflies gather in the rainforest and endangered marine turtles come ashore to nest on the black sand beaches. Nearly 200 species of birds fly amongst the island's three volcanic peaks. 1,105 plant species have been recorded on Bioko, 65 known mammals, and 144 birds (32% of which are endemic subspecies).

ECONOMY:

Total GDP:

Per Capita GDP:	
2001	250.00 USD

% of GDP per Sector:			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary

% of Population Employed by Sector			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary

External Aid/Remittances:

NDA

Growth:

56 % realized between 1996 and 1997 for (Equatorial Guinea)

Labour Force:

Unemployment	
Year:	Unemployment Rate (% of pop.)

Industry:

Currently developing a \$1.4 billion liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility on Bioko Island. Cacao and coffee are the leading exports

Niche Industry:

A 2,500 metric ton methanol plant with power capacity on Bioko, was established in 2001 and is intended to take methane gas from a gas field and



Official Currency:
(CFA) Franc

Banking and Insurance:

Number of Banks and Credit Unions: 1
Number of Agricultural Credit Unions:
Number of Insurance Companies:

Of the thirty banks operating in Central Africa, one operates in Malabo.

Financial Services:

Communications/E-Commerce:

A modernized telecommunications system is being expanded to far reaches of the country.

Public Ownership:

Land Use:

The natural vegetation on the island changes with altitude and, to a lesser extent, with precipitation. About half of the island has been cultivated at one time or another, usually for cocoa at the lower elevations, but now about 26% is under cultivation and another 19% has reverted to secondary forest. Because the terrain at higher altitudes is difficult and because there are relatively few large trees, logging has not been a serious threat to these forests. The natural vegetation is divided into four types: low land rainforest from 0 to 800 m above sea level (now 28% of the island's cover), montane rainforest from 800 m to 1400 m (now 19%), Schefflera forest from 1400 to 2600 m (now 10%), and heath and grassland from 2600 to 3000 m (limited to Pico Basile and less than 1%).

Agriculture/Forestry:

Some commercial logging was undertaken in the lowland forest of the southern half of the island during the early 1990's, but this has now ceased. The montane forest and alpine savannah have experienced relatively little physical disturbance aside from some coco-yam cultivation in the immediate vicinity of settlements.

Marine Activity:

Fishing:

A major fishing center, the chief catches being perch, tuna, mackerel, cod, pike, shark, and crayfish.

Marine Life:

Critical Issues:

Hunting for bushmeat is widespread and is currently considered the greatest threat to Biodiversity. The bark of the montane trees species, *Prunus africana* is utilized for the treatment of benign prostate hyperplasia, and has a current market value of around \$150 million per annum. Recent reports have indicated that the island of Bioko is becoming of increasing importance for the supply of *Prunus* bark to Europe and other countries.

JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES

Capital:

Malabo

Political System:

(Equatorial Guinea) Nominally multi-party Republic with strong domination by the executive branch. Executive: President (Chief of State) and a Council of Ministers appointed by the president. Legislative--100-member Chamber of People's Representatives (members directly elected by universal suffrage to serve five-year terms). Judicial--Supreme Tribunal. (Equatorial Guinea) President Brig Gen (Ret) Teodore Obiang Nguema Mbasogo

Political Parties:

(Equatorial Guinea) The ruling party is the Partido Democratico de Guinea Ecuatorial (PDGE), formed July 30, 1987. Numerous other parties were allowed to form in the early 1990s.

Important Legislation:

Constitution: Approved by national referendum November 17, 1991; amended January 1995.

Principal Taxes:

Associated Power:

Equatorial Guinea

Citizenship:

Paradiplomacy:

HUMAN RESOURCES

Percent population in agr/mining/fishing: 76% 1999 22% of 400,000 (Equatorial Guinea) = 88,000

1999			
Island	Area (km sq.)	Population	% of Total Population
Bioko	2,017	88,000	22%

Population:	
Year	Resident Population

Age of Population:	0-14	15-24	25-49	50-64	65 and up
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Migration:

The Fang and Bubi migrated there in the 17th century and to the main island of Fernando Po (now called Bioko) in the 19th century. Threats and physical attacks on Nigerian contract workers by government forces led to the Nigerian evacuation of all its citizens from Equatorial Guinea in 1976

Crude Birth Rate:

Life Expedctancy:

Crude Death Rate:

Ethnicity:

Primarily Bubi, some Fernandinos. The Bubi constitute 15% of the population of Equatorial Guinea, are indigenous to Bioko, and is now estimated to be 5,000 of the island's 90,000 people.

Class Division:

The Bubis still live on Bioko today, oppressed as a minority tribe under the dictator-president of the larger Fang tribe. Their numbers were seriously depleted under previous dictator Francisco Macias Nguema's systematic slaughter, which began shortly after the country's independence from Spain in 1968. Tens of thousands of Bubi, an estimated two-thirds of their population, were tortured, executed, beaten to death in labor camps, or managed to escape the island. Macias Nguema was executed during a 1979 coup by his nephew, current President Teodoro Obiang Nguema. Many Bubi today who fled Macias Nguema's murderous regime live in exile in Spain. Returning home to Bioko to the abject poverty and unstable politics still wrought by President Obiang's corrupt regime is an unattractive option. Those Bubis still living on Bioko walk cautiously through the political landmines. Second-generation exile Bubis are finding their way from Spain to the United States.

Languages:

Bubi, Fang, and Pidgin English

Religion:

Nominally Christian and predominantly Roman Catholic, pagan practices

Literacy:

Education System:

Total Pre-schools:()	
Total Primary Schools	
First Level:	
Second Level:	
Third Level:	
Total Secondary Schools:	
Total Professional Schools	
Universities:	

Number of Schools per Island:										
	Pre-school		Elementary			High-school		Prof.	University	
	Pub	Priv	1	2	3	Pub	Priv		Pub	Priv

Students Enrolled:					
Year:	Pre-School	Elementary	High-school	Prof.	University

Teachers							
Year	Pre-School	Elementary			High-School	Prof.	University
		1	2	3			

Medical Services:

HISTORY AND CULTURE

History:

The Portuguese explorer, Fernando Po (Ferna do Poo), seeking a route to India, is credited with having discovered the island of Bioko in 1471. He called it Formosa ("pretty flower"), but it quickly took on the name of its European discoverer. The Portuguese retained control until 1778. From 1827 to 1843, Britain established a base on the island to combat the slave trade. The Treaty of Paris settled conflicting claims to the mainland in 1900, and periodically, the mainland territories were united administratively under Spanish rule. Spain lacked the wealth and the interest to develop an extensive economic infrastructure in what was commonly known as Spanish Guinea during the first half of this century. However, through a paternalistic system, particularly on Bioko Island, Spain developed large cacao plantations for which thousands of Nigerian workers were imported as laborers. At independence in 1968, largely as a result of this system, Equatorial Guinea had one of the highest per capita incomes in Africa. Equatorial Guinea gained independence in 1968 after 190 years of Spanish rule. In September 1968, Francisco Macias Nguema was elected first president of Equatorial Guinea, and independence was granted in October. The Macias regime was characterized by abandonment of all government functions except internal security, which was accomplished by terror; this led to the death or exile of up to one-third of the country's population. Due to pilferage, ignorance, and neglect, the country's infrastructure--electrical, water, road, transportation, and health--fell into ruin. Religion was repressed, and education ceased. The private and public sectors of the economy were devastated. Nigerian contract laborers on Bioko, estimated to have been 60,000, left en masse in early 1976. The economy collapsed, and skilled citizens and foreigners left. Of course, the Macias dictatorship quickly ruined the positive economic development Guinea had experienced before 1968. With the evacuation of the Spaniards, the new republic lost much knowledge and capital. At the same time, the terror regime drained the country for the local intellectuals and capital. Most cocoa plantations (including the village cooperatives) were nationalized. However, the most fatal incident for the economy, probably was the evacuation of the Nigerian workers in 1976. The steadily deteriorating relationship with the exterior world also hindered foreign investments. The country now was without knowledge, capital and manpower to sustain an extensive cocoa production. Other industries, such as the coffee and oil palm production, livestock and logging, met the same fate. The Bubi people, which still preferred a livelihood outside the plantations, were now forcefully recruited to replace the Nigerians on the badly managed state farms. The national economy totally collapsed under these circumstances. The production of cocoa could not be sustained, and production shrunk from 38,000 tons in 1968 to only 2,340 tons in 1975! Coffee production equally shrunk from 8,500 tons in 1968 to 1,500 tons in 1978 and merely 400 tons in 1981. Other industries followed in line. Only logging could somehow sustain itself through enormous concessions to foreign companies (mainly French). This trend is mirrored in the GDP per capita estimations for the period, which shrunk from 300 US\$ in 1968 to 70 US\$ in 1975.

Referenda:

Recent Significant Events:

An invasion was launched in January 1998 by the Movement for the Self-Determination of the People of Bioko (MAIB). This small group of the indigenous Bubi people of the island was formed in 1993 and advocates outright secession of Bioko Island. Corruption and a dysfunctional judicial system severely disrupt development of Equatorial Guinea's economy and society. Prime Minister Angel Serafin Seriche Dougan's government of January 1998 was appointed to rid the country of ministers who were abusing the system and has been given a mandate to end corruption and install good governance. He introduced legislation to fight corruption and calling for the immediate dismissal of crooked civil servants. Although nominally a constitutional democracy since 1991, the 1996 and 2002 presidential elections - as well as the 1999 legislative elections - were widely seen as being flawed. The president controls most opposition parties through the judicious use of patronage.

Music, Dance, Handicraft and Patrimony:

The capital island of Bioko has largely been influenced by Spanish customs and traditions during the colonial period. Bubi folklore consists of stories of the animals in the jungle that are delightful entertainment as well as interesting records of the animals that lived on the island and the Bubi's impressions of their personalities and habits. Other folk stories tell of sorcerer mischief and of witches trying to snatch children. Still others explain everyday things people might wonder about. The balÃ© dance is performed along the coast throughout the year and on Bioko around Christmas.

Sources:

* Last access April 1, 2006 African Cities.net <http://www.malabo.info/php/malfact.php?name=Malabo%20Fact> Afrol News http://www.afrol.com/Countries/Equatorial_Guinea/eqg_history.htm Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program <http://www.bioko.org> (Accessed Nov. 13) Bubis on Fernando Po <http://www.thebubis.com/> Canadian Content <http://www.canadiancontent.net/profiles/Equatorial-Guinea.html> Chemicals Technology <http://www.chemicals-technology.com/projects/bioko/> Economics of the primate Trade in Bioko www.Conservation-strategy.org Encyclopedia Britannica <http://www.britannica.com> Energy Information Administration <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/eqguinea.html> Facts About Africa <http://abbott-infotech.co.za/facts%20about%20the%20continent%20of%20africa.html> Fact Monster <http://www.factmonster.com/ipka/A0107493.html> Gulf of Guinea Conservation Group http://www.ggcg.st/bioko/bioko_prunus.htm Island Law <http://www.macmeekin.com/Library/Jurisds/Bioko.htm> Islands of Sao Tome, Principe, and Annobon, West Africa http://volcano.und.nodak.edu/vwdocs/volc_images/africa/wafrica.html Republic of EG Culture and Environment Cultura y Naturaleza http://www.orgitecture.com/guinea/event1390/event_show.htm?doc_id=2715 Trades Compliance Center http://www.mac.doc.gov/tcc/data/commerce_html/countries/countries/equatorialguinea/countrycommercial/1999/text.html UN System -wide Earthwatch EARTHWATCH Web Site <http://islands.unep.ch/IPK.htm#594> US Department of State <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/7221.htm> Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bioko>

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Institute of Island Studies
University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI)
550 University Ave
Charlottetown, PE, Canada, C1A 4P3

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