

# Burkina Faso

**2016 Country Review**

**COUNTRY WATCH**

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# Chapter 1

## Country Overview

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## Country Overview

### BURKINA FASO

A landlocked country in Western Africa, Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta) achieved independence from France in 1960, but the country spent many of its post-independence years under military rule with repeated coups during the 1970s and 1980s. The current president, Blaise Compaore, came to power in a bloody 1987 military coup that involved the assassination of then-President Thomas Sankara and other officials. Blaise Compaore seized control of the government, and eventually executed his co-conspirators in the coup for plotting against him. Once he was established with the power of the presidency, Compaore, unlike his predecessor, began to attract foreign investment and expanded the private sector. His economic embrace of neo-liberal policies advocated by international financial institutions has led many countries to turn a blind eye to the manner in which he came to power. However, the truth was that even with these moves, Burkina Faso has remained one of the poorest countries in the world. Although a multiparty system was established, Compaore managed to win every election to date. His latest efforts to hang onto power after almost three decades in the office of the presidency was ironically the cause of his fall from grace. With a power chasm opening up, the military seized power in what could only be understood as a coup d'etat. While the people of Burkina Faso had participated in an uprising intended to protect their democracy, they had instead been faced with betrayal by the military, who exploited the public discontent to seize power for itself. International pressure along with difficult negotiations led to the development of a transitional plan aimed at returning Burkina Faso to democratic order. The election of Roch Marc Christian Kabore as president in late 2015 was the culmination of that process.

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## Key Data

Key Data	
<b>Region:</b>	Africa
<b>Population:</b>	18931686
<b>Climate:</b>	Tropical; warm, dry winters; hot, wet summers.
<b>Languages:</b>	French (Official) Tribal languages belonging to the Sudanic family
<b>Currency:</b>	1 CFAF = 100 centimes
<b>Holiday:</b>	Anniversary of the Revolution, 4 August (1983)
<b>Area Total:</b>	274200
<b>Area Land:</b>	273800
<b>Coast Line:</b>	0

## Burkina Faso

### Country Map



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## Africa

### Regional Map

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# **Chapter 2**

## **Political Overview**

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## History

Around 1100 in the common era, or C.E., the Bobo, Lobi and Gurunsi peoples primarily inhabited present-day Burkina Faso. After that period, invaders from present-day Ghana conquered central and eastern Burkina Faso. These invaders, the empire-building Mossi and Gurma people, are believed to have originally come from central or eastern Africa.

By the 14<sup>th</sup> century the conquerors established their Mossi states of Ouagadougou, Yatenga and Tengkodogo in the center and the state of Gourma in the east. Until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Mossi dominated Burkina Faso. These conquerors were far outnumbered by their subjects, but by using religion (based on ancestor worship) and a complex administrative system of governance, allowing for some regional autonomy, the Mossi created a powerful state that endured for 800 years. At its peak, the Mossi region was divided into several provinces that were further divided into 300 districts.

For centuries, the Mossi were both farmer and soldier. Mossi states had strong armies that included cavalry units, and were able to repel most attacks by the powerful Malian and Songhai empires from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Mossi people were able to defend their religious beliefs and social structure against forcible attempts to convert them to Islam by Muslims from the northwest.

Near the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the French gained power over the region. The French arrived in 1895 claiming the area under the treaties of the Berlin Conference establishing European control over Africa. First the French peacefully negotiated a protectorate over Yetenga, and then in 1896 they forcibly occupied Ouagadougou. In 1897 they annexed Gourma and the lands of the Bobo, Lobi and Gurunsi peoples. An Anglo-French agreement in 1898 established the boundary with the Gold Coast (now Ghana).

Mossi resistance ended with the capture of their capital at Ouagadougou. The region of present day Burkina Faso was administered as part of the French colony of Soudan (then called Upper Senegal-Niger and now mostly part of Mali and not to be confused with Sudan) until 1919. Then in 1919, certain provinces from Cote d'Ivoire were united as a separate protectorate called the Upper Volta in the French West Africa Federation. In 1932, the new colony was divided among Cote d'Ivoire, Soudan, and Niger for administrative convenience. It was later reconstituted in 1937

as an administrative division called the Upper Coast.

After World War II, the Mossi renewed their pressure for separate territorial status and on Sept. 4, 1947, Upper Volta became a French West African territory again in its own right.

A revision in the organization of French Overseas Territories began with the passage of the "Loi Cadre" (Basic Law) of July 23, 1956. This act was followed by re-organizational measures approved by the French parliament early in 1957 that ensured a large degree of self-government for individual territories.

Upper Volta became an autonomous republic in the French community on Dec. 11, 1958 and achieved full independence on Aug. 5, 1960. The country changed its name to Burkina Faso in the 1980s.

*Note on History: In certain entries, open source content from the State Department Background Notes and Country Guides have been used. A full listing of sources is available in the Bibliography.*

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## Political Conditions

### Post-Independence Developments

The first president, and leader of the Voltaic Democratic Union (known by the acronym UDV), Maurice Yaméogo established a strong presidential government. The 1960 constitution provided for election by universal suffrage of a president and a national assembly for five-year terms. Soon after coming to power, Yaméogo reduced the traditional power of the Mossi states and banned all political parties other than the UDV.

His authority soon weakened because of ethnic conflict and the poor performance of the economy. In late 1965, Yaméogo was overwhelmingly re-elected president. But in January 1966 at the height of demonstrations and general strikes against the government's austerity program, by students, labor unions, and civil servants, Yaméogo was ousted in a bloodless coup by a group of army officers headed by Lt. Col. Aboukar Sangoulé Lamizana.

This military coup deposed Yaméogo, suspended the constitution, dissolved the National Assembly, temporarily prohibited any political activity, and officially placed Lt. Col. Aboukar Sangoulé at the head of a government of senior army officers. The army remained in power for four years. On

June 14, 1970, in a national referendum, the Voltans ratified a new constitution that established a four-year transition period toward complete civilian rule.

Lamizana was to remain in power until 1975, when an elected president would replace him. The UDV did well in the 1970 legislative elections and Lamizana appointed Gérard Kango Ouédraogo to be the prime minister. In 1974, the army headed by Lamizana, again intervened in the political process, dissolving the national assembly, ousting Ouédraogo, and suspending the 1970 constitution.

Lamizana remained in power throughout the 1970s as president of military or mixed civil-military governments. After the conflict over the 1970 constitution, a new constitution was written and approved in 1977. Lamizana was re-elected in open elections in 1978.

During the 1960s and early 1970s, Upper Volta received a large amount of financial aid from France. During this period, Upper Volta was suffering from a long-term drought, mainly in the north. The drought began in the late 1960s and continued into the 1970s. Upper Volta was also involved in a border dispute with Mali in 1974 over land containing mineral reserves. The dispute resolved in a national strike and demands for higher wages and a return to civilian rule. Lamizana's government also faced problems with the country's traditionally powerful trade unions.

A new constitution was promulgated in 1977, and multiparty presidential and legislative elections were held in 1978. Lamizana was elected back to office; however in 1980, he was overthrown in a bloodless military coup.

On Nov. 25, 1980, Col. Saye Zerbo deposed President Lamizana and established the Military Committee of Recovery for National Progress as the supreme governmental authority, thereby eradicating the 1977 constitution. Since then, the country has been under military rule.

Colonel Zerbo's tenure was characterized by labor unrest. He encountered resistance from trade unions and was eventually overthrown two years later, on Nov. 7, 1982, by Maj. Jean-Baptiste Ouédraogo and the Council of Popular Salvation (CSP). The CSP continued to ban political parties and organizations, while promising an eventual transition to civilian rule and a new constitution.

### The Sankara Years: Movement to the Left

Ouédraogo's tenure proved short-lived as well. Factional infighting developed between moderates in the CSP and radicals. Ouédraogo was ousted in a bloody coup led by Capt. Thomas Sankara, who cultivated ties with Libya and Ghana. He adopted a policy of nonalignment with Western nations. While respected in Upper Volta, Sankara and his Marxist-Leninist administration were not well received by the United States.

After the coup, Sankara formed the National Council for the Revolution, with himself as president. Sankara also established Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) to "mobilize the masses" and implement the CNR's revolutionary programs.

Nevertheless, Sankara adopted a more liberal policy toward the opposition and increased the government's focus on economic development. In a symbolic rejection of Upper Volta's colonial past, Sankara changed the country's name to Burkina Faso in August 1984. The new name Burkina Faso is a composite of local languages and roughly translated as "the country of incorruptible men living in the land of their ancestors."

With his symbolic changes Sankara sought by word, deed and example to mobilize the masses and launch a massive bootstrap development movement. Many of the strict austerity measures taken by Sankara, however, met with growing resistance. Despite his initial popularity and personal charisma, problems began to surface in the implementation of the revolutionary ideals.

The internal political struggle and Sankara's leftist rhetoric led to his arrest and subsequent efforts to bring about his release, directed by Capt. Blaise Compaoré. This release effort resulted in yet another military coup d'etat on Aug. 4, 1983.

Sankara was restored to power. In 1986, he dissolved his military cabinet and appointed civil servants to government ministries. Subsequently Sankara proposed the formation of a single political party. The dispute with Mali over the Agache border was also revived in 1985.

The CNR, whose exact membership remained secret until the end, contained two small intellectual Marxist-Leninist groups. Sankara, Compaoré, Capt. Henri Zongo, and Maj. Jean-Baptiste Boukary Lengani, all leftist military officers, dominated the regime.

The CDRs, formed as popular mass organizations, deteriorated in some areas into gangs of armed thugs and clashed with several trade unions. Tensions over the repressive tactics of the government and its overall direction mounted steadily.

### Compaoré in Power

On Oct. 15, 1987, Sankara and other officials were assassinated in a bloody coup and Capt. Blaise Compaoré seized control of the government. Compaoré, unlike his predecessor, began to attract foreign investment and expanded the private sector.

Compaoré, Capt. Henri Zongo, and Maj. Jean-Baptiste Boukary Lengani formed the Popular Front, which pledged to continue and pursue the goals of the revolution and to "rectify" Sankara's

"deviations" from the original aims. The new government, realizing the need for popular support, tacitly moderated many of Sankara's policies. As part of a much-discussed political "opening" process, several political organizations, including three non-Marxist groups, were accepted under an umbrella political organization created in June 1989 by the Popular Front.

Some members of the leftist "Organisation pour le Democratie Populaire/Movement du Travail" were against the admission of non-Marxist groups. On Sept. 18, while Compaoré was returning from a two-week trip to Asia, Lengani and Zongo were accused of plotting to overthrow the Popular Front. They were arrested and summarily executed the same night. Upon his return, Compaoré reorganized the government, appointed several new ministers, and assumed the portfolio of minister of military and defense.

On Dec. 23, 1989, a presidential security detail arrested about 30 civilians and military personnel accused of plotting a coup d'etat in collaboration with the Burkinabe external opposition.

In 1990, Compaoré's Popular Front held its first National Congress, which formed a committee to draft a national constitution. The constitution was approved by referendum in 1991. In 1992, Compaoré was elected president, running unopposed following the opposition's boycott of the election, which was due to Compaoré's refusal to accede to some of its demands. Compaoré was immediately accused of reviving the cronyisms of Burkina Faso's pre-revolutionary days through his consolidation of power.

The opposition did participate in the following year's legislative elections, in which the "Organisation pour le Democratie Populaire/Movement du Travail" (Organization for People's Democracy/Labor Movement or ODP/MT) won a majority of seats.

In February 1996, the ruling ODP/MT merged with several small opposition parties to form the Congress for Democracy and Progress. This effectively co-opted much of what little viable opposition to Compaoré existed. The remaining opposition parties merged into larger groups in preparation for the 1997 legislative elections and 1998 presidential elections. Also in February 1996, Kadré Désiré Ouédraogo was appointed prime minister. He has focused on the revitalization of the economy.

In January 1997, several changes were made to the electoral system. The number of provinces was increased from 30 to 45, and the number of seats in the parliament was raised to 111. Also among the changes to the electoral system, the president was now no longer restricted to a single term.

In the legislative elections of May 11, 1997, the "Congrès pour la Démocratie et le Progrès" (Congress for Democracy and Progress or CDP) received 68.6 percent of the vote, winning 101 seats. The "Parti pour la Démocratie et le Progrès" (Party for Democracy and Progress or PDP)

garnered 10.1 percent of the vote and won six seats. The "Rassemblement Démocratique Africain" (African Democratic Rally or UDV/RDA) and the "Alliance pour la Démocratie et la Fédération" (Alliance for Democracy and Federation or ADF) each won two seats.

### Political Dissonance

Oct. 15, 1997, was marked by a formal declaration of ten years service by President Compaoré. "Sankarists" (supporters of the late Thomas Sankara), however, used the opportunity to revisit the late president's assassination and pay tribute to his achievements. Thousands of people made the pilgrimage to the popular slain leader's grave and the Burkinabe press dedicated pages to Sankara's life, achievements and legacy, acknowledging him as a "national hero." As support for Sankara grew, deeper skepticism about the role of his former friend Compaoré in his death began to surface.

The discovery of popular anti-government journalist Norbert Zongo's death in December 1998 brought students and opposition leaders to the street in protest and sparked a battle against government corruption. Zongo -- the editor of the magazine called "L'Independent" -- and three other people, were found burned to death in an abandoned car outside the capital on Dec. 13, 1998. He had been investigating the murder of David Ouédraogo, the chauffeur of President Blaise Compaoré's younger brother, Francois. An independent inquiry identified six presidential guardsmen as being involved in the Ouédraogo's death.

In response to the demonstrations and international pressure, the government established an independent commission to investigate Zongo's death. In May 1999, the commission reported that because of his investigations into Ouédraogo's death, presidential guards had killed Zongo. Students rallied again calling for the arrest of the guards. A more detailed report by this committee, the "Commission d'enquete Independante," concluded that indeed Zongo was murdered in a savage way, the murder was carefully planned in advance, and six members of Compaore's "Regiment de la Securite Presidentielle" were involved with the murder.

Meanwhile, the government had closed schools on April 13, 1999, following demonstrations marked by violence in Ouagadougou and other towns. The demonstrations occurred during a general strike launched on April 10, 1999, by a group of opposition parties, trade unions and NGOs known as "Le Collectif" in protest against the lack of progress in the investigations into the death of Norbert Zongo. The government reopened the schools on April 17, 1999, but secondary and university students refused to attend classes unless students jailed during the protests along with the main leaders of the "Le Collectif" were released.

"Le Collectif," a coalition of opposition members, journalists and human rights activists also called for the arrest of the guards. Three members of this group, including opposition leader Herman

Yameogo, were arrested following these demands. In June, in an effort to appease demands of students and other protestors, President Compaoré announced the formation of an investigative committee to focus on crime.

Presumably in response to increased dissatisfaction, the government began an initiative to promote unity and national reconciliation. In August 1999, the ruling Congress for Democracy and Progress Party shuffled its party leadership with former Prime Minister Roch Marc Christian Kabore replacing both the party president, Arsene Bongersan, and Secretary General Simon Compaoré. This was generally seen as a move to promote a more moderate image of the CDP.

Shortly after Kabore's appointment, Prime Minister Ouédraogo called for dialogue between the ruling parties and the opposition parties regarding the formation of a broad-based government. "Le Collectif" refused to participate in a coalition until the government had brought the murderers of Norbert Zongo and David Ouédraogo to justice and government impunity had ended. In October, after convincing the Greens and the Movement for Tolerance and Progress to join the new government, Prime Minister Ouédraogo reshuffled his cabinet and formed committees to address government reconciliation and reform of the justice and electoral systems.

Meanwhile, the last presidential election was held on Nov. 15, 1999. Blaise Compaoré was reelected for another seven-year term with an overwhelming 87.5 percent of the vote. By the end of 1999 and into 2000, however, the government of President Compaoré faced a growing crisis of legitimacy. Beyond his strong-handed presidency, this crisis initially stemmed from the respective deaths of Thomas Sankara (mentioned above) and Norbert Zongo.

Demonstrations by both students and opposition members increased as the one-year anniversary of the death of Norbert Zongo approached and suspects in the case had not yet been arrested. In anticipation of demonstrations, schools in the Kadrogo region closed prior to the anniversary. On Dec. 13, 1999, tens of thousands of people gathered in the streets of the capital to remember Norbert Zongo.

In a statement, "Le Collectif" demanded that Francois Compaoré and six guards suspected of killing Zongo be arrested, tried and called for an immediate and complete reform of Burkina Faso's justice system. It also said that "the militias recruited and led for the most part by government ministers, deputies and mayors should be disarmed." While three of the presidential guards were arrested for their role in the killing of Ouédraogo case, none were arrested in conjunction with Zongo's death at the time. This further outraged the president's critics and the media. In a 1999 report, a council of elder statesmen including former presidents proposed a government of national unity as a way out of the country's political quagmire, but Compaoré did not show a willingness to share power.

Compaoré spent much of 2000 at the private zoo on his estate in Ziniaré. In October 2000, his

cabinet director, Elie Sarre, died suddenly. In a major blow to his position, his long-time supporter, Prime Kadré Désiré Ouédraogo, resigned, taking his cabinet with him. He specifically accused the president of avoiding the issue of Zongo's murder. The military itself, long a base of support, fractured as older officers continued to support Compaoré but younger officers became increasingly and openly critical.

Throughout 1999 and 2000, Burkina Faso's growing civil society continued to show discomfort with the alleged corruption of President Compaoré's regime. Labor unions held general strikes in June and August 1999 in demand of higher wages and protesting job cuts and privatization. In July 1999, soldiers called a strike demanding housing allowance arrears. Burkina Faso's state companies and two main banks went on a two-day strike in late June 2000. The country's seven labor federations and six autonomous unions organized the strike, as a show of unity that, according to the media, the labor sector had not seen since 1975.

Lingani Soumaila, the administrative secretary at the "Confederation Nationale des Travailleurs Burkinabes", called it a warning strike with the intention to draw the authorities attention to a number of things. The strikers' main demands included wage increases, and the scrapping of proposed public service reforms that, the unions say, would result in some public servants becoming contract workers and weaken employees' right to strike. Another demand was for unpunished crimes to be fully investigated, including the murders of Ouédraogo and Zongo. On July 15, 2000 soldiers demonstrated in the main city of Ouagadougou to pressure the government for the reimbursement of withheld housing allowances but suspended their protest after receiving assurances that the matter would be settled. The soldiers threatened to demonstrate again on July 22, 2000 if their demand for the repayment of the allowance was not met.

On Dec. 6, 2000, students demonstrated against new measures at the University of Ouagadougou that they considered draconian. These reforms included new scoring methods and armed police squads on campus. While the demonstrations themselves may have been somewhat routine, the response from President Compaoré was not. The president used the opportunity to ban all public demonstrations in Burkina Faso.

On Dec. 12, 2000, the organizing committee of the International Festival for Freedom of Expression and Press Freedom in West Africa decided to honor the second anniversary of the death of Zongo by placing the first stone at his memorial pillar in Sapouy (about 70 miles from Ouagadougou). Police stopped the committee three miles from its destination. Journalists from throughout the subcontinent were on-hand to record the intransigence of the police under the new ban on demonstrations. President Compaoré made a statement that the ban was put in place for the protection of public order.

On Dec. 14, 2000, police clashed with demonstrators in the streets of Ouagadougou and Koudougou (the birthplace of Norbert Zongo). The "Collection Against Impunity (CEI)," an

organization fighting for media rights and the expansion of democracy in Burkina Faso, vowed to continue its gatherings in the name of freedom. For his part, President Compaoré denounced "the extremism of associations and political parties" en masse as challenges to state security.

On Feb. 7, 2001, the first charges against a presidential guard for the killing of Zongo were made by the CEI against Warrant Officer Marcel Kafando. This fueled speculation that the president himself was involved in the killings as Kafando was a head of the "Regiment de la Securite Presidentille" and as such could not have acted without the agreement of his superiors. (Note: Kafando had been convicted in 2000 of the killing of the chauffeur to the president's brother.)

In life, Norbert Zongo was considered to have used his writing to illuminate the heart of Burkinabe society. In his death, Zongo became a martyr. He has come to symbolize the freedom that much of society has been seeking. Yet, as long as President Compaoré views this freedom as a threat to public order, it was expected that he would continue to react to public actions by constituent groups with increasing the presence of force -- not decreasing it.

On March 31, 2001, President Compaoré declared "National Pardon Day." The spirit of the holiday was to offer a blanket act of state contrition. Sankarists, human rights advocates, and supporters of the late Zongo, all accused the government of seeking a bid for impunity. Those convinced that the president was involved in Zongo's death see this measure as a direct attempt to subvert the quest for truth, especially given the fact that the president granted himself and his brother Francois Compaoré immunity in the Zongo case one month earlier.

### Democratic Reforms

While critics claimed that the government lacks legitimacy and accused it of both political subversion and corruption, President Compaoré has instituted numerous democratic reforms. These reforms, political and institutional in nature, have constructed a new political order out of the revolutionary themes of Oct. 15, 1987, coup. Compaoré instituted multipartyism in 1990 and a democratic constitution in 1991. The institutions of the state have gone through democratic reforms; there has been freer and more transparent governance made possible through the expansion of freedoms of the press, regularized elections, an improved system of justice, the promulgation of a democratic culture, and an institutional recognition of the equality of women. Yet, for all these changes, President Compaoré has succeeded in maintaining a stronghold on power.

The 2002 legislative elections reflected the commitment of the government and opposition to stay on the democratic path. On Jan. 15, 2002, the National Independent Electoral Committee launched its voter registration campaign. Due to poor voter registration, the government delayed the polling day, originally slated for April 28, to May 5 to encourage more of its citizens to participate in the

democratic process. More significantly, the opposition, which for years had boycotted the polls, fully participated in the elections as well. This resulted in 12 opposition parties winning 54 out of 111 national assemblies, giving the opposition opportunities to command an active and diverse political voice into Burkina Faso affairs. Furthermore, election observers, while noting some minor irregularities on polling day, praised the electorate and political candidates for their relatively smooth and peaceful conduct during the elections.

The new government has set forth a political mandate that calls on more democratic and social reform, including much needed judicial reform. In June 2002, a new 30-member cabinet, including a new ministry for human rights promotion, was formed. No members of the opposition were included in the cabinet.

The maintenance of President Compaoré's regime would depend on his ability to regain legitimacy in the face of a strong and rising civil society challenging his authority, and his ability to stem a rising economic crisis cited by his detractors and his ability to appease challenges from supporters by providing them increases in their quality of life.

### Political and Social Developments

There are a number of social issues plaguing the country, the most critical of these being AIDS and poverty. Donor organizations and countries continue to assist Burkina Faso in its fight against AIDS; however, the epidemic continues to grow at an alarming rate. According to a report by the United Nations, ten percent of the adult population is infected with the AIDS virus. At the 12th International Conference on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases held in Ouagadougou, President Compaore called AIDS a developmental crisis. AIDS affects the part of the population that is most economically viable and it is responsible for thousands of children being orphaned each year, hindering the economic and social development to this already impoverished country.

According to the United Nations Development Program, 45 percent of the population lives on less than one United States dollar per day. However, the government has made significant steps to adopt the economic and social policies suggested by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in order to qualify for the HIPC Initiative debt reduction program. The IMF and World Bank have recognized Burkina Faso's commitment to poverty reduction and sound state fiscal management and as such have stated they will continue to assist the country in its development.

By late 2002 and well into 2003, Burkina Faso was accused of harboring dissidents and supporting rebels from neighboring Cote d'Ivoire, as that country underwent political crisis. For its part, Burkina Faso said it was simply trying to avert a humanitarian crisis and that it had a vested interest in the situation in Cote d'Ivoire, which is home to millions of Burkinabes. As the conflict in

Cote d'Ivoire increased, reports of xenophobia and attacks against foreigners, such as Burkinabes, were reported. Bilateral relations were strained when an Ivorian film was not shown at Burkina Faso's world famous international film festival. In protest, Cote d'Ivoire boycotted the event.

In October 2003, Tidiane Pare, an official with the Ministry of Agriculture, Hydraulic and Fishery Resource was murdered. Pare was shot at point blank and disemboweled. He claimed to have received death threats in the months preceding his murder.

Also in October 2003, 12 men were arrested in connection with an alleged plot to overthrow President Compaore. Those detained included Army Captain Luther Ouali Diapagri of the Burkina Faso Trade Ministry, Reverend Pascal Israel Pare, and 10 former members of the Presidential Guard. Defense Minister Kouame Louguet was later held in connection with the plot. Immediately following the arrests it was alleged that Cote d'Ivoire and Togo had provided assistance to the accused. The governments of both countries denied having any part in the plot. The suspected coup plotters went on trial in early April 2004. The defendants, with the exception of Louguet, admitted to plotting Compaore's deposition. Six of the defendants were acquitted while Ouali, the ringleader of the group, was sentenced to ten years in prison and the rest were given lighter sentences. Ouali stated that he had been frustrated with the Compaore government's refusal to build a strong democracy and felt his goals had been reached by having his grievances aired before the nation.

The allegations of Cote d'Ivoire's involvement in the attempted coup only strained relations further between the two neighbors. The border between the two countries was scheduled to be opened in mid-August 2004 after being closed for nearly a year. The reopening was postponed for the third time when the Burkina Faso government accused Cote d'Ivoire of mistreating Burkinabe's during the conflict in that country. Cote d'Ivoire returned with allegations that Burkina Faso had allowed rebels to operate from its territory. In June 2004, Burkina Faso accused Cote d'Ivoire of violating its airspace. Cote d'Ivoire officials quickly denied the claim. The following month the two governments agreed to make efforts to mend relations and President Compaore agreed to participate in a summit of African leaders intended to resume the peace process in Cote d'Ivoire.

Compaore's cabinet saw some changes in early 2004. In January, Defense Minister Kouame Louguet was sacked upon his arrest in connection with the plot to overthrow Compaore. Later that month Compaore appointed Cabinet head Yero Boli Defense Minister; former Secretary of Culture Joseph Kahoun was appointed Information Minister; Laurent Sedogo was appointed Minister for the Environment; and a new post was created - Deputy Technical Education minister - and was filled by former Secretary General for the Civil Service, Youma Zerbo.

In July 2004, eight people were killed and several injured in ethnic violence between Fulani herdsmen and Gourmantches farmers in eastern Burkina Faso. Gourmantches villagers were incensed at the release of four Fulani who were accused of murdering a farmer and stealing several

thousand dollars.

From 2004 into 2005, the main challenge facing Burkina Faso -- one of the world's poorest countries -- was famine. Thanks to locusts and drought, over half a million people lost their crops in Burkina Faso during this period. Because most people of this region of Africa rely on subsistence farming, it means that the majority will have little money to purchase food. In fact, the World Food Programme (WFP), has said that over one million Burkinabe will be in need of food assistance. The problem was exacerbated by the fact that many would have to sell their cattle -- their most prized possessions -- in order to purchase grain at inflated prices. In fact, selling a cow can often only provide food for a family for a few days. Desperate for food, many rely on a diet of wild grass and milk from remaining cattle. With no money left for medicine, there is no way to fight prevalent diseases of the region, such as malaria. In early 2006, an outbreak of meningitis affected the region, including Burkina Faso. The effects of famine and diseases on the people of Burkina Faso promise to be lethal in the immediate future.

### Special Entry: Debt Relief

On June 11, 2005, at a pre-G8 summit meeting in London, world leaders agreed to write off \$40 billion in debt owed by the world's poorest countries. Under the plan, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the African Development Fund would write off 100 percent of the money owed to them by 18 countries. In about one year to 18 months, another nine countries would also benefit from debt relief. Then, eleven other countries would be eligible for such relief, provided they successfully dealt with corruption and met targets for good governance. With those additional two phases, the entire plan would involve \$55 billion in debt relief.

The countries benefiting immediately from the plan expressed gratitude that they would no longer be saddled with debilitating debt and that they could, instead, work toward economic development. Anti-poverty activists also expressed support for the plan but said that more countries should also be able to benefit.

With the plan for debt relief agreed upon, British Prime Minister Tony Blair traveled to Moscow on June 12, 2005, for another meeting in a series of pre-G8 summit talks with world leaders. On the agenda were matters such as African aid and development, as well as transnational measures to deal with climate change. The United Kingdom, which holds the presidency of the G8 grouping of the world's eight wealthiest countries, was hoping to advance a significant increase in developmental aid to help benefit the world's most impoverished countries, especially in Africa.

*Editor's Note:* Twenty-seven countries, which are eligible for debt relief under the HIPC (highly-indebted poor countries initiative), are listed following, with the 18 countries qualifying for immediate debt relief identified by asterisk: Benin\*, Bolivia\*, Burkina Faso\*, Cameroon, Chad,

Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana\*, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Guyana\*, Honduras\*, Madagascar\*, Malawi, Mali\*, Mauritania\*, Mozambique\*, Nicaragua\*, Niger\*, Rwanda\*, Sao Tome, Senegal\*, Sierra Leone, Tanzania\*, Uganda\*, and Zambia.\*

### Recent Presidential Elections

In November 2005, Burkina Faso held presidential elections. President Compaore was seeking another term in office. There had been a constitutional limit of two presidential terms in effect, however, the Constitutional Court ruled that the president could run for office again. It was a decision decried by many in the opposition.

Turnout was 57.7 percent on November 13, 2005. When the presidential poll ended, President Compaore had won a third straight term in office. Compaore secured a commanding victory with more than 80 percent of the votes cast. One opponent, Benewende Stanislas Sankara, garnered close to five percent of the vote share. Sankara represented the Union for Rebirth / Sankarist Movement, known in French as Union pour la Renaissance / Mouvement Sankariste. There were 11 other candidates contesting the election, none of whom acquired more than three percent respectively. Opposition factions alleged fraud after the election results were made known, however, official appeals had to be addressed and dealt with by the Constitutional Court. To date no complaints have changed the election outcome. As well, supporters of the president pointed to pre-election polls that showed him with support of the majority of the population. Analysts also said that Compaore benefitted from the fact that the opposition was divided.

### Recent Political Developments

In mid-2006, the murder of journalist, Norbert Zongo, took center stage when a judge dismissed charges against the only suspect charged in the case. Media freedom associations and human rights groups decried the decision to drop the charges against the suspect, Marcel Kafondo (discussed above). The fact that the charges against Kafondo were dropped caused some to again question whether or not the president was somehow involved in the scandal that had been ongoing for more than a decade. It also evoked negative sentiments about the issue of media freedom and the state of the country's justice system. Notably, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) stated that the decision to dismiss the charges against Kafondo set a most negative precedent. Julia Crawford of the CPJ said, "It is outrageous that no-one has been brought to justice for this heinous crime."

At the close of 2006, the capital city of Ougadougou was hit by violence as police and the military became ensconced in a deadly conflict. Bloody gun battles paralyzed the capital, resulting in the decision to postpone a regional economic summit involving the Economic Community of West

African States and the West African Economic and Monetary Union scheduled to be held there. At issue was a brawl that began with the shooting of a soldier after an altercation with police, which led to retaliatory violence by the military. Talks between the two sides finally brought an end to the conflict.

### Recent Parliamentary Elections

Voters went to the polls in May 6, 2007, to vote in parliamentary elections. At issue were the 111 seats at stake in the National Assembly or *Assemblée Nationale*. The ruling Congress for Democracy and Progress (*Congrès pour la Démocratie et le Progrès* or CDP) enjoyed victory with the majority of the vote share and control over 73 seats. The Alliance for Democracy and Federation - African Democratic Rally (*Alliance pour la démocratie et la fédération-Rassemblement démocratique africain* or ADF/RDA) secured the second highest number of votes and 14 seats. Various parties won the remaining representation in parliament.

In June 2007, President Compaore appointed Tertius Zongo to become the country's new prime minister. Zongo served in various cabinet positions and had also been the country's ambassador to the United States.

### Other Recent Developments

The first part of 2008 was marked by a general spirit of economic unrest in Burkino Faso, largely due to the high cost of living, particularly manifested by the rise in food prices across the globe, and also demands for higher wages to meet the increasing prices of goods and service. As such, the country was hit by a spate of mass protests and a two-day general strike in April of 2008.

In 2009, attention was on the sphere of government and representation when the country's parliament passed legislation mandating that at least 30 percent of candidates contesting elections on behalf of political parties be women.

Also in 2009 and into 2010, Burkina Faso's President Compaore played a central role in trying to resolve the political crisis affecting the country of Guinea.

### Presidential Election of 2010

On February 11, 2010, authorities in Burkina Faso announced that the first round of the presidential elections in that country was scheduled for November 21, 2010. In keeping with the

electoral code, the voter registration process was to be complete by March 2010. President Blaise Compaore was seeking re-election; he was supported by a coalition of parties including the Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP), the Alliance for Democracy and Federation/Rally for African Democracy (ADF/RDA).

By October 2010, Burkina Faso's Constitutional Council ratified seven out of the eight candidates submitting nomination papers ahead of the November 21, 2010 presidential election. President Compaore was to be opposed by Norbert Tiendrebeogo of the Front for Social Forces, Hama Arba Diallo supported by several socialist leaning parties including Party for Democracy and Socialism (PDS) and the Party for African Independence (PAI), Me Benewende Stanislas Sankara, the head of the main opposition Union for Renaissance/Socialist Party, independent Maxime Kabore, Boukary Kabore of the PanAfrican Sanakarist Union/Progressive Movement, Emile Pare of the Movement for Socialism/Federal Party, and Francois Kabore of the Party for Democracy and socialism/Socialist Party of the late Joseph Ki-Zerbo.

Incumbent President Compaore was viewed as the favorite given the prevailing divisions and disorganization among the opposition ranks. In fact, the opposition was so chaotic and divided that it was unable to mount a unified effort with a chance beating President Campaore.

For his part, Compaore, came to power via a violent coup d'etat in 1987 in which the president of the time, Thomas Sankara, was assassinated. Compaore has maintained power since that time. Despite the bloody manner in which he originally took power, Compaore won elections held in 1991 (in this case, he ran unopposed due to the opposition boycott), 1999 and 2005. Meanwhile, President Compaore has been credited with stabilizing Burkina Faso -- a country that saw five coups since garnering independence from France in 1960 -- and placing the country in the diplomatic spotlight. Indeed, the president has been instrumental in brokering reconciliation and peace deals in Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, and Guinea. Still, despite these strides in the political sphere, Burkina Faso has remained one of the world's poorest countries with a low level of human development.

On the ground in Burkina Faso on November 21, 2010, voting was reportedly taking place in a calm and peaceful manner, although some voters had to return to the polling stations with their birth certificates in order to prove their identities before casting ballots. A confident President Compaore called for all citizens to participate in the democratic process and said he was awaiting the political verdict on his tenure. To this end, he said: "We wait confidently for the people's choice."

Note that a constitutional amendment was approved in the early 2000s that limited persons to presidential office for only two terms and reduced the presidential term from seven to five years, enforceable as of 2005. Since President Compaore claimed that the constitutional change should only be applied retroactively, he was able to contest -- and win -- the presidential election in 2005. These 2010 elections would be his last opportunity to contest presidential elections for a

final term in office.

With the votes counted, it appeared that President Compaore's bid for another term in office had been a resounding success. Results published by the country's National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) gave the incumbent president a landslide victory with more than 80 percent of the vote. President Compaore was thusly declared to be the winner of the election. Meanwhile, four presidential contenders -- Benewende Sankara, Hama Arba Diallo, Boukary Kabore and Francois Kabore -- rejected the election result. On November 27, 2010 during a press conference in the capital of Ouagadougou, the four presidential contenders characterized the election as invalid due to a court ruling that voters' cards did not conform to the electoral code.

### Unrest of 2011

In the first week of June 2011, authorities in Burkina Faso managed to quell an army mutiny that had been ongoing for months. The situation began in April 2011 when Ouagadougou -- the capital of the West African country -- was rocked by massive violence at the start of the military mutiny. Officers attached to the presidential security brigade reportedly went on a violent rampage, vandalizing property and attacking civilians. Heavy gunfire was also reported outside the presidential palace and there were suggestions that the president fled the scene temporarily. At issue was the government's failure to assent to the military officers' demands for food and housing allowances, effectively spurring months of protests, which culminated with this angry and violent military mutiny. In a separate but related development, Burkina Faso had also experienced student protests aimed at registering discontent over high commodity prices and demanding greater justice.

By the middle of the month, Burkina Faso's President Blaise Compaore responded to the situation by promising a set of reforms, aimed at assuaging the frustrations of various segments of society experiencing financial pressures. The president also dissolved the government, headed by Prime Minister Tertius Zongo and dismissed Dominique Djendjere as chief of the national army. President Compaore appointed Luc Adolphe Tiao as the country's new prime minister to replace Zongo and Colonel Major Nabere Honore Traore to replace Djendjere. Notably, Tiao served as Burkina Faso's ambassador to France as well as the head of Burkina Faso Journalists' Association (AJB). The new prime minister's most pressing task was to resolve the military mutiny destabilizing the country.

But as noted here, by the start of June 2011, the violence was flaring again. This time, the commercial center of the country, Bobo Dioulasso, was the site of violence. Disgruntled army officers took to streets in angry rampage, resulting in mass shootings and looting as well as the destruction of the marketplace, finally spurring the country's elite forces to intervene and bring a halt to the chaos. The end of the outbreak of violence came at a cost as several people, including a young girl, died as a result of the exchange of gunfire between pro-government forces and

rebellious army troops. The government said that "the authority of the state" would now return to Bobo Dioulasso, however, it was yet to be seen if Burkina Faso would see sustainable stability without a process of dialogue that could set the path to actualize previously-promised reforms.

### Primer on 2012 Parliamentary Elections in Burkina Faso

Parliamentary elections were set to be held in Burkina Faso in 2012. At stake were the seats in the unicameral National Assembly or Assemblée Nationale, where members are elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms.

The previous elections were held in 2007. In those elections of 2007, the ruling Congress for Democracy and Progress (Congrès pour la Démocratie et le Progrès or CDP) enjoyed victory with the majority of the vote share and control over 73 seats. The Alliance for Democracy and Federation - African Democratic Rally (Alliance pour la démocratie et la fédération-Rassemblement démocratique africain or ADF/RDA) secured the second highest number of votes and 14 seats. Various parties won the remaining representation in parliament.

Now, in 2012, the ruling Congress for Democracy and Progress was hoping for a repeat performance and victory, while the other parties were seeking a reversal of fortune.

The official date set for the parliamentary elections was Dec. 2, 2012. The head of the head of the African Union (AU) election observer mission in Burkina Faso, Bernard Makuza, said that the elections went off in a calm and fair manner, "without any major incident."

The ruling Congress for Democracy and Progress (Congrès pour la Démocratie et le Progrès or CDP) enjoyed victory with the majority of the vote share and control over 70 seats. The Alliance for Democracy and Federation - African Democratic Rally (Alliance pour la démocratie et la fédération-Rassemblement démocratique africain or ADF/RDA) secured the second highest number of votes and 19 seats. Union for Progress and Reform also secured 19 seats, Various parties won the remaining representation in parliament.

### Special Report:

Burkina Faso rocked by turmoil as military exploits public discontent and power chasm to seize power

Summary --

Long-serving President of Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso sought to extend his rule of the small

west African country, effectively sparking mass protests. Those protests turned violent, and the parliament and other government buildings were burned. With the country slipping precipitously into crisis, a state of emergency was established. Compaore resigned and called for elections to be held in 90 days, and a transitional plan was outlined. But with a power chasm opening up, the military seized power in what could only be understood as a coup d'etat. While the people of Burkina Faso had participated in an uprising intended to protect their democracy, they had instead been faced with betrayal by the military, who exploited the public discontent to seize power for itself.

In detail --

In late October 2014, protesters in Burkina Faso took to the streets of the nation's capital, Ouagadougou, to register their outrage over long-serving President of Blaise Compaore's plan to extend his rule of the small west African country. On Oct. 28, 2014, this mass action was being regarded as a relatively peaceful demonstration.

By the second day -- Oct. 29, 2014 --those demonstrations had intensified and protesters were in the streets of Ouagadougou rallying and demanding that President Compaore step down from office. They were also chanting "Step aside!" and "Don't touch Article 37" -- a reference to the constitutional clause that would prohibit Compaore from contesting another term in office.

The international community entered the fray, warning that an attempt by the president to hold onto power would be unconstitutional. A statement from the French government -- Burkina Faso's former colonial power -- read as follows: "The African Union charter on democracy and good governance article 23 ... specifies clearly that constitutional revisions aiming to prevent political change are banned." Likewise, the United States Department of State noted that it was "concerned by the spirit and intent behind" the proposed changes aimed at extending Compaore's tenure. The United States went so far as to issue this treatise on the utility of term limits in the practice of democracy: "The United States emphasizes that constitutionally mandated term limits provide an important mechanism to hold heads of state accountable, ensure peaceful and democratic transfers of power, and give new generations the opportunity to compete for political office and elect new leaders."

For his part, however, President Compaore was unwilling to relinquish his grip on power and instead insisted that his moves to extend his 27 years of rule was perfectly legal. It was an assertion that appeared to further raise the ire of people rather than tamp down the outrage being played out on the streets.

Soon the protests had turned violent, a death toll was being registered, and police were using tear gas and water cannons to disperse the crowds. But the scene was not becoming any less tumultuous and the parliament, city hall, and other government building had been burned. The

burning of the parliament building effectively forced members of that legislative body to suspend a vote, which was crucially aimed at changing the constitution so that Compaore could stand for re-election in 2015.

On Oct. 30, 2014, a state of emergency was declared and the army chief, General Honore Traore noted that those emergency measures included the imposition of an overnight curfew, as well as the dissolution of parliament. He also announced that a "transitional body" would be established "in consultation with all parties." He added, "A return to the constitutional order is expected in no more than 12 months." This announcement by Traore bore all the hallmarks of a transition of power. It was not being interpreted as a coup d'etat since the plans appeared to have President Compaore's blessing. Indeed, the outgoing leader made it clear that he was stepping down voluntarily and would leave the army chief at the helm to administer the state of emergency.

When President Compaore subsequently emphasized his intent to hand over power at the end of the transitional government, the political landscape could only be understood as murky. Indeed, Compaore's suggestion that he would hand over power at the end of the transitional period appeared to confuse rather than clarify the question of who was in charge of the country. As such, the main opposition leader, Zephirin Diabre, was urging people to again take to the streets in defiance of the curfew and to demand the resignation of Compaore immediately. Diabre said, "We are calling on the people to show that they are against it. The resignation of President Blaise Compaore is the only thing that can bring peace to the country."

But even as Diabre called on people to protest in the streets, Diabre also condemned the violence that broke out in the capital. At issue were the clashes between protesters and police, as well as the use of live ammunition rounds to disperse the crowds gathered at the parliament and the ensuing bloodshed.

On Oct. 31, 2014, with chaos escalating in Burkina Faso, President Compaore resigned from office and called for fresh elections to take place within 90 days. In an address that was broadcast on television, Compaore said, "In order to preserve the democratic gains, as well as social peace, I declare a power vacuum to allow the establishment of a transition leading to free and fair elections within a maximum of 90 days." He continued, "For my part, I think I have fulfilled my duty." Compaore then disappeared from the public spotlight with no indication of where he was headed although he called for calm via the social media outlet, Twitter. It was later revealed that the ousted President Compaore had arrived in Cote d'Ivoire although it was unknown if that was to be his final destination.

These developments did little to settle the political sphere of the country as confusion arose over who was actually in control in Burkina Faso. The constitution made clear that if the presidency was vacated, the president of the Senate should assume the presidency on an interim basis until elections were held within 90 days. However, it was apparent that there would be no adherence to

these constitutional provisions, and a fight for control of the country was emanating from the military sphere, while the legislative branch of government had been sidelined.

To be clear, a power struggle had emerged within Burkina Faso's armed forces between the army chief, General Honore Traore, who had earlier asserted that he was administering the state of emergency and transition to constitutional rule, and the presidential guard's second in command, Colonel Isaac Zida, who claimed that the constitution was suspended and that he was now the new head of state.

In truth, many of the protesters who participated in the uprising were not pleased by the idea that Traore would be governing the country as the transitional head of state. As Blaise Compaore's aide de camp, Traore was viewed as too much of a stalwart of the ousted president, and not representative of a real break from the Compaore era. However, it was not likely that the people of Burkina Faso would look any more kindly on the notion of a self-imposed military leader at the helm.

In a national address, Zida dismissed Traore's claim of power, characterizing it as "obsolete," and instead declaring: "I now assume... the responsibilities of head of the transition and of head of state to assure the continuation of the state." Zida also asserted that he would be responsible for a "smooth democratic transition." Zida also demanded that regional powers sanction his moves as he declared in a statement: "I assume the functions of head of state and I call on Ecowas (the Economic Community Of West African States) and the international community to demonstrate their understanding and support the new authorities." Of course, the reality was that few regional or international powers would be likely to easily consent and endorse an unorthodox and unconstitutional transition of power.

To that end, the international community reacted with shock and dismay to the Burkinabe military's move to impose its will on the people of Burkina Faso. The United Nations, the African Union, and the United States all condemned the military takeover of that country and called for a return to civilian democratic rule.

On Nov. 2, 2014, even with President Compaore gone from the scene, mass demonstrations continued to plague the capital city of Ouagadougou. It was clear that although the people of Burkina Faso wanted Compaore to resign, they were indignant over the suspension of the constitution and were now agitating for a return to civilian rule. However, the military was not eager to relinquish its own grip on power. Moreover, the military appeared fully prepared and willing to show that it was now in control of the country. Accordingly, the armed forces were on the streets of the capital firing warning shots, knocking the state television station off the air, and clearing people from the streets.

For the people of Burkina Faso, it was apparent that although they had successfully ousted

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Compaore from power, a return to democratic and civilian governance was not likely to be secured in the immediate future. Instead, their popular uprising had been hijacked, a military coup d'etat was clearly unfolding in Burkina Faso, and the people of that country had exchanged one form of strongman power for another. For many citizens of Burkina Faso, the actions of the military were being regarded as a betrayal of the public's trust as it exploited the power chasm.

The African Union soon issued a two-week ultimatum to the military in Burkina Faso, demanding that it transition power to a civilian government or face sanctions. The African Union emphasized that the actions of the armed forces now in control of Burkina Faso were undemocratic and that consequences were in the offing if Burkina Faso failed to return the country to civilian rule in short order. Some consequences were already unfolding as the credit rating agency, Standard and Poor's, downgraded Burkina Faso on the basis of the political developments discussed here.

For his part, the self-declared military leader, Zida, offered contradictory statements as to whether he intended to acquiesce to the demands of the African Union. But with condemnations escalating at home from political and civil groups, and across the international community, he soon indicated that they would consult with the tribal leadership about a possible transition.

A meeting between Zida and the Mogho Naba, the supreme leader of the Mosse (Burkina Faso's largest ethnic group), followed and an announcement was soon made that the armed forces would "hand over power to civilians as soon as possible." The Mogho Naba related the outcome of the meeting as follows: "They (the armed forces) came and told us that they will hand over power to civilians. We encouraged them to go in that direction. The country must find tranquility and peace for development."

By Nov. 9, 2014, following several days of negotiations between various stakeholders in the capital of Ouagadougou, a charter had been adopted outlining a transitional blueprint for Burkina Faso's return to democratic order. The plan also included provisions for the establishment of a 25-seat transitional government, whose individual members would not be able to stand for future elections, a 90-seat transitional parliament, and a pathway to fresh presidential and parliamentary elections, which would be held in 2015. Ahead of those elections, a consensus candidate would serve as interim president but banned from contesting these future elections. It should be noted that military representatives did not participate in the talks and the transitional plan was yet to be presented to (or accepted by) Zida.

Of note was the fact that the United States had not yet declared the actions of the military in Burkina Faso to be a coup d'etat. Condemnation aside, it was apparent that the United States was giving regional emissaries time to try to find a solution before taking negative economic action against Burkina Faso. To be clear, the classification of the military's actions as a coup d'etat would result in the automatic suspension of military aid by the United States.

In mid-November 2014, the coup leader, Zida, bowed to international pressure and said he would restore the constitution, which was suspended when the military seized power in the aftermath of Compaore's resignation. He also indicated that various institutional leaders for form a committee, which would sign on to the plan for the transitional government outlined just above.

Soon thereafter, former Foreign Minister Michel Kafando was named as Burkina Faso's transitional president in a bid to return the country to constitutional and democratic order. In an interview with the media, Kafando said of his appointment as the interim president: "The committee has just designated me to guide temporarily the destiny of our country. This is more than an honour. It's a true mission which I will take with the utmost seriousness." Kofado's immediate task would be to name a prime minister who will form a government of 25 members. To that end, Zida -- the coup leader -- was named as the new prime minister at the helm of a new transitional cabinet.

### Special Report

Presidential guard ousts interim government of Burkina Faso ahead of elections; regional diplomatic effort in place to restore order

-- Note that some aspects of this information is repeated from above for the purpose of context --

On Sept. 16, 2015, an elite military wing or praetorian guard, known as the Regiment of Presidential Security (RSP), carried out a coup d'etat in Burkina Faso, ousting the interim government from power ahead of elections. Of note was the fact that those elections were intended to restore Burkina Faso to democratic order after a coup d'etat in 2014 removed the sitting president from the helm of power. But before that voting exercise was to take place, Burkina Faso was again struck by political turbulence.

Going back to October 2014, long-serving President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso sought to extend his rule of the small west African country, effectively sparking mass protests. Those protests turned violent, and the parliament and other government buildings were burned. With the country slipping precipitously into crisis, a state of emergency was established. Compaore resigned and called for elections to be held in 90 days, and a transitional plan was outlined. But with a power chasm opening up, the military seized power in what could only be understood as a coup d'etat. While the people of Burkina Faso had participated in an uprising intended to protect their democracy, they had instead been faced with betrayal by the military, who exploited the public discontent to seize power for itself.

The African Union soon issued a two-week ultimatum to the military in Burkina Faso, demanding that it transition power to a civilian government or face sanctions. The African Union emphasized

that the actions of the armed forces now in control of Burkina Faso were undemocratic and that consequences were in the offing if Burkina Faso failed to return the country to civilian rule in short order.

By Nov. 9, 2014, following several days of negotiations between various stakeholders in the capital of Ouagadougou, a charter had been adopted outlining a transitional blueprint for Burkina Faso's return to democratic order. The plan also included provisions for the establishment of a 25-seat transitional government, whose individual members would not be able to stand for future elections, a 90-seat transitional parliament, and a pathway to fresh presidential and parliamentary elections, which would be held in 2015. Ahead of those elections, a consensus candidate would serve as interim president but banned from contesting this future elections.

In mid-November 2014, the coup leader, Yacouba Isaac Zida, bowed to international pressure and said he would restore the constitution, which was suspended when the military seized power in the aftermath of Compaore's resignation. He also indicated that various institutional leaders form a committee, which would sign on to the plan for the transitional government outlined just above. Soon thereafter, former Foreign Minister Michel Kafando was named as Burkina Faso's transitional president in a bid to return the country to constitutional and democratic order. Meanwhile, Zida was not entirely gone from the political scene, since the interim president soon named the coup leader to be the new prime minister at the helm of a new transitional cabinet.

At the time in late 2014, it was clear that the Compaore era was over in Burkina Faso. Compaore had been the central figure in the violent military coup d'etat of 1987 that involved the assassination of then-President Thomas Sankara and other officials. In addition to initially seizing power by force, and the elimination of his rivals and co-conspirators by bloodshed, Compaore's record was also blemished by his controversial support for rebels during the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It was further tainted by his participation in Qadhafi's infamous World Revolutionary Center -- colloquially referred to as "Harvard for Tyrants." Yet despite this highly tarnished background, once entrenched in the presidency, Compaore recast and reconstituted himself as a peace maker and deal broker in the region. Moreover, "Beautiful Blaise," as he came to be known, also established himself as a pro-Western ally against Islamic extremists. In 2014, however, his ambition to hold onto power indefinitely had been his undoing, and the country had been plunged into chaos as a result.

By 2015, the national purview was focused on the elections that were intended to return Burkina Faso to democratic order. High hopes to that end were somewhat marred by emerging tensions on the political scene. At issue was the call by Prime Minister Zida to disband Compaore's praetorian guard, the Regiment of Presidential Security (RSP), which stirred the pot of dissonance within the presidential military service. Other issues of disagreement flaring ahead of the elections centered on the new electoral code, which shut out Compaore loyalists who supported the ousted leader's constitutional change agenda. A court ruling in mid-2015 invalidated the electoral law,

opening the door for Compaore stalwarts to contest the forthcoming elections. But before the people of Burkina Faso could register their preferences via ballot and restore the country to democratic order, once again the country was plunged into turmoil via another irregular transition of power.

As noted above, on Sept. 16, 2015, the elite praetorian guard, known as the Regiment of Presidential Security (RSP), carried out a coup d'etat in Burkina Faso, ousting the interim government from power, and placing the interim president, the interim prime minister and members of cabinet in detention. The move came just days after a government commission issued a controversial recommendation that the elite pro-Compaore presidential guard be dismantled. As such, the general consensus was that the coup had been stimulated by the RSP's fears that it would be locked out of the sphere of military and political power, although it was the presidential guard's very influence that had spurred the plan for its extinction in the first place.

In the intervening days after the coup, international powers condemned both the undemocratic transfer of power and the detention of Burkina Faso's transitional executives, while protesters took to the streets to register their outrage over the turn of events. The unrest soon grew violent, with several people dying and at least 100 others wounded as a result. The African Union reacted to these developments by suspending Burkina Faso from its membership and issuing a Sept. 22, 2015 deadline by which the transitional government should be restored.

Perhaps moved by this unfavorable climate, the coup leadership, led by General Gilbert Diendere, released President Kafando from detention although Prime Minister Zida remained, at the time, under house arrest. Soon thereafter, mediators from West Africa's ECOWAS bloc began the process of negotiations with Diendere cabal. The self-styled National Democratic Council issued a statement saying that it accepted the mediation process and its intention was "not to stay in power for a long time." Diendere himself added in an interview with the media, "I always said that I will not cling to power. It's now a question of terms."

By Sept. 20, 2015, a plan was afoot to restore the interim government, led by President Kafando, to power, and to relaunch the transitional process. That being said, it was unclear if the transitional process would culminate with elections being held on schedule on Oct. 11, 2015. It was also unknown as to what provisions would be made for Diendere and his cabal. Of note was the fact that General Diendere was a former head of intelligence and a stalwart of former President Compaore. As such, this latest chapter in the recent story of turmoil in Burkina Faso was very much following along the same trajectory with the Compaore factor at the center.

Meanwhile, an ultimatum was in place requiring the presidential guard carrying out the coup to surrender to government authorities by Sept. 22, 2015. That deadline passed with the Diendere cabal remaining defiant and a stand-off soon ensued in the capital of Ouagadougou. With government troops threatening to disarm the presidential guard themselves, there were fears of a

violent confrontation.

For his part, General Diendere himself made clear that he would not be surrendering to the government, but instead waiting for regional mediators to arrive in the country for negotiations on a settlement to the crisis. He said, "I'm not stalling for time. I'm within the time allotted to me. We don't want to fight. We will defend ourselves if need be, but we do not want to spill blood to stay in power." Of significance was the fact that the leaders of the neighboring countries of Senegal, Togo, Benin, Ghana, Niger, and Nigeria said they would go to Burkina Faso themselves to help mediate the crisis. They aimed to find a solution that would result in the reinstatement of President Kafando, who was at the time taking refuge at the French ambassador's residence.

By Sept. 23, 2015, tensions were easing in Burkina Faso as Prime Minister Zida was released from captivity, and with regional mediators expressing optimism about the negotiations process. President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria said, "I am delighted today that there are reports of some measures of understanding reached towards the resolution of the crisis." Soon thereafter, an interim agreement was reached to ensure that there was no outbreak of violence. Later, an actual agreement was announced to end the crisis. President Kafando was then reinstated as the head of state and Burkina Faso was returned to civilian rule.

General Diendere -- now confined to military barracks -- acknowledged that the efforts of the cabal had been "the biggest mistake" and admitted that there was little public support for their actions. He said, "We knew the people were not in favor of it. That is why we have given up." While the fate of Diendere was unknown, the main task of the country's authorities was to ensure that free and fair elections would go forward (technically still scheduled to be held in October 2015), and that the country would thus be returned to democratic order. To this end, President Kafando said, "If ever there was a transition to be held up as an example, it is indeed ours. I can assure you that we are determined to carry on with the mission the Burkinabe people have entrusted us with, to build strong institutions and a real democracy."

In the last days of September 2015, the restored government of Burkina Faso dissolved the elite presidential guard at the center of the attempted coup as well as the president's military council. The government also dismissed the minister in charge of security and established a commission charged with investigating the coup plot.

These moves were, however, more aspirational than likely to guarantee the return to stability in Burkina Faso. Of note was the fact that some members of the Presidential Security Regiment (RSP) were refusing to actually disarm and disband. A statement from the Burkina Faso defense forces read as follows: "The disarmament process ... has found itself at an impasse ... marked by the refusal of officers from the former Presidential Security Regiment to follow disarmament." That being said, after being surrounded by regular military forces, about 300 members of the elite RSP surrendered to authorities.

Also of note was the fact that the coup leader, Diendere, was reported to be missing from the army barracks where he had been confined in the aftermath of the attempted government take-over. Reports indicated that Diendere's vehicle had been found and destroyed outside the diplomatic compound of the Holy See (also known as The Vatican). For his part, Diendere said in a telephone media with Reuters News that he was not at the barracks anymore; he said: "I'm in a safe place."

Nevertheless, by the start of October 2015, Diendere was apprehended and handed over to Burkinabe authorities. According to Prime Minister Zida, the government offered guarantees to the Vatican embassy making clear that if Diendere was handed over to officials to face justice, his life would be respected. Also in the custody of Burkinabe authorities was former Foreign Minister Djibril Bassole, who served in former President Compaore's cabinet, and who was accused of complicity in the attempted putsch.

Note that by Oct. 7, 2015, Diendere was charged with a litany of crimes including threatening state security, collusion with foreign forces, assault, murder, and destruction of property. As such, he would face trial before a military tribunal.

### Primer on 2015 presidential and parliamentary elections in Burkina Faso

#### Introduction --

Presidential and parliamentary elections were initially scheduled to be held on Oct. 11, 2015, in Burkina Faso and return the country to constitutional order. As noted below, in September 2015, Burkina Faso was rocked by an attempted coup launched by a cabal within the elite presidential guard. As a result, the vote would not be expected to take place until November 2015, with Nov. 29, 2015 being the date ultimately scheduled for the elections to go forward.

#### Election Details --

The incumbent head of state was Transitional President Michel Kafando, who has served since 2014 when Burkina Faso was just emerging from under the control of a military junta. The establishment of a transitional government was viewed as the first step in the direction of stabilization, although democratic elections would go a long way to returning the country to the path of democracy.

Note that in Burkina Faso, the president is both the head of state and head of government, and is elected by popular vote to serve five year terms.

Some of the known presidential candidates included the following individuals: former Prime Minister Roch Marc Kaboré, a former stalwart of Compaore who went onto form his own party, the People's Movement for Progress (MPP); former Finance Minister Zephirin Diabre under Compaore, who also went onto form his own party, the Union for Progress and Change (UPC); former Foreign Minister Djibrill Bassole, who was expected to lead a coalition of opposition groups; and a former member of parliament, Eddie Komboigo, was expected to be the candidate of Compaore's former ruling party, the Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP).

Some of the other possible candidates for the presidency included Benewende Stanislas Sankara, the leader of Union for Rebirth / Sankarist Movement and former Defense Minister Kouame Lougue.

Several would-be candidates linked with former President Blaise Compaore's ruling alliance were barred from contesting the election thanks to a ruling from Burkina Faso's constitutional council. A statement regarding the court's ruling read as follows: "All people having supported an anti-constitutional change damaging to the principle of democratic transition, notably the principle of limiting the number of presidential mandates leading to an insurrection or other uprising are ineligible." Those barred from the election included the aforementioned Eddie Komboigo.

In addition to the presidential contest, elections would also be held to determine the composition of the legislative branch of government. In Burkina Faso, the National Assembly or *Assemblée Nationale* is composed of 127 seats and members serve five-year terms.

Note on the coup that led to the ousting of President Blaise Compaore --

Long-serving President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso sought to extend his rule of the small west African country, effectively sparking mass protests in late October 2014. Those protests turned violent, and the parliament and other government buildings were burned. With the country slipping precipitously into crisis, a state of emergency was established. Compaore resigned and called for elections to be held in 90 days, and a transitional plan was outlined. But with a power chasm opening up, the military seized power in what could only be understood as a coup d'état. While the people of Burkina Faso had participated in an uprising intended to protect their democracy, they had instead been faced with betrayal by the military, who exploited the public discontent to seize power for itself.

The African Union soon issued a two-week ultimatum to the military in Burkina Faso, demanding that it transition power to a civilian government or face sanctions. The African Union emphasized that the actions of the armed forces now in control of Burkina Faso were undemocratic and that consequences were in the offing if Burkina Faso failed to return the country to civilian rule in short order.

By Nov. 9, 2014, following several days of negotiations between various stakeholders in the capital of Ouagadougou, a charter had been adopted outlining a transitional blueprint for Burkina Faso's return to democratic order. The plan also included provisions for the establishment of a 25-seat transitional government, whose individual members would not be able to stand for future elections, a 90-seat transitional parliament, and a pathway to fresh presidential and parliamentary elections, which would be held in 2015. Ahead of those elections, a consensus candidate would serve as interim president but be banned from contesting the future elections.

In mid-November 2014, the coup leader, Zida, bowed to international pressure and said he would restore the constitution, which was suspended when the military seized power in the aftermath of Compaore's resignation. He also indicated that various institutional leaders form a committee, which would sign on to the plan for the transitional government outlined just above.

Soon thereafter, former Foreign Minister Michel Kafando was named as Burkina Faso's transitional president in a bid to return the country to constitutional and democratic order. In an interview with the media, Kafando said of his appointment as the interim president: "The committee has just designated me to guide temporarily the destiny of our country. This is more than an honor. It's a true mission which I will take with the utmost seriousness." Kafando's immediate task would be to name a prime minister who will form a government of 25 members. To that end, Zida -- the coup leader -- was named as the new prime minister at the helm of a new transitional cabinet.

Meanwhile, it was clear that the Compaore era was over in Burkina Faso. Compaore was the central figure in the violent military coup d'etat of 1987 that involved the assassination of then-President Thomas Sankara and other officials. In addition to initially seizing power by force, and the elimination of his rivals and co-conspirators by bloodshed, Compaore's record was also blemished by his controversial support for rebels during the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It was further tainted by his participation in Qadhafi's infamous World Revolutionary Center -- colloquially referred to as "Harvard for Tyrants." Yet despite this highly tarnished background, once entrenched in the presidency, Compaore recast and reconstituted himself as a peace maker and deal broker in the region. Moreover, "Beautiful Blaise," as he came to be known, also established himself as a pro-Western ally against Islamic extremists. In 2014, however, his ambition to hold onto power indefinitely had been his undoing, and the country had been plunged into chaos as a result.

#### Attempted Coup of 2015 --

The next elections were expected to be held in 2015, as discussed above, and were intended to return the country to democratic order. High hopes to that end were somewhat marred by emerging tensions on the political scene. At issue was the call by Prime Minister Zida to disband Compaore's praetorian guard, the Regiment of Presidential Security (RSP), which stirred the pot of dissonance within the presidential military service. Other issues of disagreement flaring ahead of

the elections centered on the new electoral code, which shut out Compaore loyalists who supported the ousted leader's constitutional change agenda. However, a court ruling in mid-2015 invalidated the electoral law. Then, in mid-September 2015, Burkina Faso was subject to a military coup carried out by elements of the military loyal to Compaore and his praetorian guard.

A regional effort to resolve the crisis ended successfully with transitional President Kafando being returned to power as the head of state. Now, his main task would be to ensure that free and fair elections would go forward (at the time, still scheduled to be held in October 2015), and that the country would thus be returned to democratic order. To this end, President Kafando said, "If ever there was a transition to be held up as an example, it is indeed ours. I can assure you that we are determined to carry on with the mission the Burkinabe people have entrusted us with, to build strong institutions and a real democracy.

New date set for elections --

With Burkina Faso still left somewhat in shock after the attempted coup of September 2015, and with elections officially scheduled to take place a month later, calls began to rise for a delay so that the political landscape might be settled somewhat before people went to the polls. Accordingly, it was soon announced that the elections would not take place until November 2015, with Nov. 29, 2015 being the date scheduled for the elections to finally go forward.

Election Results --

On election day, voting took place in Burkina Faso's elections amidst heavy security. At the presidential level, Roch Marc Christian Kabore garnered an outright majority with 54 percent of the vote share, thus clinching the presidency. His closest rival was Zephirin Diabre, who secured 30 percent. Kabore, who served as prime minister under former President Compaore although he later parted company with the ousted leader, declared victory. In a speech to supporters, he declared, "My first thought is to recognize the honor of this high office and to feel the weight of its great responsibility." Results for the parliamentary elections were not made official at the time of writing.

### New prime minister for Burkina Faso

In January 2016, in the aftermath of presidential elections intended to return the country to democratic order, Burkina Faso's newly elected President Roch Marc Christian Kabore named a new prime minister. The new president's selection to lead the government of Burkina Faso was Paul Kaba Thieba -- an economist who worked for the West African central bank with limited political experience. It was apparent that President Kabore's intent was to place a technocrat in the position of head of government, given the priority of reviving the slowing economy.

### Islamist terrorists launch vicious attack in Burkina Faso

On Jan. 16, 2016, Islamist terrorists carried out an attack on a hotel in Ouagadougou -- the capital of the landlocked west African country of Burkina Faso. Foreign Minister Alpha Berry confirmed in interviews with the international media that the Splendid Hotel was popular with Westerners and other foreign nationals. The attack went on for several hours with reports of hostages being held at the hotel and a least 20 people believed to have been killed, with several more said to have been injured. Among the dead were six Canadians, three Ukrainians, two French nationals, and eight Burkinabes. Witnesses said that the assailants particularly targeted foreigners.

Security forces were dispatched to the perimeter of the Splendid Hotel and took up positions in preparation for a rescue operation. French military and United States intelligence experts were said to be assisting in the effort. What could only be described as a siege went on for several hours before security personnel took control of the hotel. In the aftermath of the attack, al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) claimed responsibility for the carnage, with the terror group releasing a statement in which they named three attackers as al-Battar al-Ansari, Abu Muhammad al-Buqali al-Ansari and Ahmed al-Fulani al-Ansari. It was the first time Islamist Jihadist terrorists had carried out an attack in Burkina Faso, and the general consensus was that the attack may have been coordinated with Islamist Jihadists in Mali.

Note: This assault on Burkina Faso's national security came a month after elections were held and a new president -- Roch Marc Christian Kabore -- was elected to power. That election in 2015 was intended to return Burkina Faso to constitutional order following the resignation of long-serving President Blaise Compaore and an ensuing coup d'etat by the military. Just as the country appeared to be edging toward more secure footing, the January 2016 terror attack struck Burkina Faso with another wave of turbulence.

### Editor's Note:

A landlocked country in Western Africa, Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta) achieved independence from France in 1960, but the country spent many of its post-independence years under military rule with repeated coups during the 1970s and 1980s. The current president, Blaise Compaore, came to power in a bloody 1987 military coup that involved the assassination of then-President Thomas Sankara and other officials. Blaise Compaore seized control of the government, and eventually executed his co-conspirators in the coup for plotting against him. Once he was established with the power of the presidency, Compaore, unlike his predecessor, began to attract foreign investment and expanded the private sector. His economic embrace of neo-liberal policies advocated by international financial institutions has led many countries to turn a blind eye to the

manner in which he came to power. However, the truth was that even with these moves, Burkina Faso has remained one of the poorest countries in the world. Although a multiparty system was established, Compaore managed to win every election to date. His latest efforts to hang onto power after almost three decades in the office of the presidency was ironically the cause of his fall from grace. With a power chasm opening up, the military seized power in what could only be understood as a coup d'etat. While the people of Burkina Faso had participated in an uprising intended to protect their democracy, they had instead been faced with betrayal by the military, who exploited the public discontent to seize power for itself. International pressure along with difficult negotiations led to the development of a transitional plan aimed at returning Burkina Faso to democratic order. The election of Roch Marc Christian Kabore as president in late 2015 was the culmination of that process.

-- January 2016

Written by Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief and Executive Vice President, [www.countrywatch.com](http://www.countrywatch.com); see Bibliography for reference sources.

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## Political Risk Index

### Political Risk Index

The **Political Risk Index** is a proprietary index measuring the level of risk posed to governments, corporations, and investors, based on a myriad of political and economic factors. The [Political Risk Index](#) is calculated using an established methodology by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on varied criteria\* including the following consideration: political stability, political representation, democratic accountability, freedom of expression, security and crime, risk of conflict, human development, jurisprudence and regulatory transparency, economic risk, foreign investment considerations, possibility of sovereign default, and corruption. Scores are assigned from 0-10 using the aforementioned criteria. A score of 0 marks the highest political risk, while a score of 10 marks the lowest political risk. Stated differently, countries with the lowest scores pose the greatest political risk. A score of 0 marks the most dire level of political risk and an ultimate nadir, while a score of 10 marks the lowest possible level of political risk, according to this proprietary index. Rarely will there be scores of 0 or 10 due to the reality that countries contain complex landscapes; as such, the index offers a range of possibilities ranging from lesser to greater risk.

Country	Assessment
Afghanistan	2
Albania	4
Algeria	6
Andorra	9
Angola	4
Antigua	8
Argentina	4
Armenia	4-5
Australia	9.5
Austria	9.5
Azerbaijan	4
Bahamas	8.5
Bahrain	6
Bangladesh	3.5

Barbados	8.5-9
Belarus	3
Belgium	9
Belize	8
Benin	5
Bhutan	5
Bolivia	5
Bosnia-Herzegovina	4
Botswana	7
Brazil	7
Brunei	7
Bulgaria	6
Burkina Faso	4
Burma (Myanmar)	4.5
Burundi	3
Cambodia	4
Cameroon	5
Canada	9.5

Cape Verde	6
Central African Republic	3
Chad	4
Chile	9
China	7
China: Hong Kong	8
China: Taiwan	8
Colombia	7
Comoros	5
Congo DRC	3
Congo RC	4
Costa Rica	8
Cote d'Ivoire	4.5
Croatia	7
Cuba	4-4.5
Cyprus	5
Czech Republic	8
Denmark	9.5

Djibouti	4.5
Dominica	7
Dominican Republic	6
East Timor	5
Ecuador	6
Egypt	5
El Salvador	7
Equatorial Guinea	4
Eritrea	3
Estonia	8
Ethiopia	4
Fiji	5
Finland	9
Fr.YugoslavRep.Macedonia	5
France	9
Gabon	5
Gambia	4
Georgia	5

Germany	9.5
Ghana	6
Greece	4.5-5
Grenada	8
Guatemala	6
Guinea	3.5
Guinea-Bissau	3.5
Guyana	4.5
Haiti	3.5
Holy See (Vatican)	9
Honduras	4.5-5
Hungary	7
Iceland	8.5-9
India	7.5-8
Indonesia	6
Iran	3.5-4
Iraq	2.5-3
Ireland	8-8.5

Israel	8
Italy	7.5
Jamaica	6.5-7
Japan	9
Jordan	6.5
Kazakhstan	6
Kenya	5
Kiribati	7
Korea, North	1
Korea, South	8
Kosovo	4
Kuwait	7
Kyrgyzstan	4.5
Laos	4.5
Latvia	7
Lebanon	5.5
Lesotho	6
Liberia	3.5

Libya	2
Liechtenstein	9
Lithuania	7.5
Luxembourg	9
Madagascar	4
Malawi	4
Malaysia	8
Maldives	4.5
Mali	4
Malta	8
Marshall Islands	6
Mauritania	4.5-5
Mauritius	7
Mexico	6.5
Micronesia	7
Moldova	5
Monaco	9
Mongolia	5

Montenegro	6
Morocco	6.5
Mozambique	4.5-5
Namibia	6.5-7
Nauru	6
Nepal	4
Netherlands	9.5
New Zealand	9.5
Nicaragua	5
Niger	4
Nigeria	4.5
Norway	9.5
Oman	7
Pakistan	3.5
Palau	7
Panama	7.5
Papua New Guinea	5
Paraguay	6.5-7

Peru	7
Philippines	6
Poland	8
Portugal	7.5
Qatar	7.5
Romania	5.5
Russia	5.5
Rwanda	5
Saint Kitts and Nevis	8
Saint Lucia	8
Saint Vincent and Grenadines	8
Samoa	7
San Marino	9
Sao Tome and Principe	5.5
Saudi Arabia	6
Senegal	6
Serbia	5
Seychelles	7

Sierra Leone	4.5
Singapore	9
Slovak Republic (Slovakia)	8
Slovenia	8
Solomon Islands	6
Somalia	2
South Africa	7
Spain	7.5
Sri Lanka	5
Sudan	3.5
Suriname	5
Swaziland	5
Sweden	9.5
Switzerland	9.5
Syria	2
Tajikistan	4.5
Tanzania	6
Thailand	6.5

Togo	4.5
Tonga	7
Trinidad and Tobago	8
Tunisia	6
Turkey	7
Turkmenistan	4.5
Tuvalu	7
Uganda	6
Ukraine	3.5-4
United Arab Emirates	7
United Kingdom	9
United States	9.5
Uruguay	8
Uzbekistan	4
Vanuatu	7
Venezuela	4
Vietnam	5
Yemen	3

Zambia	4.5
Zimbabwe	3

### \*Methodology

The [Political Risk Index](#) is calculated by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on the combined scoring of varied criteria as follows --

1. political stability (record of peaceful transitions of power, ability of government to stay in office and carry out policies as a result of productive executive-legislative relationship, perhaps with popular support vis a vis risk of government collapse)
2. political representation (right of suffrage, free and fair elections, multi-party participation, and influence of foreign powers)
3. democratic accountability (record of respect for political rights, human rights, and civil liberties, backed by constitutional protections)
4. freedom of expression (media freedom and freedom of expression, right to dissent or express political opposition, backed by constitutional protections)
5. security and crime (the degree to which a country has security mechanisms that ensures safety of citizens and ensures law and order, without resorting to extra-judicial measures)
6. risk of conflict (the presence of conflict; record of coups or civil disturbances; threat of war; threats posed by internal or external tensions; threat or record of terrorism or insurgencies)
7. human development (quality of life; access to education; socio-economic conditions; systemic concern for the status of women and children)
8. jurisprudence and regulatory transparency (the impartiality of the legal system, the degree of transparency within the regulatory system of a country and the durability of that structure)
9. economic conditions (economic stability, investment climate, degree of nationalization of industries, property rights, labor force development)
10. corruption ( the degree of corruption in a country and/or efforts by the government to address graft and other irregularities)

Editor's Note:

As of 2015, the current climate of upheaval internationally -- both politically and economically -- has affected the ratings for several countries across the world.

North Korea, [Afghanistan](#), [Somalia](#), and [Zimbabwe](#) -- retain their low rankings.

Several Middle Eastern and North African countries, such as [Tunisia](#), [Egypt](#), [Libya](#), [Syria](#), [Iraq](#) and [Yemen](#) were downgraded in recent years due to political instability occurring in the "season of unrest" sweeping the region since 2011 and continuing today. The worst downgrades affected [Syria](#) where civil war is at play, along with the rampage of terror being carried out by Islamist terrorists who have also seized control over part of Syrian territory. [Iraq](#) has been further downgraded due to the rampage of Islamist terrorists and their takeover of wide swaths of Iraqi territory. [Libya](#) has also been downgraded further due to its slippage into failed state status; at issue in [Libya](#) have been an ongoing power struggle between rival militias. [Yemen](#) continues to hold steady with a poor ranking due to continued unrest at the hands of Houthi rebels, secessionists, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, and Islamic State. Its landscape has been further complicated by the fact that it is now the site of a proxy war between [Iran](#) and [Saudi Arabia](#). Conversely, [Tunisia](#) and [Egypt](#) have seen slight upgrades as these countries stabilize.

In Africa, [Zimbabwe](#) continues to be one of the bleak spots of the world with the Mugabe regime effectively destroying the country's once vibrant economy, and miring [Zimbabwe](#) with an exceedingly high rate of inflation, debilitating unemployment, devolving public services, and critical food shortages; rampant crime and political oppression round out the landscape. [Somalia](#) also sports a poor ranking due to the continuing influence of the terror group, al-Shabab, which was not operating across the border in [Kenya](#). On the upside, [Nigeria](#), which was ineffectively dealing with the threat posed by the terror group, Boko Haram, was making some strides on the national security front with its new president at the helm. [Mali](#) was slightly upgraded due to its efforts to return to constitutional order following the 2012 coup and to neutralize the threat of separatists and Islamists. But the [Central African Republic](#) was downgraded due to the takeover of the government by Muslim Seleka rebels and a continued state of lawlessness in that country. South [Sudan](#) -- the world's newest nation state -- has not been officially included in this assessment; however, it can be unofficially assessed to be in the vicinity of "3" due to its manifold political and economic challenges. [Burkina Faso](#), [Burundi](#) and [Guinea](#) have been downgraded due to political unrest, with [Guinea](#) also having to deal with the burgeoning Ebola crisis.

In Europe, [Ukraine](#) was downgraded due to the unrest facing that country following its Maidan revolution that triggered a pro-Russian uprising in the eastern part of the country. [Russia](#) was also implicated in the Ukrainian crisis due to its intervention on behalf of pro-Russian separatists, as

well as its annexation of the Ukrainian territory of Crimea. Strains on the infrastructure of southern and eastern European countries, such as [Serbia](#), [Croatia](#), and [Hungary](#), due to an influx of refugees was expected to pose social and economic challenges, and slight downgrades were made accordingly. So too, a corruption crisis for the Romanian prime minister has affected the ranking of that country. Meanwhile, the rankings for [Spain](#), [Portugal](#), [Ireland](#), and [Italy](#) were maintained due to debt woes and the concomitant effect on the euro zone. [Greece](#), another euro zone nation, was earlier downgraded due to its sovereign debt crisis; however, no further downgrade was added since the country was able to successfully forge a bailout rescue deal with creditor institutions. Cyprus' exposure to Greek banks yielded a downgrade in its case.

In Asia, [Nepal](#) was downgraded in response to continuous political instability and a constitutional crisis that prevails well after landmark elections were held. Both [India](#) and [China](#) retain their rankings; [India](#) holds a slightly higher ranking than [China](#) due to its record of democratic representation and accountability. Increasing violence and political instability in [Pakistan](#) resulted in a downgrade for this country's already low rating. Meanwhile, [Singapore](#) retained its strong rankings due to its continued effective stewardship of the economy and political stability.

In the Americas, ongoing political and economic woes, as well as crime and corruption have affected the rankings for [Mexico](#), [Guatemala](#), and [Brazil](#). [Argentina](#) was downgraded due to its default on debt following the failure of talks with bond holders. [Venezuela](#) was downgraded due to its mix of market unfriendly policies and political oppression. For the moment, the [United States](#) maintains a strong ranking along with [Canada](#), and most of the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean; however, a renewed debt ceiling crisis could cause the [United States](#) to be downgraded in a future edition. Finally, a small but significant upgrade was attributed to [Cuba](#) due to its recent pro-business reforms and its normalization of ties with the United States.

Source:

Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, CountryWatch Inc. [www.countrywatch.com](http://www.countrywatch.com)

Updated:

2015

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## Political Stability

## Political Stability

The **Political Stability Index** is a proprietary index measuring a country's level of stability, standard of good governance, record of constitutional order, respect for human rights, and overall strength of democracy. The [Political Stability Index](#) is calculated using an established methodology\* by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on a given country's record of peaceful transitions of power, ability of a government to stay in office and carry out its policies vis a vis risk credible risks of government collapse. Threats include coups, domestic violence and instability, terrorism, etc. This index measures the dynamic between the quality of a country's government and the threats that can compromise and undermine stability. Scores are assigned from 0-10 using the aforementioned criteria. A score of 0 marks the lowest level of political stability and an ultimate nadir, while a score of 10 marks the highest level of political stability possible, according to this proprietary index. Rarely will there be scores of 0 or 10 due to the reality that countries contain complex landscapes; as such, the index offers a range of possibilities ranging from lesser to greater stability.

Country	Assessment
Afghanistan	2
Albania	4.5-5
Algeria	5
Andorra	9.5
Angola	4.5-5
Antigua	8.5-9
Argentina	7
Armenia	5.5
Australia	9.5

Austria	9.5
Azerbaijan	5
Bahamas	9
Bahrain	6
Bangladesh	4.5
Barbados	9
Belarus	4
Belgium	9
Belize	8
Benin	5
Bhutan	5
Bolivia	6
Bosnia-Herzegovina	5
Botswana	8.5
Brazil	7
Brunei	8
Bulgaria	7.5
Burkina Faso	4

Burma (Myanmar)	4.5
Burundi	4
Cambodia	4.5-5
Cameroon	6
Canada	9.5
Cape Verde	6
Central African Republic	3
Chad	4.5
Chile	9
China	7
China: Hong Kong	8
China: Taiwan	8
Colombia	7.5
Comoros	5
Congo DRC	3
Congo RC	5
Costa Rica	9.5
Cote d'Ivoire	3.5

Croatia	7.5
Cuba	4.5
Cyprus	8
Czech Republic	8.5
Denmark	9.5
Djibouti	5
Dominica	8.5
Dominican Republic	7
East Timor	5
Ecuador	7
Egypt	4.5-5
El Salvador	7.5-8
Equatorial Guinea	4.5
Eritrea	4
Estonia	9
Ethiopia	4.5
Fiji	5
Finland	9

Fr. Yugoslav Rep. Macedonia	6.5
France	9
Gabon	5
Gambia	4.5
Georgia	5
Germany	9.5
Ghana	7
Greece	6
Grenada	8.5
Guatemala	7
Guinea	3.5-4
Guinea-Bissau	4
Guyana	6
Haiti	3.5-4
Holy See (Vatican)	9.5
Honduras	6
Hungary	7.5
Iceland	9

India	8
Indonesia	7
Iran	3.5
Iraq	2.5
Ireland	9.5
Israel	8
Italy	8.5-9
Jamaica	8
Japan	9
Jordan	6
Kazakhstan	6
Kenya	5
Kiribati	8
Korea, North	2
Korea, South	8.5
Kosovo	5.5
Kuwait	7
Kyrgyzstan	5

Laos	5
Latvia	8.5
Lebanon	5.5
Lesotho	5
Liberia	3.5-4
Libya	2
Liechtenstein	9
Lithuania	9
Luxembourg	9.5
Madagascar	4
Malawi	5
Malaysia	8
Maldives	4.5-5
Mali	4.5-5
Malta	9
Marshall Islands	8
Mauritania	6
Mauritius	8

Mexico	6.5-7
Micronesia	8
Moldova	5.5
Monaco	9.5
Mongolia	6.5-7
Montenegro	8
Morocco	7
Mozambique	5
Namibia	8.5
Nauru	8
Nepal	4.5
Netherlands	9.5
New Zealand	9.5
Nicaragua	6
Niger	4.5
Nigeria	4.5
Norway	9.5
Oman	7

Pakistan	3
Palau	8
Panama	8.5
Papua New Guinea	6
Paraguay	8
Peru	7.5
Philippines	6
Poland	9
Portugal	9
Qatar	7
Romania	7
Russia	6
Rwanda	5
Saint Kitts and Nevis	9
Saint Lucia	9
Saint Vincent and Grenadines	9
Samoa	8
San Marino	9.5

Sao Tome and Principe	7
Saudi Arabia	6
Senegal	7.5
Serbia	6.5
Seychelles	8
Sierra Leone	4.5
Singapore	9.5
Slovak Republic (Slovakia)	8.5
Slovenia	9
Solomon Islands	6.5-7
Somalia	2
South Africa	7.5
Spain	9
Sri Lanka	5
Sudan	3
Suriname	5
Swaziland	5
Sweden	9.5

Switzerland	9.5
Syria	2
Tajikistan	4.5
Tanzania	6
Thailand	6
Togo	5
Tonga	7
Trinidad and Tobago	8
Tunisia	5
Turkey	7.5
Turkmenistan	5
Tuvalu	8.5
Uganda	6
Ukraine	3.5-4
United Arab Emirates	7
United Kingdom	9
United States	9
Uruguay	8.5

Uzbekistan	4
Vanuatu	8.5
Venezuela	4.5-5
Vietnam	4.5
Yemen	2.5
Zambia	5
Zimbabwe	3

### \*Methodology

The Political Stability Index is calculated by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on the combined scoring of varied criteria as follows --

1. record of peaceful transitions of power ( free and fair elections; adherence to political accords)
2. record of democratic representation, presence of instruments of democracy; systemic accountability
3. respect for human rights; respect for civil rights
4. strength of the system of jurisprudence, adherence to constitutional order, and good governance
5. ability of a government to stay in office and carry out its policies vis a vis risk credible risks of government collapse (i.e. government stability versus a country being deemed "ungovernable")
6. threat of coups, insurgencies, and insurrection
7. level of unchecked crime and corruption
8. risk of terrorism and other threats to national security

9. relationship with regional powers and international community; record of bilateral or multilateral cooperation

10. degree of economic strife (i.e. economic and financial challenges)

Editor's Note:

As of 2015, the current climate of upheaval internationally -- both politically and economically -- has affected the ratings for several countries across the world. The usual suspects -- North Korea, [Afghanistan](#), and [Somalia](#) -- retain their low rankings. The reclusive and ultra-dictatorial North Korean regime, which has terrified the world with its nuclear threats, has exhibited internal instability. Of note was a cut-throat purge of hundreds of high ranking officials deemed to be a threat to Kim Jung-un. Despite their attempts to recover from years of lawlessness, war, and warlordism, both [Afghanistan](#) and [Somalia](#) continue to be beset by terrorism and turmoil. In [Afghanistan](#), while international forces have seen success in the effort against the terror group, al-Qaida, the other Islamist extremist group, the Taliban, continues to carry out a vicious insurgency using terrorism. In [Somalia](#), while the government attempts to do the nation's business, the terror group, al-Shabab continues to make its presence known not only in [Somalia](#), but across the border into [Kenya](#) with devastating results/ Also in this category is [Iraq](#), which continues to be rocked by horrific violence and terrorism at the hands of Islamic State, which has taken over wide swaths of Iraqi territory.

Syria, [Libya](#), and [Yemen](#) have been added to this unfortunate echelon of the world's most politically unstable countries. [Syria](#) has been mired by the twin hazards of 1. a civil war as rebels oppose the Assad regime; and 2. the rampage of terror being carried out by Islamic State, which also seized control over vast portions of Syrian territory. Meanwhile, the post-Qaddhafi landscape of [Libya](#) has devolved into chaos as rival militias battle for control -- the elected government of the country notwithstanding. Rounding out this grim triad is [Yemen](#), which was dealing with a Houthi rebellion, secessionists in the south, as well as the threat of terrorism from al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula as well as Islamic State, while also being the site of a proxy war between Shi'a [Iran](#) and Sunni [Saudi Arabia](#).

Meanwhile, several Middle Eastern and North African countries, such as [Tunisia](#), [Egypt](#), and [Bahrain](#) were downgraded in recent years due to political instability occurring in the "season of unrest" sweeping the region since 2011 and continuing today. All three of these countries have stabilized in recent years and have been upgraded accordingly. In [Bahrain](#), the landscape had calmed. In [Egypt](#), the secular military-backed government has generated criticism for its crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood; however, the country had ratified the presidency via democratic elections and were on track to hold parliamentary elections as the country moved along the path of democratization. Perhaps the most impressive story was coming out of [Tunisia](#) -- the

country whose Jasmine Revolution sparked the entire Arab Spring -- and where after a few years of strife, a new progressive constitution was passed into law and a secular government had been elected to power. [Tunisia](#), [Egypt](#), and [Bahrain](#) have seen slight upgrades as these countries stabilize.

In Africa, the [Central African Republic](#) was downgraded the previous year due to the takeover of the government by Muslim Seleka rebels. Although the country has been trying to emerge from this crisis, the fact of the matter was that it was difficult to halt the precipitous decline into lawlessness in that country. [Zimbabwe](#) has maintained its consistently poor ranking due to the dictatorial regime of Mugabe, who continues to hold a tight grip on power, intimidates the opposition, squashes dissent, and oppresses the white farmer population of the country. Moving in a slightly improved direction is [Nigeria](#), which has sported abysmal ratings due to the government's fecklessness in dealing with the threat posed by the Islamist terror group, Boko Haram. Under its newly-elected government, there appears to be more of a concerted effort to make national security a priority action item. [Mali](#) was also slightly upgraded due to its efforts to return to constitutional order following the 2012 coup and to neutralize the threat of separatists and Islamists. Political instability has visited [Burkina Faso](#) and [Burundi](#) as the leaders of those countries attempted to side-step constitutional limits to hold onto power. In [Burundi](#), an attempted coup ensued but quelled, and the president won a (questionable) new term in office; unrest has since punctuated the landscape. In [Burkina Faso](#), the political climate has turned stormy as a result of a successful coup that ended the rule of the president, and then a putsch against the transitional government. These two African countries have been downgraded as a result.

It should be noted that the African country of South [Sudan](#) -- the world's newest nation state -- has not been officially included in this assessment; however, it can be unofficially assessed to be in the vicinity of "3" due to its manifold political and economic challenges. [Guinea](#) has endured poor rankings throughout, but was slightly downgraded further over fears of social unrest and the Ebola heath crisis.

In Europe, [Ukraine](#) was downgraded due to the unrest facing that country following its Maidan revolution that triggered a pro-Russian uprising in the eastern part of the country. [Russia](#) was also implicated in the Ukrainian crisis due to its intervention on behalf of pro-Russian separatists, as well as its annexation of the Ukrainian territory of Crimea. [Serbia](#) and [Albania](#) were slightly downgraded due to eruptions of unrest, while [Romania](#) was slightly downgraded on the basis of corruption charges against the prime minister. [Spain](#), [Portugal](#), [Ireland](#), and [Italy](#) were downgraded due to debt woes and the concomitant effect on the euro zone. [Greece](#), another euro zone nation, was downgraded the previous year due to its sovereign debt crisis; however, the country successfully forged a rescue deal with international creditors and stayed within the Euro zone. Greek voters rewarded the hitherto unknown upstart party at the polls for these efforts. As a result, [Greece](#) was actually upgraded slightly as it proved to the world that it could endure the political and economic storms. Meanwhile, [Germany](#), [France](#), [Switzerland](#), the [United Kingdom](#),

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the [Netherlands](#), and the Scandinavian countries continue to post impressive ranking consistent with these countries' strong records of democracy, freedom, and peaceful transfers of power.

In Asia, [Nepal](#) was downgraded in response to continuous political instability well after landmark elections that prevails today. [Cambodia](#) was very slightly downgraded due to post-election instability that has resulted in occasional flares of violence. Despite the "trifecta of tragedy" in [Japan](#) in 2011 -- the earthquake, the ensuing tsunami, and the resulting nuclear crisis -- and the appreciable destabilization of the economic and political terrain therein, this country has only slightly been downgraded. Japan's challenges have been assessed to be transient, the government remains accountable, and there is little risk of default. Both [India](#) and [China](#) retain their rankings; [India](#) holds a slightly higher ranking than [China](#) due to its record of democratic representation and accountability. Increasing violence and political instability in [Pakistan](#) resulted in a downgrade for this country's already low rating.

In the Americas, [Haiti](#) retained its downgraded status due to ongoing political and economic woes. [Mexico](#) was downgraded due to its alarming rate of crime. [Guatemala](#) was downgraded due to charges of corruption, the arrest of the president, and uncertainty over the outcome of elections. [Brazil](#) was downgraded due to the corruption charges erupting on the political landscape, the stalling of the economy, and the increasingly loud calls for the impeachment of President Rousseff. [Argentina](#) was downgraded due to its default on debt following the failure of talks with bond holders. [Venezuela](#) was downgraded due to the fact that the country's post-Chavez government is every bit as autocratic and nationalistic, but even more inclined to oppress its political opponents. [Colombia](#) was upgraded slightly due to efforts aimed at securing a peace deal with the FARC insurgents. A small but significant upgrade was attributed to [Cuba](#) due to its recent pro-business reforms and its normalization of ties with the United States. Meanwhile, the [United States](#), [Canada](#), [Costa Rica](#), [Panama](#), and most of the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean retain their strong rankings due to their records of stability and peaceful transfers of power.

In the Pacific, [Fiji](#) was upgraded due to its return to constitutional order and democracy with the holding of the first elections in eight years.

In Oceania, [Maldives](#) has been slightly downgraded due to the government's continued and rather relentless persecution of the country's former pro-democracy leader - former President Nasheed.

Source:

Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, CountryWatch Inc. [www.countrywatch.com](http://www.countrywatch.com)

Updated:

2015

## Freedom Rankings

### Freedom Rankings

#### Freedom in the World

Editor's Note: This ranking by Freedom House quantifies political freedom and civil liberties into a single combined index on each sovereign country's level of freedom and liberty. The initials "PR" and "CL" stand for Political Rights and Civil Liberties, respectively. The number 1 represents the most free countries and the number 7 represents the least free. Several countries fall in the continuum in between. The freedom ratings reflect an overall judgment based on survey results.

Country	PR	CL	Freedom Status	Trend Arrow
Afghanistan	6 ?	6	Not Free	
Albania*	3	3	Partly Free	
Algeria	6	5	Not Free	
Andorra*	1	1	Free	
Angola	6	5	Not Free	
Antigua and Barbuda*	3 ?	2	Free	

Argentina*	2	2	Free
Armenia	6	4	Partly Free
Australia*	1	1	Free
Austria*	1	1	Free
Azerbaijan	6	5	Not Free
Bahamas*	1	1	Free
Bahrain	6 ?	5	Not Free ?
Bangladesh*	3 ?	4	Partly Free
Barbados*	1	1	Free
Belarus	7	6	Not Free
Belgium*	1	1	Free
Belize*	1	2	Free
Benin*	2	2	Free
Bhutan	4	5	Partly Free
Bolivia*	3	3	Partly Free
Bosnia-Herzegovina*	4	3	Partly Free
Botswana*	3 ?	2	Free
Brazil*	2	2	Free

Brunei	6	5	Not Free	
Bulgaria*	2	2	Free	
Burkina Faso	5	3	Partly Free	
Burma	7	7	Not Free	
Burundi*	4	5	Partly Free	↑
Cambodia	6	5	Not Free	↓
Cameroon	6	6	Not Free	
Canada*	1	1	Free	
Cape Verde*	1	1	Free	
Central African Republic	5	5	Partly Free	
Chad	7	6	Not Free	
Chile*	1	1	Free	
China	7	6	Not Free	
Colombia*	3	4	Partly Free	
Comoros*	3	4	Partly Free	
Congo (Brazzaville )	6	5	Not Free	↓
Congo (Kinshasa)	6	6	Not Free	↓
Costa Rica*	1	1	Free	

Cote d'Ivoire	6	5	Not Free	
Croatia*	1 ?	2	Free	
Cuba	7	6	Not Free	
Cyprus*	1	1	Free	
Czech Republic*	1	1	Free	
Denmark*	1	1	Free	
Djibouti	5	5	Partly Free	
Dominica*	1	1	Free	
Dominican Republic*	2	2	Free	↓
East Timor*	3	4	Partly Free	
Ecuador*	3	3	Partly Free	
Egypt	6	5	Not Free	
El Salvador*	2	3	Free	
Equatorial Guinea	7	7	Not Free	
Eritrea	7	7 ?	Not Free	
Estonia*	1	1	Free	
Ethiopia	5	5	Partly Free	↓
Fiji	6	4	Partly Free	

Finland*	1	1	Free	
France*	1	1	Free	
Gabon	6	5 ?	Not Free ?	
The Gambia	5	5 ?	Partly Free	
Georgia	4	4	Partly Free	
Germany*	1	1	Free	
Ghana*	1	2	Free	
Greece*	1	2	Free	
Grenada*	1	2	Free	
Guatemala*	4 ?	4	Partly Free	
Guinea	7	6 ?	Not Free	
Guinea-Bissau*	4	4	Partly Free	
Guyana*	2	3	Free	
Haiti*	4	5	Partly Free	
Honduras	4 ?	4 ?	Partly Free	
Hungary*	1	1	Free	
Iceland*	1	1	Free	
India*	2	3	Free	

Indonesia*	2	3	Free	
Iran	6	6	Not Free	↓
Iraq	5 ?	6	Not Free	
Ireland*	1	1	Free	
Israel*	1	2	Free	
Italy*	1	2	Free	
Jamaica*	2	3	Free	
Japan*	1	2	Free	
Jordan	6 ?	5	Not Free ?	
Kazakhstan	6	5	Not Free	↓
Kenya	4	4 ?	Partly Free	
Kiribati*	1	1	Free	
Kosovo	5 ?	4 ?	Partly Free ?	
Kuwait	4	4	Partly Free	
Kyrgyzstan	6 ?	5 ?	Not Free ?	
Laos	7	6	Not Free	
Latvia*	2	1	Free	
Lebanon	5	3 ?	Partly Free	

Lesotho*	3 ?	3	Partly Free ?	
Liberia*	3	4	Partly Free	
Libya	7	7	Not Free	
Liechtenstein*	1	1	Free	
Lithuania*	1	1	Free	
Luxembourg*	1	1	Free	
Macedonia*	3	3	Partly Free	↑
Madagascar	6 ?	4 ?	Partly Free	
Malawi*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	
Malaysia	4	4	Partly Free	
Maldives*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	
Mali*	2	3	Free	
Malta*	1	1	Free	↓
Marshall Islands*	1	1	Free	
Mauritania	6	5	Not Free	
Mauritius*	1	2	Free	
Mexico*	2	3	Free	
Micronesia*	1	1	Free	

Moldova*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	
Monaco*	2	1	Free	
Mongolia*	2	2	Free	↑
Montenegro*	3	2 ?	Free ?	
Morocco	5	4	Partly Free	↓
Mozambique	4 ?	3	Partly Free	
Namibia*	2	2	Free	
Nauru*	1	1	Free	
Nepal	4	4	Partly Free	
Netherlands*	1	1	Free	
New Zealand*	1	1	Free	
Nicaragua*	4	4 ?	Partly Free	
Niger	5 ?	4	Partly Free	
Nigeria	5	4	Partly Free	↓
North Korea	7	7	Not Free	↓
Norway*	1	1	Free	
Oman	6	5	Not Free	
Pakistan	4	5	Partly Free	

Palau*	1	1	Free	
Panama*	1	2	Free	
Papua New Guinea*	4	3	Partly Free	
Paraguay*	3	3	Partly Free	
Peru*	2	3	Free	
Philippines	4	3	Partly Free	↓
Poland*	1	1	Free	
Portugal*	1	1	Free	
Qatar	6	5	Not Free	
Romania*	2	2	Free	
Russia	6	5	Not Free	↓
Rwanda	6	5	Not Free	
Saint Kitts and Nevis*	1	1	Free	
Saint Lucia*	1	1	Free	
Saint Vincent and Grenadines*	2	1	Free	
Samoa*	2	2	Free	
San Marino*	1	1	Free	
Sao Tome and Principe*	2	2	Free	

Saudi Arabia	7	6	Not Free	
Senegal*	3	3	Partly Free	
Serbia*	2 ?	2	Free	
Seychelles*	3	3	Partly Free	
Sierra Leone*	3	3	Partly Free	
Singapore	5	4	Partly Free	
Slovakia*	1	1	Free	↓
Slovenia*	1	1	Free	
Solomon Islands	4	3	Partly Free	
Somalia	7	7	Not Free	
South Africa*	2	2	Free	
South Korea*	1	2	Free	
Spain*	1	1	Free	
Sri Lanka*	4	4	Partly Free	
Sudan	7	7	Not Free	
Suriname*	2	2	Free	
Swaziland	7	5	Not Free	
Sweden*	1	1	Free	

Switzerland*	1	1	Free	↓
Syria	7	6	Not Free	
Taiwan*	1 ?	2 ?	Free	
Tajikistan	6	5	Not Free	
Tanzania	4	3	Partly Free	
Thailand	5	4	Partly Free	
Togo	5	4 ?	Partly Free	
Tonga	5	3	Partly Free	
Trinidad and Tobago*	2	2	Free	
Tunisia	7	5	Not Free	
Turkey*	3	3	Partly Free	↓
Turkmenistan	7	7	Not Free	
Tuvalu*	1	1	Free	
Uganda	5	4	Partly Free	
Ukraine*	3	2	Free	
United Arab Emirates	6	5	Not Free	
United Kingdom*	1	1	Free	
United States*	1	1	Free	

Uruguay*	1	1	Free	
Uzbekistan	7	7	Not Free	
Vanuatu*	2	2	Free	
Venezuela	5 ?	4	Partly Free	
Vietnam	7	5	Not Free	↓
Yemen	6 ?	5	Not Free ?	
Zambia*	3	4 ?	Partly Free	
Zimbabwe	6 ?	6	Not Free	

Methodology:

PR and CL stand for political rights and civil liberties, respectively; 1 represents the most free and 7 the least free rating. The ratings reflect an overall judgment based on survey results.

? ? up or down indicates a change in political rights, civil liberties, or status since the last survey.

↑ ↓ up or down indicates a trend of positive or negative changes that took place but that were not sufficient to result in a change in political rights or civil liberties ratings of 1-7.

\* indicates a country's status as an electoral democracy.

Source:

This data is derived from the latest edition of Freedom House's Freedom in the World 2010 edition.

Available at URL: <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

Updated:

Reviewed in 2015

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## Human Rights

### Overview of Human Rights in Burkina Faso

Overall, Burkina Faso has a poor record of human rights. Indeed, there are areas in which major abuses occur almost daily. A weak infrastructure and high levels of poverty undermine any meaningful changes by the government to resolve past and current human rights violations.

The police in Burkina Faso are prone to use arbitrary arrest, detention, and excessive force against law-abiding citizens and criminals alike. Meanwhile, societal violence goes unchecked by the authorities.

There has been no progress made into resolving extrajudicial execution-style killings. As well, no charges have been brought against those responsible for the politically motivated killings which occurred in the late 1990s.

Both prisoners and international monitors have complained about harsh and inhumane prison conditions that can prematurely lead to prisoners' illness and/or death.

The government is known to restrict the freedoms of press, assembly and association. Demonstrations against the government are often forcibly dispersed by the authorities and those detained are sometimes held indefinitely.

Discrimination and violence against persons with disabilities and children happen without repercussion or reprisal. Child labor and trafficking of persons for forced sexual labor are growing problems.

### Human Development Index (HDI) Rank:

See full listing of the Human Development Index located in the Social Overview of this report for this country's current rank.

### Human Poverty Index Rank:

102nd out of 103

### Gini Index:

48.2

**Life Expectancy at Birth (years):**

53 years

**Unemployment Rate:**

N/A

**Population living on \$1 a day (%):**

44.9%

**Population living on \$2 a day (%):**

81.0%

**Population living beneath the Poverty Line (%):**

45%

**Internally Displaced People:**

N/A

Note- Burkina Faso is currently home to some 1,000 foreign refugees

**Total Crime Rate (%):**

N/A

**Health Expenditure (% of GDP):**

Public: 2.0%

**% of GDP Spent on Education:**

2.4%

**Human Rights Conventions Party to:**

- International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Conventions on the Rights of the Child
- Convention relating to the Status of Refugees
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

\*Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite index that measures the level of well-being in 177 nations in the world. It uses factors such as poverty, literacy, life-expectancy, education, gross domestic product, and purchasing power parity to assess the average achievements in each nation. It has been used in the United Nation's Human Development Report since 1993.

\*Human Poverty Index Ranking is based on certain indicators used to calculate the Human Poverty Index. Probability at birth of not surviving to age 40, adult literacy rate, population without sustainable access to an improved water source, and population below income poverty line are the indicators assessed in this measure.

\*The Gini Index measures inequality based on the distribution of family income or consumption. A value of 0 represents perfect equality (income being distributed equally), and a value of 100 perfect inequality (income all going to one individual).

\*The calculation of the total crime rate is the % of the total population which has been effected by property crime, robbery, sexual assault, assault, or bribery (corruption) related occurrences.

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## **Government Functions**

### Introduction

Burkina Faso is governed under the constitution of 1991, which was later amended in 2000 and in 2002. The government of the Burkina Faso includes a strong presidency, a prime minister, a cabinet-like entity known as the council of ministers, which is presided over by the president, a legislature known as the National Assembly, and the judiciary. The legislature and judiciary are independent, but remain susceptible to outside influence.

### The Presidency

The president is elected by popular vote and heads the executive branch. According to Articles 36-39 of the constitution, the president's primary responsibilities including leading the state, assuring national unity, and acting as a guarantor of national independence, territorial integrity, the permanence and continuity of the state, and to respect accords and treaties. Although the presidential term was once for a seven-year term, a constitutional change shortened the term to five years.\* In order to be eligible for the presidency, however, both of the candidate's parents must be Burkinabe.

Also included in the executive branch of government is the prime minister and cabinet. Following Article 43, if for any reason the president should become incapacitated while in office, his powers pass temporarily on to the prime minister. The president appoints the prime minister.

### The Legislature

The legislature consists of a 127-member elected National Assembly. Members of the National Assembly (Deputies) are elected for five-year terms. The primary function of the legislature is to exercise legislative powers; as the constitution is devoted to the rule of law, the legislature is the sole body endowed with the power to write laws. The president of the National Assembly is elected by the constituent members of the Assembly by an absolute majority in one or two elections.

Note that in 2013, a Senate was established in Burkina Faso; that body is made up of 99 seats -- 39 members are indirectly elected by regional councils, 39 members are appointed by the president, and 21 members are indirectly elected by interest groups; members serve five-year terms.

### The Judiciary

The legal system is based on French civil law system and customary law. There is a Supreme Court, an Appeals Court, and a Constitutional Court

\* NOTE:

Note that a constitutional amendment was approved in the early 2000s that limited persons to presidential office for only two terms and reduced the presidential term from seven to five years, enforceable as of 2005. Since then-President Compaore claimed that the constitutional change should only be applied retroactively, he was able to contest -- and win -- the presidential election in 2005. The 2010 elections were understood as his last opportunity to contest presidential elections for a final term in office. However, Compaore's interpretation of these constitutional limits (read: the president's desire to extend his rule) led to unrest in 2014 and, ultimately, he was forced to resign. Since that time, Burkina Faso has been rocked by political turmoil.

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## Government Structure

**Names:**

*conventional long form:*

None

*conventional short form:*

Burkina Faso

*local long form:*

none

*local short form:*

Burkina Faso

*former:*

Upper Volta, Republic of Upper Volta

**Type:**

Parliamentary republic

**Executive Branch:**

Chief of State:

Roch Marc Christian Kabore was elected to the presidency on Nov. 29, 2015; see Primer below for details. The president is elected by popular vote and heads the executive branch.

Note that a constitutional amendment was approved in the early 2000s that limited persons to presidential office for only two terms and reduced the presidential term from seven to five years, enforceable as of 2005. Since then-President Compaore claimed that the constitutional change should only be applied retroactively, he was able to contest -- and win -- the presidential election in 2005. The 2010 elections were understood as his last opportunity to contest presidential elections for a final term in office. However, as discussed below, his interpretation of these constitutional limits (read: the president's desire to extend his rule) led to unrest in 2014 and, ultimately, Compaore was forced to resign. Since that time, as discussed below, Burkina Faso has been rocked by political turmoil.

Note that elections were finally held in November 2015, with Roch Marc Christian Kabore winning the presidency. See Primer below for details.

#### Head of Government:

Also included in the executive branch of government is the prime minister, who is appointed by the president and serves as head of government.

In January 2016, in the aftermath of presidential elections intended to return the country to democratic order, Burkina Faso's newly elected President Roch Marc Christian Kabore named a new prime minister. The new president's selection to lead the government of Burkina Faso was Paul Kaba Thieba -- an economist who worked for the West African central bank with limited political experience. It was apparent that President Kabore's intent was to place a technocrat in the position of head of government, given the priority of reviving the slowing economy.

#### Cabinet:

Council of Ministers; formally appointed by the president on the recommendation of the prime minister

#### Note on chief of state:

At the time of writing in 2015, Burkina Faso was enduring its second uprising in a one year period. In 2014, President Captain Blaise COMPAORÉ was ousted from power, as discussed below. A peace plan was advanced and President Michel KAFANDO became the interim or transitional chief of state in 2014 until elections could be held in 2015 to return the country to democratic order. Before those elections could be held an elite presidential guard carried out a coup. Regional powers were in the process of trying to broker another peace plan, which would be aimed at returning the country to the leadership of the transitional government. The matter of scheduled elections (to be held in 2015) remained unresolved at the time of writing, along with the question of whether or not the junta would sign on fully to the fresh peace proposal.

#### Note on former president:

President Captain Blaise COMPAORÉ (since 1987 via coup; elected without opposition in 1991;

re-elected 1998 and 2005; elected in 2005 for a five-year term by popular vote due to constitutional changes that reduced the presidential term from seven to five years, enforceable as of 2005; contested 2010 election; forced to resign in 2014 after mass protests and apparent military takeover). A political transition was soon set in place. See "Editor's Note on 2010 election" and "Special Entry on 2014 political turmoil" below. The next presidential elections is expected to be held in 2015, as discussed in the Primer below.

Note on transitional president:

Transitional President Michel KAFANDO (since 2014; see below for details related to his appointment, as well as details related to the 2015 coup). Kafando came to power as an interim leader just as Burkina Faso was emerging from under the control of a military junta in 2014, following mass unrest of that period, as discussed below. His successor was to be determined on the basis of fresh elections set for 2015, as discussed below. However, in September 2015, Burkina Faso was subject to a second undemocratic transfer of power -- this time to an elite presidential guard. Regional powers brokered a deal that returned Kafando to the helm, as discussed in the Special Entry below. Elections followed in November 2015, as discussed in the Primer below.

Special Entry:

On Sept. 16, 2015, an elite military wing or praetorian guard, known as the Regiment of Presidential Security (RSP), carried out a coup d'etat in Burkina Faso, ousting the interim government from power ahead of elections. Of note was the fact that those elections were intended to restore Burkina Faso to democratic order after a coup d'etat in 2014 removed the sitting president from the helm of power. But before that voting exercise was to take place, Burkina Faso was again struck by political turbulence.

Going back to October 2014, long-serving President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso sought to extend his rule of the small west African country, effectively sparking mass protests. Those protests turned violent, and the parliament and other government buildings were burned. With the country slipping precipitously into crisis, a state of emergency was established. Compaore resigned and called for elections to be held in 90 days, and a transitional plan was outlined. But with a power chasm opening up, the military seized power in what could only be understood as a coup d'etat. While the people of Burkina Faso had participated in an uprising intended to protect their democracy, they had instead been faced with betrayal by the military, who exploited the public discontent to seize power for itself.

The African Union soon issued a two-week ultimatum to the military in Burkina Faso, demanding that it transition power to a civilian government or face sanctions. The African Union emphasized that the actions of the armed forces now in control of Burkina Faso were undemocratic and that consequences were in the offing if Burkina Faso failed to return the country to civilian rule in short order.

By Nov. 9, 2014, following several days of negotiations between various stakeholders in the capital of Ouagadougou, a charter had been adopted outlining a transitional blueprint for Burkina Faso's return to democratic order. The plan also included provisions for the establishment of a 25-seat transitional government, whose individual members would not be able to stand for future elections, a 90-seat transitional parliament, and a pathway to fresh presidential and parliamentary elections, which would be held in 2015. Ahead of those elections, a consensus candidate would serve as interim president but banned from contesting this future elections.

In mid-November 2014, the coup leader, Yacouba Isaac Zida, bowed to international pressure and said he would restore the constitution, which was suspended when the military seized power in the aftermath of Compaore's resignation. He also indicated that various institutional leaders form a committee, which would sign on to the plan for the transitional government outlined just above. Soon thereafter, former Foreign Minister Michel Kafando was named as Burkina Faso's transitional president in a bid to return the country to constitutional and democratic order. Meanwhile, Zida was not entirely gone from the political scene, since the interim president soon named the coup leader to be the new prime minister at the helm of a new transitional cabinet.

At the time in late 2014, it was clear that the Compaore era was over in Burkina Faso. Compaore had been the central figure in the violent military coup d'etat of 1987 that involved the assassination of then-President Thomas Sankara and other officials. In addition to initially seizing power by force, and the elimination of his rivals and co-conspirators by bloodshed, Compaore's record was also blemished by his controversial support for rebels during the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It was further tainted by his participation in Qadhafi's infamous World Revolutionary Center -- colloquially referred to as "Harvard for Tyrants." Yet despite this highly tarnished background, once entrenched in the presidency, Compaore recast and reconstituted himself as a peace maker and deal broker in the region. Moreover, "Beautiful Blaise," as he came to be known, also established himself as a pro-Western ally against Islamic extremists. In 2014, however, his ambition to hold onto power indefinitely had been his undoing, and the country had been plunged into chaos as a result.

By 2015, the national purview was focused on the elections that were intended to return Burkina Faso to democratic order. High hopes to that end were somewhat marred by emerging tensions on the political scene. At issue was the call by Prime Minister Zida to disband Compaore's praetorian guard, the Regiment of Presidential Security (RSP), which stirred the pot of dissonance within the presidential military service. Other issues of disagreement flaring ahead of the elections centered on the new electoral code, which shut out Compaore loyalists who supported the ousted leader's constitutional change agenda. A court ruling in mid-2015 invalidated the electoral law, opening the door for Compaore stalwarts to contest the forthcoming elections. But before the people or Burkina Faso could register their preferences via ballot and restore the country to democratic order, once again the country was plunged into turmoil via another irregular transition

of power.

As noted above, on Sept. 16, 2015, the elite praetorian guard, known as the Regiment of Presidential Security (RSP), carried out a coup d'etat in Burkina Faso, ousting the interim government from power, and placing the interim president, the interim prime minister and members of cabinet in detention. The move came just days after a government commission issued a controversial recommendation that the elite pro-Compaore presidential guard be dismantled. As such, the general consensus was that the coup had been stimulated by the RSP's fears that it would be locked out of the sphere of military and political power, although it was the presidential guard's very influence that had spurred the plan for its extinction in the first place.

In the intervening days after the coup, international powers condemned both the undemocratic transfer of power and the detention of Burkina Faso's transitional executives, while protesters took to the streets to register their outrage over the turn of events. The unrest soon grew violent, with several people dying and at least 100 others wounded as a result. The African Union reacted to these developments by suspending Burkina Faso from its membership and issuing a Sept. 22, 2015 deadline by which the transitional government should be restored.

Perhaps moved by this unfavorable climate, the coup leadership, led by General Gilbert Diendere, released President Kafando from detention although Prime Minister Zida remained, at the time, under house arrest. Soon thereafter, mediators from West Africa's ECOWAS bloc began the process of negotiations with Diendere cabal. The self-styled National Democratic Council issued a statement saying that it accepted the mediation process and its intention was "not to stay in power for a long time." Diendere himself added in an interview with the media, "I always said that I will not cling to power. It's now a question of terms."

By Sept. 20, 2015, a plan was afoot to restore the interim government, led by President Kafando, to power, and to relaunch the transitional process. That being said, it was unclear if the transitional process would culminate with elections being held on schedule on Oct. 11, 2015. It was also unknown as to what provisions would be made for Diendere and his cabal. Of note was the fact that General Diendere was a former head of intelligence and a stalwart of former President Compaore. As such, this latest chapter in the recent story of turmoil in Burkina Faso was very much following along the same trajectory with the Compaore factor at the center.

Meanwhile, an ultimatum was in place requiring the presidential guard carrying out the coup to surrender to government authorities by Sept. 22, 2015. That deadline passed with the Diendere cabal remaining defiant and a stand-off soon ensued in the capital of Ouagadougou. With government troops threatening to disarm the presidential guard themselves, there were fears of a violent confrontation.

For his part, General Diendere himself made clear that he would not be surrendering to the

government, but instead waiting for regional mediators to arrive in the country for negotiations on a settlement to the crisis. He said, "I'm not stalling for time. I'm within the time allotted to me. We don't want to fight. We will defend ourselves if need be, but we do not want to spill blood to stay in power." Of significance was the fact that the leaders of the neighboring countries of Senegal, Togo, Benin, Ghana, Niger, and Nigeria said they would go to Burkina Faso themselves to help mediate the crisis. They aimed to find a solution that would result in the reinstatement of President Kafando, who was at the time taking refuge at the French ambassador's residence.

By Sept. 23, 2015, tensions were easing in Burkina Faso as Prime Minister Zida was released from captivity, and with regional mediators expressing optimism about the negotiations process. President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria said, "I am delighted today that there are reports of some measures of understanding reached towards the resolution of the crisis." Soon thereafter, an interim agreement was reached to ensure that there was no outbreak of violence. Later, an actual agreement was announced to end the crisis. President Kafando was then reinstated as the head of state and Burkina Faso was returned to civilian rule.

General Diendere -- now confined to military barracks -- acknowledged that the efforts of the cabal had been "the biggest mistake" and admitted that there was little public support for their actions. He said, "We knew the people were not in favor of it. That is why we have given up." While the fate of Diendere was unknown, the main task of the country's authorities was to ensure that free and fair elections would go forward (technically still scheduled to be held in October 2015), and that the country would thus be returned to democratic order. To this end, President Kafando said, "If ever there was a transition to be held up as an example, it is indeed ours. I can assure you that we are determined to carry on with the mission the Burkinabe people have entrusted us with, to build strong institutions and a real democracy."

In the last days of September 2015, the restored government of Burkina Faso dissolved the elite presidential guard at the center of the attempted coup as well as the president's military council. The government also dismissed the minister in charge of security and established a commission charged with investigating the coup plot.

These moves were, however, more aspirational than likely to guarantee the return to stability in Burkina Faso. Of note was the fact that some members of the Presidential Security Regiment (RSP) were refusing to actually disarm and disband. A statement from the Burkina Faso defense forces read as follows: "The disarmament process ... has found itself at an impasse ... marked by the refusal of officers from the former Presidential Security Regiment to follow disarmament." That being said, after being surrounded by regular military forces, about 300 members of the elite RSP surrendered to authorities.

Also of note was the fact that the coup leader, Diendere, was reported to be missing from the army barracks where he had been confined in the aftermath of the attempted government take-over.

Reports indicated that Diendere's vehicle had been found and destroyed outside the diplomatic compound of the Holy See (also known as The Vatican). For his part, Diendere said in a telephone media with Reuters News that he was not at the barracks anymore; he said: "I'm in a safe place."

Nevertheless, by the start of October 2015, Diendere was apprehended and handed over to Burkinabe authorities. According to Prime Minister Zida, the government offered guarantees to the Vatican embassy making clear that if Diendere was handed over to officials to face justice, his life would be respected. Also in the custody of Burkinabe authorities was former Foreign Minister Djibril Bassole, who served in former President Compaore's cabinet, and who was accused of complicity in the attempted putsch.

Note that by Oct. 7, 2015, Diendere was charged with a litany of crimes including threatening state security, collusion with foreign forces, assault, murder, and destruction of property. As such, he would face trial before a military tribunal.

Presidential elections were held in November 2015, as discussed in the Primer below.

2015 Presidential Election:

Held on Nov. 29, 2015 and won by Roch Marc Christian Kabore; see Primer below for details.

**Legislative Branch:**

National Assembly or Assemblée Nationale:

Consists of 127 seats; members serve five-year terms

Note that in 2013, a Senate was established in Burkina Faso; that body is made up of 99 seats -- 39 members are indirectly elected by regional councils, 39 members are appointed by the president, and 21 members are indirectly elected by interest groups; members serve five-year terms.

Note on Results of 2012 Parliamentary Elections:

Held in December 2012; results as follows: seats by party -- CDP 70, ADF-RDA 19, Union for Progress and Reform 19, UPR 4, UNIR-MS 4, CFD-B 3, PDS/Metba 2, other 6

2015 Parliamentary Elections:

held on Nov. 29, 2015; see Primer below for details.

**Primer on 2015 presidential and parliamentary elections in Burkina Faso**

Nov. 29, 2015 2015 --

## Introduction --

Presidential and parliamentary elections were initially scheduled to be held on Oct. 11, 2015, in Burkina Faso and return the country to constitutional order. As noted below, in September 2015, Burkina Faso was rocked by an attempted coup launched by a cabal within the elite presidential guard. As a result, the vote would not be expected to take place until November 2015, with Nov. 29, 2015 being the date ultimately scheduled for the elections to go forward.

## Election Details --

The incumbent head of state was Transitional President Michel Kafando, who has served since 2014 when Burkina Faso was just emerging from under the control of a military junta. The establishment of a transitional government was viewed as the first step in the direction of stabilization, although democratic elections would go a long way to returning the country to the path of democracy.

Note that in Burkina Faso, the president is both the head of state and head of government, and is elected by popular vote to serve five year terms.

Some of the known presidential candidates included the following individuals: former Prime Minister Roch Marc Kaboré, a former stalwart of Compaoré who went on to form his own party, the People's Movement for Progress (MPP); former Finance Minister Zéphirin Diabré under Compaoré, who also went on to form his own party, the Union for Progress and Change (UPC); former Foreign Minister Djibrill Bassolé, who was expected to lead a coalition of opposition groups; and a former member of parliament, Eddie Komboigo, was expected to be the candidate of Compaoré's former ruling party, the Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP).

Some of the other possible candidates for the presidency included Benewende Stanislas Sankara, the leader of Union for Rebirth / Sankarist Movement and former Defense Minister Kouame Lougue.

Several would-be candidates linked with former President Blaise Compaoré's ruling alliance were barred from contesting the election thanks to a ruling from Burkina Faso's constitutional council. A statement regarding the court's ruling read as follows: "All people having supported an anti-constitutional change damaging to the principle of democratic transition, notably the principle of limiting the number of presidential mandates leading to an insurrection or other uprising are ineligible." Those barred from the election included the aforementioned Eddie Komboigo.

In addition to the presidential contest, elections would also be held to determine the composition of the legislative branch of government. In Burkina Faso, the National Assembly or Assemblée

Nationale is composed of 127 seats and members serve five-year terms.

Note on the coup that led to the ousting of President Blaise Compaore --

Long-serving President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso sought to extend his rule of the small west African country, effectively sparking mass protests in late October 2014. Those protests turned violent, and the parliament and other government buildings were burned. With the country slipping precipitously into crisis, a state of emergency was established. Compaore resigned and called for elections to be held in 90 days, and a transitional plan was outlined. But with a power chasm opening up, the military seized power in what could only be understood as a coup d'etat. While the people of Burkina Faso had participated in an uprising intended to protect their democracy, they had instead been faced with betrayal by the military, who exploited the public discontent to seize power for itself.

The African Union soon issued a two-week ultimatum to the military in Burkina Faso, demanding that it transition power to a civilian government or face sanctions. The African Union emphasized that the actions of the armed forces now in control of Burkina Faso were undemocratic and that consequences were in the offing if Burkina Faso failed to return the country to civilian rule in short order.

By Nov. 9, 2014, following several days of negotiations between various stakeholders in the capital of Ouagadougou, a charter had been adopted outlining a transitional blueprint for Burkina Faso's return to democratic order. The plan also included provisions for the establishment of a 25-seat transitional government, whose individual members would not be able to stand for future elections, a 90-seat transitional parliament, and a pathway to fresh presidential and parliamentary elections, which would be held in 2015. Ahead of those elections, a consensus candidate would serve as interim president but be banned from contesting the future elections.

In mid-November 2014, the coup leader, Zida, bowed to international pressure and said he would restore the constitution, which was suspended when the military seized power in the aftermath of Compaore's resignation. He also indicated that various institutional leaders would form a committee, which would sign on to the plan for the transitional government outlined just above.

Soon thereafter, former Foreign Minister Michel Kafando was named as Burkina Faso's transitional president in a bid to return the country to constitutional and democratic order. In an interview with the media, Kafando said of his appointment as the interim president: "The committee has just designated me to guide temporarily the destiny of our country. This is more than an honor. It's a true mission which I will take with the utmost seriousness." Kafando's immediate task would be to name a prime minister who will form a government of 25 members. To that end, Zida -- the coup leader -- was named as the new prime minister at the helm of a new transitional cabinet.

Meanwhile, it was clear that the Compaore era was over in Burkina Faso. Compaore was the central figure in the violent military coup d'etat of 1987 that involved the assassination of then-President Thomas Sankara and other officials. In addition to initially seizing power by force, and the elimination of his rivals and co-conspirators by bloodshed, Compaore's record was also blemished by his controversial support for rebels during the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It was further tainted by his participation in Qadhafi's infamous World Revolutionary Center -- colloquially referred to as "Harvard for Tyrants." Yet despite this highly tarnished background, once entrenched in the presidency, Compaore recast and reconstituted himself as a peace maker and deal broker in the region. Moreover, "Beautiful Blaise," as he came to be known, also established himself as a pro-Western ally against Islamic extremists. In 2014, however, his ambition to hold onto power indefinitely had been his undoing, and the country had been plunged into chaos as a result.

#### Attempted Coup of 2015 --

The next elections were expected to be held in 2015, as discussed above, and were intended to return the country to democratic order. High hopes to that end were somewhat marred by emerging tensions on the political scene. At issue was the call by Prime Minister Zida to disband Compaore's praetorian guard, the Regiment of Presidential Security (RSP), which stirred the pot of dissonance within the presidential military service. Other issues of disagreement flaring ahead of the elections centered on the new electoral code, which shut out Compaore loyalists who supported the ousted leader's constitutional change agenda. However, a court ruling in mid-2015 invalidated the electoral law. Then, in mid-September 2015, Burkina Faso was subject to a military coup carried out by elements of the military loyal to Compaore and his praetorian guard.

A regional effort to resolve the crisis ended successfully with transitional President Kafando being returned to power as the head of state. Now, his main task would be to ensure that free and fair elections would go forward (at the time, still scheduled to be held in October 2015), and that the country would thus be returned to democratic order. To this end, President Kafando said, "If ever there was a transition to be held up as an example, it is indeed ours. I can assure you that we are determined to carry on with the mission the Burkinabe people have entrusted us with, to build strong institutions and a real democracy.

#### New date set for elections --

With Burkina Faso still left somewhat in shock after the attempted coup of September 2015, and with elections officially scheduled to take place a month later, calls began to rise for a delay so that the political landscape might be settled somewhat before people went to the polls. Accordingly, it was soon announced that the elections would not take place until November 2015, with Nov. 29, 2015 being the date scheduled for the elections to finally go forward.

## Election Results --

On election day, voting took place in Burkina Faso's elections amidst heavy security. At the presidential level, Roch Marc Christian Kabore garnered an outright majority with 54 percent of the vote share, thus clinching the presidency. His closest rival was Zephirin Diabre, who secured 30 percent. Kabore, who served as prime minister under former President Compaore although he later parted company with the ousted leader, declared victory. In a speech to supporters, he declared, "My first thought is to recognize the honor of this high office and to feel the weight of its great responsibility." Results for the parliamentary elections were not made official at the time of writing.

## **Judicial Branch:**

Supreme Court; Appeals Court; Constitutional Court

## **Legal System:**

Based on French civil law system and customary law

## **Constitution:**

June 2, 1991; amended in 2000

## **Administrative Divisions:**

13 regions; Boucle du Mouhoun, Cascades, Centre, Centre-Est, Centre-Nord, Centre-Ouest, Centre-Sud, Est, Hauts-Bassins, Nord, Plateau-Central, Sahel, Sud-Ouest

## **Political Parties and Leaders:**

African Democratic Rally-Alliance for Democracy and Federation or ADF-RDA [Gilbert OUEDRAOGO]

Citizen's Popular Rally or RPC [Antoine QUARE]

Coalition of Democratic Forces of Burkina or CFD-B [Zio Eric FRANCOIS]

Congress for Democracy and Progress or CDP [Assimi KOUANDA]

Democratic and Popular Rally or RDP [Nana THIBAUT]

Movement for Tolerance and Progress or MTP [Nayabtigungou Congo KABORE]

Party for African Independence or PAI [Soumane TOURE]

Party for Democracy and Progress-Socialist Party or PDP-PS [Francois O. KABORE]

Party for Democracy and Socialism/Metba or PDS/Metba [Hama Arba DIALLO]

Party for National Rebirth or PAREN [Barry TAHIROU]

People's Movement for Progress or MPP [Roch March KABORE]  
Rally for the Development of Burkina or RDB [Celestin Saidou COMPAORE]  
Rally of Ecologists of Burkina Faso or RDEB [Ram OUEDRAGO]  
Republican Party for Integration and Solidarity or PARIS  
Union for Democracy and Social Progress or UDPS [Fidele HIEN]  
Union for Progress and Change or UPC [Zephirin DIABRE]  
Union for Rebirth - Sankarist Movement or UNIR-MS [Benewende Stanislas SANKARA]  
Union for the Republic or UPR [Toussaint Abel COULIBALY]  
Union of Sankarist Parties or UPS [Ernest Nongma OUEDRAOGO]

**Suffrage:**

Universal adult

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## Principal Government Officials

### Government of Burkina Faso

**Executive Branch:**

Chief of State:

Roch Marc Christian Kabore was elected to the presidency on Nov. 29, 2015; see Primer below for details. The president is elected by popular vote and heads the executive branch.

Note that a constitutional amendment was approved in the early 2000s that limited persons to presidential office for only two terms and reduced the presidential term from seven to five years, enforceable as of 2005. Since then-President Compaore claimed that the constitutional change should only be applied retroactively, he was able to contest -- and win -- the presidential election in 2005. The 2010 elections were understood as his last opportunity to contest presidential elections for a final term in office. However, as discussed below, his interpretation of these constitutional limits (read: the president's desire to extend his rule) led to unrest in 2014 and, ultimately, Compaore was forced to resign. Since that time, as discussed below, Burkina Faso has been rocked by political turmoil.

Note that elections were finally held in November 2015, with Roch Marc Christian Kabore winning the presidency. See Primer below for details.

Head of Government:

Also included in the executive branch of government is the prime minister, who is appointed by the president and serves as head of government.

In January 2016, in the aftermath of presidential elections intended to return the country to democratic order, Burkina Faso's newly elected President Roch Marc Christian Kabore named a new prime minister. The new president's selection to lead the government of Burkina Faso was Paul Kaba Thieba -- an economist who worked for the West African central bank with limited political experience. It was apparent that President Kabore's intent was to place a technocrat in the position of head of government, given the priority of reviving the slowing economy.

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At the time in late 2014, it was clear that the Compaore era was over in Burkina Faso. Compaore had been the central figure in the violent military coup d'etat of 1987 that involved the assassination of then-President Thomas Sankara and other officials. In addition to initially seizing power by force, and the elimination of his rivals and co-conspirators by bloodshed, Compaore's record was also blemished by his controversial support for rebels during the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It was further tainted by his participation in Qadhafi's infamous World Revolutionary Center -- colloquially referred to as "Harvard for Tyrants." Yet despite this highly tarnished background, once entrenched in the presidency, Compaore recast and reconstituted himself as a peace maker and deal broker in the region. Moreover, "Beautiful Blaise," as he came to be known, also established himself as a pro-Western ally against Islamic extremists. In 2014, however, his ambition to hold onto power indefinitely had been his undoing, and the country had been plunged into chaos as a result.

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As noted above, on Sept. 16, 2015, the elite praetorian guard, known as the Regiment of Presidential Security (RSP), carried out a coup d'etat in Burkina Faso, ousting the interim government from power, and placing the interim president, the interim prime minister and members of cabinet in detention. The move came just days after a government commission issued a controversial recommendation that the elite pro-Compaore presidential guard be dismantled. As such, the general consensus was that the coup had been stimulated by the RSP's fears that it would be locked out of the sphere of military and political power, although it was the presidential guard's very influence that had spurred the plan for its extinction in the first place.

In the intervening days after the coup, international powers condemned both the undemocratic transfer of power and the detention of Burkina Faso's transitional executives, while protesters took to the streets to register their outrage over the turn of events. The unrest soon grew violent, with several people dying and at least 100 others wounded as a result. The African Union reacted to these developments by suspending Burkina Faso from its membership and issuing a Sept. 22, 2015 deadline by which the transitional government should be restored.

Perhaps moved by this unfavorable climate, the coup leadership, led by General Gilbert Diendere, released President Kafando from detention although Prime Minister Zida remained, at the time, under house arrest. Soon thereafter, mediators from West Africa's ECOWAS bloc began the process of negotiations with Diendere cabal. The self-styled National Democratic Council issued a statement saying that it accepted the mediation process and its intention was "not to stay in power for a long time." Diendere himself added in an interview with the media, "I always said that I will not cling to power. It's now a question of terms."

By Sept. 20, 2015, a plan was afoot to restore the interim government, led by President Kafando, to power, and to relaunch the transitional process. That being said, it was unclear if the transitional process would culminate with elections being held on schedule on Oct. 11, 2015. It was also unknown as to what provisions would be made for Diendere and his cabal. Of note was the fact that General Diendere was a former head of intelligence and a stalwart of former President Compaore. As such, this latest chapter in the recent story of turmoil in Burkina Faso was very much following along the same trajectory with the Compaore factor at the center.

Meanwhile, an ultimatum was in place requiring the presidential guard carrying out the coup to surrender to government authorities by Sept. 22, 2015. That deadline passed with the Diendere cabal remaining defiant and a stand-off soon ensued in the capital of Ouagadougou. With government troops threatening to disarm the presidential guard themselves, there were fears of a violent confrontation.

For his part, General Diendere himself made clear that he would not be surrendering to the government, but instead waiting for regional mediators to arrive in the country for negotiations on a settlement to the crisis. He said, "I'm not stalling for time. I'm within the time allotted to me. We don't want to fight. We will defend ourselves if need be, but we do not want to spill blood to stay in power." Of significance was the fact that the leaders of the neighboring countries of Senegal, Togo, Benin, Ghana, Niger, and Nigeria said they would go to Burkina Faso themselves to help mediate the crisis. They aimed to find a solution that would result in the reinstatement of President Kafando, who was at the time taking refuge at the French ambassador's residence.

By Sept. 23, 2015, tensions were easing in Burkina Faso as Prime Minister Zida was released from captivity, and with regional mediators expressing optimism about the negotiations process.

President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria said, "I am delighted today that there are reports of some measures of understanding reached towards the resolution of the crisis." Soon thereafter, an interim agreement was reached to ensure that there was no outbreak of violence. Later, an actual agreement was announced to end the crisis. President Kafando was then reinstated as the head of state and Burkina Faso was returned to civilian rule.

General Diendere -- now confined to military barracks -- acknowledged that the efforts of the cabal had been "the biggest mistake" and admitted that there was little public support for their actions. He said, "We knew the people were not in favor of it. That is why we have given up." While the fate of Diendere was unknown, the main task of the country's authorities was to ensure that free and fair elections would go forward (technically still scheduled to be held in October 2015), and that the country would thus be returned to democratic order. To this end, President Kafando said, "If ever there was a transition to be held up as an example, it is indeed ours. I can assure you that we are determined to carry on with the mission the Burkinabe people have entrusted us with, to build strong institutions and a real democracy."

In the last days of September 2015, the restored government of Burkina Faso dissolved the elite presidential guard at the center of the attempted coup as well as the president's military council. The government also dismissed the minister in charge of security and established a commission charged with investigating the coup plot.

These moves were, however, more aspirational than likely to guarantee the return to stability in Burkina Faso. Of note was the fact that some members of the Presidential Security Regiment (RSP) were refusing to actually disarm and disband. A statement from the Burkina Faso defense forces read as follows: "The disarmament process ... has found itself at an impasse ... marked by the refusal of officers from the former Presidential Security Regiment to follow disarmament." That being said, after being surrounded by regular military forces, about 300 members of the elite RSP surrendered to authorities.

Also of note was the fact that the coup leader, Diendere, was reported to be missing from the army barracks where he had been confined in the aftermath of the attempted government take-over. Reports indicated that Diendere's vehicle had been found and destroyed outside the diplomatic compound of the Holy See (also known as The Vatican). For his part, Diendere said in a telephone media with Reuters News that he was not at the barracks anymore; he said: "I'm in a safe place."

Nevertheless, by the start of October 2015, Diendere was apprehended and handed over to Burkinabe authorities. According to Prime Minister Zida, the government offered guarantees to the Vatican embassy making clear that if Diendere was handed over to officials to face justice, his life would be respected. Also in the custody of Burkinabe authorities was former Foreign Minister Djibril Bassole, who served in former President Compaore's cabinet, and who was

accused of complicity in the attempted putsch.

Note that by Oct. 7, 2015, Diendere was charged with a litany of crimes including threatening state security, collusion with foreign forces, assault, murder, and destruction of property. As such, he would face trial before a military tribunal.

Presidential elections were held in November 2015, as discussed in the Primer below.

2015 Presidential Election:

Held on Nov. 29, 2015 and won by Roch Marc Christian Kabore; see Primer below for details.

**Legislative Branch:**

National Assembly or Assemblée Nationale:

Consists of 127 seats; members serve five-year terms

Note that in 2013, a Senate was established in Burkina Faso; that body is made up of 99 seats -- 39 members are indirectly elected by regional councils, 39 members are appointed by the president, and 21 members are indirectly elected by interest groups; members serve five-year terms.

Note on Results of 2012 Parliamentary Elections:

Held in December 2012; results as follows: seats by party -- CDP 70, ADF-RDA 19, Union for Progress and Reform 19, UPR 4, UNIR-MS 4, CFD-B 3, PDS/Metba 2, other 6

2015 Parliamentary Elections:

held on Nov. 29, 2015; see Primer below for details.

**Primer on 2015 presidential and parliamentary elections in Burkina Faso**

Nov. 29, 2015 2015 --

Introduction --

Presidential and parliamentary elections were initially scheduled to be held on Oct. 11, 2015, in Burkina Faso and return the country to constitutional order. As noted below, in September 2015, Burkina Faso was rocked by an attempted coup launched by a cabal within the elite presidential guard. As a result, the vote would not be expected to take place until November 2015, with Nov. 29, 2015 being the date ultimately scheduled for the elections to go forward.

Election Details --

The incumbent head of state was Transitional President Michel Kafando, who has served since 2014 when Burkina Faso was just emerging from under the control of a military junta. The establishment of a transitional government was viewed as the first step in the direction of stabilization, although democratic elections would go a long way to returning the country to the path of democracy.

Note that in Burkina Faso, the president is both the head of state and head of government, and is elected by popular vote to serve five years terms.

Some of the known presidential candidates included the following individuals: former Prime Minister Roch Marc Kaboré, a former stalwart of Compaore who went onto form his own party, the People's Movement for Progress (MPP); former Finance Minister Zephirin Diabre under Compaore, who also went onto form his own party, the Union for Progress and Change (UPC); former Foreign Minister Djibrill Bassolé, who was expected to lead a coalition of opposition groups; and a former member of parliament, Eddie Komboigo, was expected to be the candidate of Compaore's former ruling party, the Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP).

Some of the other possible candidates for the presidency included Benewende Stanislas Sankara, the leader of Union for Rebirth / Sankarist Movement and former Defense Minister Kouame Lougue.

Several would-be candidates linked with former President Blaise Compaore's ruling alliance were barred from contesting the election thanks to a ruling from Burkina Faso's constitutional council. A statement regarding the court's ruling read as follows: "All people having supported an anti-constitutional change damaging to the principle of democratic transition, notably the principle of limiting the number of presidential mandates leading to an insurrection or other uprising are ineligible." Those barred from the election included the aforementioned Eddie Komboigo.

In addition to the presidential contest, elections would also be held to determine the composition of the legislative branch of government. In Burkina Faso, the National Assembly or Assemblée Nationale is composed of 127 seats and members serve five-year terms.

Note on the coup that led to the ousting of President Blaise Compaore --

Long-serving President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso sought to extend his rule of the small west African country, effectively sparking mass protests in late October 2014. Those protests turned violent, and the parliament and other government buildings were burned. With the country slipping precipitously into crisis, a state of emergency was established. Compaore resigned and called for elections to be held in 90 days, and a transitional plan was outlined. But with a power chasm opening up, the military seized power in what could only be understood as a coup d'etat.

While the people of Burkina Faso had participated in an uprising intended to protect their democracy, they had instead been faced with betrayal by the military, who exploited the public discontent to seize power for itself.

The African Union soon issued a two-week ultimatum to the military in Burkina Faso, demanding that it transition power to a civilian government or face sanctions. The African Union emphasized that the actions of the armed forces now in control of Burkina Faso were undemocratic and that consequences were in the offing if Burkina Faso failed to return the country to civilian rule in short order.

By Nov. 9, 2014, following several days of negotiations between various stakeholders in the capital of Ouagadougou, a charter had been adopted outlining a transitional blueprint for Burkina Faso's return to democratic order. The plan also included provisions for the establishment of a 25-seat transitional government, whose individual members would not be able to stand for future elections, a 90-seat transitional parliament, and a pathway to fresh presidential and parliamentary elections, which would be held in 2015. Ahead of those elections, a consensus candidate would serve as interim president but be banned from contesting the future elections.

In mid-November 2014, the coup leader, Zida, bowed to international pressure and said he would restore the constitution, which was suspended when the military seized power in the aftermath of Compaore's resignation. He also indicated that various institutional leaders would form a committee, which would sign on to the plan for the transitional government outlined just above.

Soon thereafter, former Foreign Minister Michel Kafando was named as Burkina Faso's transitional president in a bid to return the country to constitutional and democratic order. In an interview with the media, Kafando said of his appointment as the interim president: "The committee has just designated me to guide temporarily the destiny of our country. This is more than an honor. It's a true mission which I will take with the utmost seriousness." Kafando's immediate task would be to name a prime minister who will form a government of 25 members. To that end, Zida -- the coup leader -- was named as the new prime minister at the helm of a new transitional cabinet.

Meanwhile, it was clear that the Compaore era was over in Burkina Faso. Compaore was the central figure in the violent military coup d'etat of 1987 that involved the assassination of then-President Thomas Sankara and other officials. In addition to initially seizing power by force, and the elimination of his rivals and co-conspirators by bloodshed, Compaore's record was also blemished by his controversial support for rebels during the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It was further tainted by his participation in Qadhafi's infamous World Revolutionary Center -- colloquially referred to as "Harvard for Tyrants." Yet despite this highly tarnished background, once entrenched in the presidency, Compaore recast and reconstituted himself as a peace maker and deal broker in the region. Moreover, "Beautiful Blaise," as he came to be known, also established himself as a pro-Western ally against Islamic extremists. In 2014, however, his

ambition to hold onto power indefinitely had been his undoing, and the country had been plunged into chaos as a result.

#### Attempted Coup of 2015 --

The next elections were expected to be held in 2015, as discussed above, and were intended to return the country to democratic order. High hopes to that end were somewhat marred by emerging tensions on the political scene. At issue was the call by Prime Minister Zida to disband Compaore's praetorian guard, the Regiment of Presidential Security (RSP), which stirred the pot of dissonance within the presidential military service. Other issues of disagreement flaring ahead of the elections centered on the new electoral code, which shut out Compaore loyalists who supported the ousted leader's constitutional change agenda. However, a court ruling in mid-2015 invalidated the electoral law. Then, in mid-September 2015, Burkina Faso was subject to a military coup carried out by elements of the military loyal to Compaore and his praetorian guard.

A regional effort to resolve the crisis ended successfully with transitional President Kafando being returned to power as the head of state. Now, his main task would be to ensure that free and fair elections would go forward (at the time, still scheduled to be held in October 2015), and that the country would thus be returned to democratic order. To this end, President Kafando said, "If ever there was a transition to be held up as an example, it is indeed ours. I can assure you that we are determined to carry on with the mission the Burkinabe people have entrusted us with, to build strong institutions and a real democracy.

#### New date set for elections --

With Burkina Faso still left somewhat in shock after the attempted coup of September 2015, and with elections officially scheduled to take place a month later, calls began to rise for a delay so that the political landscape might be settled somewhat before people went to the polls. Accordingly, it was soon announced that the elections would not take place until November 2015, with Nov. 29, 2015 being the date scheduled for the elections to finally go forward.

#### Election Results --

On election day, voting took place in Burkina Faso's elections amidst heavy security. At the presidential level, Roch Marc Christian Kabore garnered an outright majority with 54 percent of the vote share, thus clinching the presidency. His closest rival was Zephirin Diabre, who secured 30 percent. Kabore, who served as prime minister under former President Compaore although he later parted company with the ousted leader, declared victory. In a speech to supporters, he declared, "My first thought is to recognize the honor of this high office and to feel the weight of its great responsibility." Results for the parliamentary elections were not made official at the time of writing.

-- as of 2016

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## Leader Biography

### Leader Biography

#### Leader

##### **Executive Branch:**

##### Chief of State:

Roch Marc Christian Kabore was elected to the presidency on Nov. 29, 2015; see Primer below for details. The president is elected by popular vote and heads the executive branch.

Note that a constitutional amendment was approved in the early 2000s that limited persons to presidential office for only two terms and reduced the presidential term from seven to five years, enforceable as of 2005. Since then-President Compaore claimed that the constitutional change should only be applied retroactively, he was able to contest -- and win -- the presidential election in 2005. The 2010 elections were understood as his last opportunity to contest presidential elections for a final term in office. However, as discussed below, his interpretation of these constitutional limits (read: the president's desire to extend his rule) led to unrest in 2014 and, ultimately, Compaore was forced to resign. Since that time, as discussed below, Burkina Faso has been rocked by political turmoil.

Note that elections were finally held in November 2015, with Roch Marc Christian Kabore winning the presidency. See Primer below for details.

Head of Government:

Also included in the executive branch of government is the prime minister, who is appointed by the president and serves as head of government.

In January 2016, in the aftermath of presidential elections intended to return the country to democratic order, Burkina Faso's newly elected President Roch Marc Christian Kabore named a new prime minister. The new president's selection to lead the government of Burkina Faso was Paul Kaba Thieba -- an economist who worked for the West African central bank with limited political experience. It was apparent that President Kabore's intent was to place a technocrat in the position of head of government, given the priority of reviving the slowing economy.

Cabinet:

Council of Ministers; formally appointed by the president on the recommendation of the prime minister

Note on chief of state:

At the time of writing in 2015, Burkina Faso was enduring its second uprising in a one year period. In 2014, President Captain Blaise COMPAORÉ was ousted from power, as discussed below. A peace plan was advanced and President Michel KAFANDO became the interim or transitional chief of state in 2014 until elections could be held in 2015 to return the country to democratic order. Before those elections could be held an elite presidential guard carried out a coup. Regional powers were in the process of trying to broker another peace plan, which would be aimed at returning the country to the leadership of the transitional government. The matter of scheduled elections (to be held in 2015) remained unresolved at the time of writing, along with the question of whether or not the junta would sign on fully to the fresh peace proposal.

Note on former president:

President Captain Blaise COMPAORÉ (since 1987 via coup; elected without opposition in 1991; re-elected 1998 and 2005; elected in 2005 for a five-year term by popular vote due to constitutional changes that reduced the presidential term from seven to five years, enforceable as

of 2005; contested 2010 election; forced to resign in 2014 after mass protests and apparent military takeover). A political transition was soon set in place. See "Editor's Note on 2010 election" and "Special Entry on 2014 political turmoil" below. The next presidential elections is expected to be held in 2015, as discussed in the Primer below.

Note on transitional president:

Transitional President Michel KAFANDO (since 2014; see below for details related to his appointment, as well as details related to the 2015 coup). Kafando came to power as an interim leader just as Burkina Faso was emerging from under the control of a military junta in 2014, following mass unrest of that period, as discussed below. His successor was to be determined on the basis of fresh elections set for 2015, as discussed below. However, in September 2015, Burkina Faso was subject to a second undemocratic transfer of power -- this time to an elite presidential guard. Regional powers brokered a deal that returned Kafando to the helm, as discussed in the Special Entry below. Elections followed in November 2015, as discussed in the Primer below.

Special Entry:

On Sept. 16, 2015, an elite military wing or praetorian guard, known as the Regiment of Presidential Security (RSP), carried out a coup d'etat in Burkina Faso, ousting the interim government from power ahead of elections. Of note was the fact that those elections were intended to restore Burkina Faso to democratic order after a coup d'etat in 2014 removed the sitting president from the helm of power. But before that voting exercise was to take place, Burkina Faso was again struck by political turbulence.

Going back to October 2014, long-serving President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso sought to extend his rule of the small west African country, effectively sparking mass protests. Those protests turned violent, and the parliament and other government buildings were burned. With the country slipping precipitously into crisis, a state of emergency was established. Compaore resigned and called for elections to be held in 90 days, and a transitional plan was outlined. But with a power chasm opening up, the military seized power in what could only be understood as a coup

d'etat. While the people of Burkina Faso had participated in an uprising intended to protect their democracy, they had instead been faced with betrayal by the military, who exploited the public discontent to seize power for itself.

The African Union soon issued a two-week ultimatum to the military in Burkina Faso, demanding that it transition power to a civilian government or face sanctions. The African Union emphasized that the actions of the armed forces now in control of Burkina Faso were undemocratic and that consequences were in the offing if Burkina Faso failed to return the country to civilian rule in short order.

By Nov. 9, 2014, following several days of negotiations between various stakeholders in the capital of Ouagadougou, a charter had been adopted outlining a transitional blueprint for Burkina Faso's return to democratic order. The plan also included provisions for the establishment of a 25-seat transitional government, whose individual members would not be able to stand for future elections, a 90-seat transitional parliament, and a pathway to fresh presidential and parliamentary elections, which would be held in 2015. Ahead of those elections, a consensus candidate would serve as interim president but banned from contesting this future elections.

In mid-November 2014, the coup leader, Yacouba Isaac Zida, bowed to international pressure and said he would restore the constitution, which was suspended when the military seized power in the aftermath of Compaore's resignation. He also indicated that various institutional leaders form a committee, which would sign on to the plan for the transitional government outlined just above. Soon thereafter, former Foreign Minister Michel Kafando was named as Burkina Faso's transitional president in a bid to return the country to constitutional and democratic order. Meanwhile, Zida was not entirely gone from the political scene, since the interim president soon named the coup leader to be the new prime minister at the helm of a new transitional cabinet.

At the time in late 2014, it was clear that the Compaore era was over in Burkina Faso. Compaore had been the central figure in the violent military coup d'etat of 1987 that involved the assassination of then-President Thomas Sankara and other officials. In addition to initially seizing

power by force, and the elimination of his rivals and co-conspirators by bloodshed, Compaore's record was also blemished by his controversial support for rebels during the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It was further tainted by his participation in Qadhafi's infamous World Revolutionary Center -- colloquially referred to as "Harvard for Tyrants." Yet despite this highly tarnished background, once entrenched in the presidency, Compaore recast and reconstituted himself as a peace maker and deal broker in the region. Moreover, "Beautiful Blaise," as he came to be known, also established himself as a pro-Western ally against Islamic extremists. In 2014, however, his ambition to hold onto power indefinitely had been his undoing, and the country had been plunged into chaos as a result.

By 2015, the national purview was focused on the elections that were intended to return Burkina Faso to democratic order. High hopes to that end were somewhat marred by emerging tensions on the political scene. At issue was the call by Prime Minister Zida to disband Compaore's praetorian guard, the Regiment of Presidential Security (RSP), which stirred the pot of dissonance within the presidential military service. Other issues of disagreement flaring ahead of the elections centered on the new electoral code, which shut out Compaore loyalists who supported the ousted leader's constitutional change agenda. A court ruling in mid-2015 invalidated the electoral law, opening the door for Compaore stalwarts to contest the forthcoming elections. But before the people of Burkina Faso could register their preferences via ballot and restore the country to democratic order, once again the country was plunged into turmoil via another irregular transition of power.

As noted above, on Sept. 16, 2015, the elite praetorian guard, known as the Regiment of Presidential Security (RSP), carried out a coup d'etat in Burkina Faso, ousting the interim government from power, and placing the interim president, the interim prime minister and members of cabinet in detention. The move came just days after a government commission issued a controversial recommendation that the elite pro-Compaore presidential guard be dismantled. As such, the general consensus was that the coup had been stimulated by the RSP's fears that it would be locked out of the sphere of military and political power, although it was the presidential guard's very influence that had spurred the plan for its extinction in the first place.

In the intervening days after the coup, international powers condemned both the undemocratic transfer of power and the detention of Burkina Faso's transitional executives, while protesters took to the streets to register their outrage over the turn of events. The unrest soon grew violent, with several people dying and at least 100 others wounded as a result. The African Union reacted to these developments by suspending Burkina Faso from its membership and issuing a Sept. 22, 2015 deadline by which the transitional government should be restored.

Perhaps moved by this unfavorable climate, the coup leadership, led by General Gilbert Diendere, released President Kafando from detention although Prime Minister Zida remained, at the time, under house arrest. Soon thereafter, mediators from West Africa's ECOWAS bloc began the process of negotiations with Diendere cabal. The self-styled National Democratic Council issued a statement saying that it accepted the mediation process and its intention was "not to stay in power for a long time." Diendere himself added in an interview with the media, "I always said that I will not cling to power. It's now a question of terms."

By Sept. 20, 2015, a plan was afoot to restore the interim government, led by President Kafando, to power, and to relaunch the transitional process. That being said, it was unclear if the transitional process would culminate with elections being held on schedule on Oct. 11, 2015. It was also unknown as to what provisions would be made for Diendere and his cabal. Of note was the fact that General Diendere was a former head of intelligence and a stalwart of former President Compaore. As such, this latest chapter in the recent story of turmoil in Burkina Faso was very much following along the same trajectory with the Compaore factor at the center.

Meanwhile, an ultimatum was in place requiring the presidential guard carrying out the coup to surrender to government authorities by Sept. 22, 2015. That deadline passed with the Diendere cabal remaining defiant and a stand-off soon ensued in the capital of Ouagadougou. With government troops threatening to disarm the presidential guard themselves, there were fears of a violent confrontation.

For his part, General Diendere himself made clear that he would not be surrendering to the

government, but instead waiting for regional mediators to arrive in the country for negotiations on a settlement to the crisis. He said, "I'm not stalling for time. I'm within the time allotted to me. We don't want to fight. We will defend ourselves if need be, but we do not want to spill blood to stay in power." Of significance was the fact that the leaders of the neighboring countries of Senegal, Togo, Benin, Ghana, Niger, and Nigeria said they would go to Burkina Faso themselves to help mediate the crisis. They aimed to find a solution that would result in the reinstatement of President Kafando, who was at the time taking refuge at the French ambassador's residence.

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General Diendere -- now confined to military barracks -- acknowledged that the efforts of the cabal had been "the biggest mistake" and admitted that there was little public support for their actions. He said, "We knew the people were not in favor of it. That is why we have given up." While the fate of Diendere was unknown, the main task of the country's authorities was to ensure that free and fair elections would go forward (technically still scheduled to be held in October 2015), and that the country would thus be returned to democratic order. To this end, President Kafando said, "If ever there was a transition to be held up as an example, it is indeed ours. I can assure you that we are determined to carry on with the mission the Burkinabe people have entrusted us with, to build strong institutions and a real democracy."

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These moves were, however, more aspirational than likely to guarantee the return to stability in Burkina Faso. Of note was the fact that some members of the Presidential Security Regiment (RSP) were refusing to actually disarm and disband. A statement from the Burkina Faso defense forces read as follows: "The disarmament process ... has found itself at an impasse ... marked by the refusal of officers from the former Presidential Security Regiment to follow disarmament." That being said, after being surrounded by regular military forces, about 300 members of the elite RSP surrendered to authorities.

Also of note was the fact that the coup leader, Diendere, was reported to be missing from the army barracks where he had been confined in the aftermath of the attempted government take-over. Reports indicated that Diendere's vehicle had been found and destroyed outside the diplomatic compound of the Holy See (also known as The Vatican). For his part, Diendere said in a telephone media with Reuters News that he was not at the barracks anymore; he said: "I'm in a safe place."

Nevertheless, by the start of October 2015, Diendere was apprehended and handed over to Burkinabe authorities. According to Prime Minister Zida, the government offered guarantees to the Vatican embassy making clear that if Diendere was handed over to officials to face justice, his life would be respected. Also in the custody of Burkinabe authorities was former Foreign Minister Djibril Bassole, who served in former President Compaore's cabinet, and who was accused of complicity in the attempted putsch.

Note that by Oct. 7, 2015, Diendere was charged with a litany of crimes including threatening state security, collusion with foreign forces, assault, murder, and destruction of property. As such, he would face trial before a military tribunal.

Presidential elections were held in November 2015, as discussed in the Primer below.

#### 2015 Presidential Election:

Held on Nov. 29, 2015 and won by Roch Marc Christian Kabore; see Primer below for details.

## **Primer on 2015 presidential and parliamentary elections in Burkina Faso**

Nov. 29, 2015 2015 --

### Introduction --

Presidential and parliamentary elections were initially scheduled to be held on Oct. 11, 2015, in Burkina Faso and return the country to constitutional order. As noted below, in September 2015, Burkina Faso was rocked by an attempted coup launched by a cabal within the elite presidential guard. As a result, the vote would not be expected to take place until November 2015, with Nov. 29, 2015 being the date ultimately scheduled for the elections to go forward.

### Election Details --

The incumbent head of state was Transitional President Michel Kafando, who has served since 2014 when Burkina Faso was just emerging from under the control of a military junta. The establishment of a transitional government was viewed as the first step in the direction of stabilization, although democratic elections would go a long way to returning the country to the path of democracy.

Note that in Burkina Faso, the president is both the head of state and head of government, and is elected by popular vote to serve five year terms.

Some of the known presidential candidates included the following individuals: former Prime Minister Roch Marc Kaboré, a former stalwart of Compaore who went on to form his own party, the People's Movement for Progress (MPP); former Finance Minister Zephirin Diabre under Compaore, who also went on to form his own party, the Union for Progress and Change (UPC); former Foreign Minister Djibrill Bassole, who was expected to lead a coalition of opposition groups; and a former member of parliament, Eddie Komboigo, was expected to be the candidate of

Compaore's former ruling party, the Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP).

Some of the other possible candidates for the presidency included Benewende Stanislas Sankara, the leader of Union for Rebirth / Sankarist Movement and former Defense Minister Kouame Lougue.

Several would-be candidates linked with former President Blaise Compaore's ruling alliance were barred from contesting the election thanks to a ruling from Burkina Faso's constitutional council. A statement regarding the court's ruling read as follows: "All people having supported an anti-constitutional change damaging to the principle of democratic transition, notably the principle of limiting the number of presidential mandates leading to an insurrection or other uprising are ineligible." Those barred from the election included the aforementioned Eddie Komboigo.

In addition to the presidential contest, elections would also be held to determine the composition of the legislative branch of government. In Burkina Faso, the National Assembly or Assemblée Nationale is composed of 127 seats and members serve five-year terms.

Note on the coup that led to the ousting of President Blaise Compaore --

Long-serving President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso sought to extend his rule of the small west African country, effectively sparking mass protests in late October 2014. Those protests turned violent, and the parliament and other government buildings were burned. With the country slipping precipitously into crisis, a state of emergency was established. Compaore resigned and called for elections to be held in 90 days, and a transitional plan was outlined. But with a power chasm opening up, the military seized power in what could only be understood as a coup d'etat. While the people of Burkina Faso had participated in an uprising intended to protect their democracy, they had instead been faced with betrayal by the military, who exploited the public discontent to seize power for itself.

The African Union soon issued a two-week ultimatum to the military in Burkina Faso, demanding

that it transition power to a civilian government or face sanctions. The African Union emphasized that the actions of the armed forces now in control of Burkina Faso were undemocratic and that consequences were in the offing if Burkina Faso failed to return the country to civilian rule in short order.

By Nov. 9, 2014, following several days of negotiations between various stakeholders in the capital of Ouagadougou, a charter had been adopted outlining a transitional blueprint for Burkina Faso's return to democratic order. The plan also included provisions for the establishment of a 25-seat transitional government, whose individual members would not be able to stand for future elections, a 90-seat transitional parliament, and a pathway to fresh presidential and parliamentary elections, which would be held in 2015. Ahead of those elections, a consensus candidate would serve as interim president but be banned from contesting the future elections.

In mid-November 2014, the coup leader, Zida, bowed to international pressure and said he would restore the constitution, which was suspended when the military seized power in the aftermath of Compaore's resignation. He also indicated that various institutional leaders for form a committee, which would sign on to the plan for the transitional government outlined just above.

Soon thereafter, former Foreign Minister Michel Kafando was named as Burkina Faso's transitional president in a bid to return the country to constitutional and democratic order. In an interview with the media, Kafando said of his appointment as the interim president: "The committee has just designated me to guide temporarily the destiny of our country. This is more than an honor. It's a true mission which I will take with the utmost seriousness." Kofado's immediate task would be to name a prime minister who will form a government of 25 members. To that end, Zida -- the coup leader -- was named as the new prime minister at the helm of a new transitional cabinet.

Meanwhile, it was clear that the Compaore era was over in Burkina Faso. Compaore was the central figure in the violent military coup d'etat of 1987 that involved the assassination of then-President Thomas Sankara and other officials. In addition to initially seizing power by force, and the elimination of his rivals and co-conspirators by bloodshed, Compaore's record was also

blemished by his controversial support for rebels during the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It was further tainted by his participation in Qadhafi's infamous World Revolutionary Center -- colloquially referred to as "Harvard for Tyrants." Yet despite this highly tarnished background, once entrenched in the presidency, Compaore recast and reconstituted himself as a peace maker and deal broker in the region. Moreover, "Beautiful Blaise," as he came to be known, also established himself as a pro-Western ally against Islamic extremists. In 2014, however, his ambition to hold onto power indefinitely had been his undoing, and the country had been plunged into chaos as a result.

#### Attempted Coup of 2015 --

The next elections were expected to be held in 2015, as discussed above, and were intended to return the country to democratic order. High hopes to that end were somewhat marred by emerging tensions on the political scene. At issue was the call by Prime Minister Zida to disband Compaore's praetorian guard, the Regiment of Presidential Security (RSP), which stirred the pot of dissonance within the presidential military service. Other issues of disagreement flaring ahead of the elections centered on the new electoral code, which shut out Compaore loyalists who supported the ousted leader's constitutional change agenda. However, a court ruling in mid-2015 invalidated the electoral law. Then, in mid-September 2015, Burkina Faso was subject to a military coup carried out by elements of the military loyal to Compaore and his praetorian guard.

A regional effort to resolve the crisis ended successfully with transitional President Kafando being returned to power as the head of state. Now, his main task would be to ensure that free and fair elections would go forward (at the time, still scheduled to be held in October 2015), and that the country would thus be returned to democratic order. To this end, President Kafando said, "If ever there was a transition to be held up as an example, it is indeed ours. I can assure you that we are determined to carry on with the mission the Burkinabe people have entrusted us with, to build strong institutions and a real democracy.

#### New date set for elections --

With Burkina Faso still left somewhat in shock after the attempted coup of September 2015, and with elections officially scheduled to take place a month later, calls began to rise for a delay so that the political landscape might be settled somewhat before people went to the polls. Accordingly, it was soon announced that the elections would not take place until November 2015, with Nov. 29, 2015 being the date scheduled for the elections to finally go forward.

### Election Results --

On election day, voting took place in Burkina Faso's elections amidst heavy security. At the presidential level, Roch Marc Christian Kabore garnered an outright majority with 54 percent of the vote share, thus clinching the presidency. His closest rival was Zephirin Diabre, who secured 30 percent. Kabore, who served as prime minister under former President Compaore although he later parted company with the ousted leader, declared victory. In a speech to supporters, he declared, "My first thought is to recognize the honor of this high office and to feel the weight of its great responsibility."

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## Foreign Relations

### General Relations

Burkina has excellent relations with European, North African and Asian donors, which are all active development partners. France, in particular, continues to provide significant aid and supports Compaoré's developing role as a regional powerbroker.

### Regional Relations

President Compaoré has mediated a political crisis in Togo and helped to resolve the Tuareg conflict in Niger. Several thousand Tuareg refugees from Mali, who sought protection in Burkina Faso, were repatriated by the end of 1997.

Burkina Faso's relationship with neighboring Cote d'Ivoire cooled in 2001. At the heart of the matter has the been the treatment of Burkinabe nationals living in Cote d'Ivoire and Compaoré's

public support of Ivorian opposition leader Alassane Ouattara.

In recent years, Burkinabe living in Cote d'Ivoire have come under increasing attack, marginalized from the political system, ousted from the land, and subjected to human rights abuses. Ivorian President Robert Gbagbo continued to submit that the popular opposition leader Alassane Ouattara is Burkinabe not Ivorian, making him ineligible to run for office. Ouattara denies this stating that both of his parents were born in Cote d'Ivoire. Compaoré publicly supported Ouattara's bid to challenge Gbagbo.

In July 2001 matters escalated as the Ambassador of Burkina Faso to Cote d'Ivoire, Emile Ilboudo, was kidnapped. While the Ambassador was released unharmed two days later, the event did not help quell the political storm.

Burkina Faso has also been accused of harboring dissidents and supporting rebels from neighboring Cote d'Ivoire, as that country underwent political crisis. For its part, Burkina Faso said it was simply trying to avert a humanitarian crisis and that it had a vested interest in the situation in Cote d'Ivoire, which is home to millions of Burkinabes. As the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire increased, reports of xenophobia and attacks against foreigners, such as Burkinabes, were reported.

Bilateral relations were also strained when an Ivorian film was not shown at Burkina Faso's world famous international film festival. In protest, Cote d'Ivoire decided to boycott the event.

Over the course of 2004, relations between the two countries grew worse, especially following accusations that Cote d'Ivoire had supported the attempted coup against Compaore. Cote d'Ivoire denied the allegations. In the summer of 2004, both countries made efforts to mend relations and Burkina Faso recommitted itself to the peace process in Cote d'Ivoire.

In 2007, a peace deal between the government and rebels of Côte d'Ivoire, which was in Burkina Faso, was expected to have a positive impact.

Burkina Faso maintains strong relations with Libya. In addition to ongoing military exchanges and financial assistance from President Muammar al-Qadhafi, on Feb. 7, 2001, Burkina Faso became the 27th country to ratify the Africa Union constituent act.

### *Africa Union --*

At its July 2-11, 2001, meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, the Organization of African Unity officially approved the transformation of the Organization of African Unity into the new African Union. Former foreign minister of Cote d'Ivoire, Amara Essy, was elected the first Secretary-General of the Africa Union. United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, reacted with the statement that "This historic effort will require leadership, courage and willingness to depart from the ways of the past, if it is to do for Africa what the European Union has done for Europe". The goal of the Africa

Union is to be a continental body that will pave the way to a better life for all Africans. Where the OAU was criticized for its lack of action on economic and social fronts, the Africa Union is charged with development as its primary task. Following a model based on the European Union, the Africa Union is intended to bridge the economic gaps between African countries and thrust the continent onto the world economic stage as a single entity. The Africa Union Bill was based on a convergence of South African president Thabo Mbeki's African development plan, and the Plan Omega proposed by Senegalese president Abdoulaye Wade. It therefore adds to its economic mandate the political mandate that all of Africa should seek democratic consolidation.

There are significant criticisms to the new African Union, though. Some fear that too much faith is being placed in a document that makes more sense in theory than in practice. The strongest criticism, however, is that the Africa Union's largest force has been Libyan President Moammar al-Qadhafi. The U.S. has made its objections to the Union clear no doubt due to a lack of trust in Al-Qadhafi's motives. Many African leaders backed the Union even though they also demonstrated a lack of trust in al-Qadhafi's motives. Even at the opening of the meeting of the OAU leaders noted that al-Qadhafi failed to mention Africa's founding fathers although it was Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah who was the founder of pan-Africanism some forty years ago. Indeed, al-Qadhafi has backed groups that are markedly anti-pan-Africanist in his own country. Other comments challenged the controversial role Libyan nationals often play in sub-Saharan African countries. Yet the most controversial position of al-Qadhafi no doubt was his statement that "We cannot be neutral here. We are here for the Africans, not the Europeans. We are here for the blacks, not for the whites." With Louis Farrakhan, leader of the U.S.-based Nation of Islam movement, standing behind him, this statement was taken as an affront to increased western relations as opposed to the Union's goal of increasing economic ties with wealthier countries.

### Other Significant Relations

United States (U.S.) relations with Burkina Faso, once strained because of Burkina Faso's past involvement in Liberia's civil war, are improving. U.S. trade with Burkina is still extremely limited, but investment possibilities exist, especially in the mining and communications sectors. Burkina Faso's involvement in Sierra Leone's civil war in 2000 led to the further straining of U.S. ties with the country once again.

U.S. trade with Burkina is still extremely limited--\$220 million in U.S. exports and \$600,000 in Burkinabe exports to the U.S. annually in recent years, but investment possibilities exist, especially in the mining and communications sectors.

In response to the drought that plagued the Sahel countries from 1968 to 1974, the U.S. provided significant emergency food assistance to Burkina Faso. Following this, the U.S. and other international donors began to work with the Sahel countries to plan and implement long-term

development assistance programs.

Although the Agency for International Development (USAID) closed its office in Ouagadougou in 1995, about \$18 million annually of USAID funding goes to Burkina's development through non-governmental and regional organizations. The largest is a Food for Peace school lunch program administered by Catholic Relief Services.

Burkina has been the site of several development success stories. U.S. leadership in building food security in the Sahel after the 1968-74 drought has been successful in virtually eliminating famine, despite recurrent drought years. River blindness has been eliminated from the region. In both cases, the U.S. was the main donor to inter-African organizations headquartered in Ouagadougou which through sustained efforts have achieved and consolidated these gains.

Burkina Faso and the Millennium Challenge Corporation recently signed a \$12 million Threshold Country Program to build schools and increase girls' enrolment rates. In November 2005, the Millennium Challenge Corporation selected Burkina Faso as eligible to submit a proposal for Millennium Challenge Account assistance for fiscal year 2006.

Back in 1995, the Peace Corps program resumed, after a 10-year absence, with volunteers working in rural health and education. In 1997, the program was expanded to include education. In 2005, 81 Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) were in Burkina Faso, including those working in a new sector of small business development. The Peace Corps has added a new program focusing on girls' education.

The U.S. embassy also maintains a variety of programs to support social and economic development projects throughout the country.

Written by Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, [www.countrywatch.com](http://www.countrywatch.com); see Bibliography for list of research sources.

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## National Security

## External Threats

Regional instability has contributed to tension between Burkina Faso and its neighbors. Burkina Faso's border zones play host to rebel fighters from Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, as well as refugees caught in the crossfire of regional conflicts. The rebel presence has precipitated strained relations with Côte d'Ivoire in particular. Its central government accuses Burkina Faso of supporting the insurgents. The conflict in Côte d'Ivoire has had a negative impact on Burkina Faso's economy. However, as of 2007, a peace deal between the government and rebels of Côte d'Ivoire, which was in Burkina Faso, was expected to have a positive impact. Finally, Burkina Faso is engaged in a minor territorial dispute with Benin over two villages along their shared border.

## Crime

In addition to a high incidence of street crime, business fraud is also a common occurrence in Burkina Faso. Once generally confined to Nigeria, the prevalence of such scams has spread to other countries in the region. The perpetrators often target foreigners, including Americans. Such scenarios usually begin with an unsolicited e-mail that offers the recipient the promise of high returns on an investment. The hopeful victim is generally required to pay a series of advance fees before collecting any compensation. The criminals then keep the fees, without fulfilling their obligation to pay the duped investor.

Child labor and child trafficking remain serious problems in Burkina Faso. Armed robberies along the roads and petty crimes are also on the rise.

## Insurgencies

Burkina Faso's central government does not face any domestic insurgent movements. The country has a long history of political instability, however, and the future of democracy there hangs in the balance. The French rested control of the region from the indigenous Mossi in 1901. They established the colony of Upper Volta in 1919, but the present borders of the region were not demarcated until 1947. Upper Volta achieved its independence in 1961 and the country changed its name to Burkina Faso in 1984. Authoritarian rule and violent overthrows have been an integral part of post-colonial politics. President Compaore assumed the reins of power in 1987, when the previous president, Thomas Sankara, was assassinated. He proceeded to implement democratic reforms, including the adoption of a constitution, and was subsequently elected president in 1991 and again in 1998. During the first election he ran unopposed, however. Also, his 1998 victory was tainted by protests stemming from allegations that he had instigated the assassination of a popular journalist, Norbert Zongo, who had been investigating the role of the Compaore family in the murder of a chauffeur.

The presidential elections of 2005 went off with few troubles (although some allegations of fraud were levied), and were widely viewed as a test of Burkina Faso's commitment to democracy. The fact that the president was able to contest another election despite constitutional term limits has been a matter of some controversy in Burkina Faso. Parliamentary elections were held in 2007.

## **Terrorism**

Burkina Faso has not traditionally suffered from terrorist violence. Nor has it been a significant base of operations for global terrorist organizations. In January 2005, the government hosted a national workshop for its law enforcement officials, judges and prosecutors in order for them to be able to exchange lessons learned in the effort to combat terrorism. This workshop was organized by the United Nations *Office on Drugs and Crime* (UNODC) and the Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso. It reflects the commitment and actions of Burkina Faso to combat global crime and terrorism.

## **National Security Note --**

Long-serving President of Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso sought to extend his rule of the small west African country, effectively sparking mass protests in late October 2014. Those protests turned violent, and the parliament and other government buildings were burned. With the country slipping precipitously into crisis, a state of emergency was established. Compaore resigned and called for elections to be held in 90 days, and a transitional plan was outlined. But with a power chasm opening up, the military seized power in what could only be understood as a coup d'etat. While the people of Burkina Faso had participated in an uprising intended to protect their democracy, they had instead been faced with betrayal by the military, who exploited the public discontent to seize power for itself.

See "Political Conditions" for details.

## **Islamist terrorists launch vicious attack in Burkina Faso**

On Jan. 16, 2016, Islamist terrorists carried out an attack on a hotel in Ouagadougou -- the capital of the landlocked west African country of Burkina Faso. Foreign Minister Alpha Berry confirmed in interviews with the international media that the Splendid Hotel was popular with Westerners and other foreign nationals. The attack went on for several hours with reports of hostages being held at the hotel and a least 20 people believed to have been killed, with several more said to have been injured. Among the dead were six Canadians, three Ukrainians, two French nationals, and eight

Burkinabes. Witnesses said that the assailants particularly targeted foreigners.

Security forces were dispatched to the perimeter of the Splendid Hotel and took up positions in preparation for a rescue operation. French military and United States intelligence experts were said to be assisting in the effort. What could only be described as a siege went on for several hours before security personnel took control of the hotel. In the aftermath of the attack, al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) claimed responsibility for the carnage, with the terror group releasing a statement in which they named three attackers as al-Battar al-Ansari, Abu Muhammad al-Buqali al-Ansari and Ahmed al-Fulani al-Ansari. It was the first time Islamist Jihadist terrorists had carried out an attack in Burkina Faso, and the general consensus was that the attack may have been coordinated with Islamist Jihadists in Mali.

Note: This assault on Burkina Faso's national security came a month after elections were held and a new president -- Roch Marc Christian Kaboré -- was elected to power. That election in 2015 was intended to return Burkina Faso to constitutional order following the resignation of long-serving President Blaise Compaoré and an ensuing coup d'état by the military. Just as the country appeared to be edging toward more secure footing, the January 2016 terror attack struck Burkina Faso with another wave of turbulence.

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## Defense Forces

### Military Data

#### **Military Branches:**

Army, Air Force, National Gendarmerie

#### **Eligible age to enter service:**

18 for voluntary

#### **Mandatory Service Terms:**

No conscription

**Manpower in general population-fit for military service:**

males age 16-49: 2,366,168

females age 16-49: 2,367,673

**Manpower reaching eligible age annually:**

male: 193,905

female: 191,662

**Military Expenditures-Percent of GDP:**

1.39%

# **Chapter 3**

## **Economic Overview**

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## Economic Overview

### *Overview*

Burkina Faso, a landlocked country in Western Africa, is one of the poorest countries in the world. With few natural resources and a weak industrial base, about 90 percent of the population is engaged in subsistence agriculture, which is vulnerable to periodic drought. Cotton is the most important agricultural crop and the main source of export earnings, and manufacturing is limited to cotton and food processing. The economy is highly vulnerable to fluctuations in international commodity prices.

Despite these disadvantages, Burkina Faso has achieved generally good macroeconomic performance in recent years, attributable to the implementation of economic reforms supported by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. In 2008 and 2009, economic activity was negatively affected by several shocks, including an increase in global food and fuel prices, the global economic crisis, and heavy flooding in the capital area in September 2009. These shocks contributed to lower growth and deterioration in the population's welfare. The government acted promptly in dealing with the adverse impact of the shocks through fiscal stimulus measures to support economic activity. In the meantime, despite a difficult environment, the government implemented structural reforms in tax administration and the cotton sector. By 2010, gold had become the main source of export revenue for the country with gold mining production doubling between 2009 and 2010. Burkina Faso is among the five countries in sub-Saharan Africa charging consumers the highest prices for power. As in most low-income African countries, infrastructure is a major constraint on doing business in Burkina Faso, which suffers from border and customs clearance issues. The government of President Blaise Compaore experienced unprecedented internal social unrest in the first half of 2011, including student, labor, and civilian protests throughout the nation. It also was dealing with separate police and military mutinies and looting. The country was also getting spillover from the political unrest in neighboring Cote d'Ivoire, which briefly disrupted flows of transportation, electricity, and remittances. Calm had returned for the most part by June 2011, with the appointment of a new prime minister and cabinet, and the adoption of social measures under a supplementary budget. Still, some local community tension remains in the mining and cotton sectors. In an attempt to quell some of the public discontent, the Prime Minister announced measures such as income tax reductions, reparations for looting victims, and subsidies for basic food items and fertilizer. However, an IMF mission to Burkina Faso in October 2011 expressed general satisfaction with the measures. By June 2012, though, the IMF was praising Burkinabé authorities "for their strong performance...in the face of continuing challenges." Overall in 2011, despite a slowdown, the country's growth remained above regional

averages, and the fiscal deficit was reduced. The authorities put public finances on a more stable footing by improving revenue collection and reducing fuel subsidies, according to the IMF. Looking ahead, the country was facing two shocks: inadequate food supplies and an influx of refugees that were facing increasingly dire living conditions. On the positive side, new analysis by the IMF and World Bank led to the country's risk of debt distress rating to shift to 'moderate' from 'high'- which could leave the country open to new financing opportunities other than grants.

According to preliminary estimates, GDP growth in real terms in 2012 was strong, driven by a good harvest and a favorable global environment. A similar economic trend was projected for 2013, thanks to strong performances by the primary and tertiary sectors.

In 2013, Burkina Faso experienced a number of public protests over the cost of living, corruption, and other socioeconomic issues. To defuse tensions the government offered higher housing bonuses, reduced income taxes and price controls. Turmoil in neighboring Mali, unreliable energy supplies, and poor transportation links pose longer-term challenges. Also in 2013, Burkina Faso suffered from lower gold prices.

Despite slight downward revisions and difficult economic circumstances, growth was strong in 2013 and 2014, although down compared to 2012. Agriculture and mining remained the main drivers of growth in 2013. For 2014, growth was projected to be somewhere between 6.7 and 7 percent, and could be higher in case of good rainfall and strong domestic demand. In December 2013, inflation was 0.5 percent, influenced primarily by lower food prices than a year prior. It was expected to remain below 2 percent in 2014. To that end, the government has set up special stores across the country to sell consumer products at prices accessible to low-revenue households.

The government was also launching a vast infrastructure building program as part of its accelerated growth and sustainable development strategy, known under the French acronym SCADD. Work will concentrate on buildings and roads, events for the commemoration of Burkina Faso's independence and paving major roads, particularly from Dédougou to Nouna and the Mali frontier, Ziniaré to Zitenga and Boromo to Skeins.

In October 2014, Bloomberg reported that Burkina Faso farmers had reclaimed as much as 742,000 acres of land once thought too infertile to use for agriculture.

Meanwhile, the fall of the Compaore government in 2014 gave rise to laborers pushing for better pay and working conditions. Then, a failed military coup in Burkina Faso in September 2015 cost its flagging economy more than \$50 million in lost revenue, according to the country's finance minister. The economy essentially was halted for about 10 days with banks and businesses closed and employees unable to travel to work after an elite military unit seized power, took interim leaders hostage and disrupted the country's democratic transition, according to Reuters.

In October 2015, Reuters reported that Burkina Faso was owed more than US\$212 million in

unpaid taxes due between 2012 and 2014, with senior members of ousted President Blaise Compaore's government among the worst offenders, according to a parliamentary report. Alexandre Sankara, vice-president of the parliamentary commission investigating tax fraud, said the fraud was “seriously harming” Burkina Faso’s economy.

### *Economic Performance*

Burkina Faso’s agriculture-based economy is highly vulnerable to adverse weather conditions and external shocks, resulting in ups and downs in GDP growth from year to year. Following a sluggish growth of 3.6 percent in 2007 due to weather-related declines in cotton exports, real GDP rebounded in 2008 with a strong recovery in agricultural production. But growth slowed in 2009, reflecting the impact of the global downturn, particularly on the cotton sector and related activities, before rebounding in 2010.

According to CountryWatch estimated calculations for 2014:

Real GDP growth rate was: 7.0 percent

Inflation was measured at: 1.2 percent

The fiscal deficit/surplus as percent of GDP (%) was: -3.1 percent

*Updated in 2015*

*\*Please note that the figures in our Economic Performance section are estimates or forecasts based on IMF-based data that are formulated using CountryWatch models of analysis.*

*Supplementary Sources: International Monetary Fund, African Development Bank, Bloomberg and Reuters*

## **Nominal GDP and Components**

Nominal GDP and Components					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Nominal GDP (LCU billions)	5,060.32	5,700.58	5,990.89	6,201.43	6,561.10

	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Nominal GDP Growth Rate (%)	13.777	12.652	5.093	3.514	5.800
Consumption (LCU billions)	3,016.67	3,326.04	3,439.46	3,432.44	4,677.55
Government Expenditure (LCU billions)	1,040.67	1,188.24	1,247.69	1,302.54	1,775.03
Gross Capital Formation (LCU billions)	1,415.22	1,849.96	1,973.27	1,924.04	905.235
Exports of Goods & Services (LCU billions)	1,265.27	1,454.70	1,564.29	1,755.67	1,516.58
Imports of Goods & Services (LCU billions)	1,677.51	2,118.36	2,233.81	2,213.26	2,313.29

## Population and GDP Per Capita

Population and GDP Per Capita					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Population, total (million)	15.995	16.460	16.937	17.429	17.934
Population growth (%)	2.928	2.907	2.898	2.905	2.897
Nominal GDP per Capita (LCU 1000s)	316,368.93	346,329.10	353,716.04	355,811.13	365,846.99

## Real GDP and Inflation

Real GDP and Inflation					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Real Gross Domestic Product (LCU billions 2005 base)	3,585.70	3,817.08	4,045.77	4,254.52	4,444.05
Real GDP Growth Rate (%)	6.627	6.453	5.991	5.160	4.455
GDP Deflator (2005=100.0)	141.125	149.344	148.078	145.761	147.638
Inflation, GDP Deflator (%)	6.706	5.824	-0.8477	-1.5647	1.288

## Government Spending and Taxation

Government Spending and Taxation					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Government Fiscal Budget (billions)	1,116.82	1,453.72	1,677.34	1,440.71	1,629.36
Fiscal Budget Growth Rate (percentage)	9.974	30.166	15.382	-14.1073	13.094
National Tax Rate Net of Transfers (%)	20.696	22.393	24.066	21.303	22.295
Government Revenues Net of Transfers (LCU billions)	1,047.29	1,276.51	1,441.75	1,321.10	1,462.79
Government Surplus(-) Deficit(+) (LCU billions)	-69.5370	-177.2110	-235.5900	-119.6100	-166.5680
Government Surplus(+) Deficit(-) (%GDP)	-1.3742	-3.1086	-3.9325	-1.9287	-2.5387

## Money Supply, Interest Rates and Unemployment

Money Supply, Interest Rates and Unemployment					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Money and Quasi-Money (M2) (LCU billions)	1,421.60	1,661.96	1,842.38	2,035.28	2,153.32
Money Supply Growth Rate (%)	13.683	16.908	10.856	10.470	5.800
Lending Interest Rate (%)	11.404	11.288	10.412	10.318	15.909
Unemployment Rate (%)	3.415	3.658	3.646	3.627	3.310

## Foreign Trade and the Exchange Rate

Foreign Trade and the Exchange Rate					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Official Exchange Rate (LCU/\$US)	471.429	510.256	490.976	495.996	579.449
Trade Balance NIPA (\$US billions)	-0.8745	-1.3006	-1.3637	-0.9226	-1.3750
Trade Balance % of GDP	-8.1466	-11.6420	-11.1757	-7.3788	-12.1430
Total Foreign Exchange Reserves (\$US billions)	0.9570	1.025	0.6285	0.2971	1.348

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**Data in US Dollars**

Data in US Dollars					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Nominal GDP (\$US billions)	10.734	11.172	12.202	12.503	11.323
Exports (\$US billions)	2.684	2.851	3.186	3.540	2.617
Imports (\$US billions)	3.558	4.152	4.550	4.462	3.992

## Energy Consumption and Production Standard Units

Energy Consumption and Production Standard Units					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum Consumption (TBPD)	11.644	11.613	12.000	12.347	12.596
Petroleum Production (TBPD)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Petroleum Net Exports (TBPD)	-11.6443	-11.6125	-12.0000	-12.3465	-12.5963
Natural Gas Consumption (bcf)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Natural Gas Production (bcf)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Natural Gas Net Exports (bcf)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Consumption (1000s st)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Production (1000s st)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Net Exports (1000s st)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Nuclear Production (bil kwh)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Hydroelectric Production (bil kwh)	0.0810	0.0970	0.1014	0.1056	0.1109
Renewables Production (bil kwh)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

## Energy Consumption and Production QUADS

Energy Consumption and Production QUADS					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum Consumption (Quads)	0.0249	0.0248	0.0256	0.0264	0.0269
Petroleum Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Petroleum Net Exports (Quads)	-0.0249	-0.0248	-0.0256	-0.0264	-0.0269
Natural Gas Consumption (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Natural Gas Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Natural Gas Net Exports (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Consumption (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Net Exports (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Nuclear Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Hydroelectric Production (Quads)	0.0008	0.0010	0.0010	0.0011	0.0011
Renewables Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

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## World Energy Price Summary

World Energy Price Summary					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum-WTI (\$/bbl)	95.054	94.159	97.943	93.112	48.709
Natural Gas-Henry Hub (\$/mmbtu)	3.999	2.752	3.729	4.369	2.614
Coal Thermal-Australian (\$/mt)	121.448	96.364	84.562	70.130	57.511

## CO2 Emissions

CO2 Emissions					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum Based (mm mt C)	0.5555	0.5540	0.5724	0.5890	0.6009
Natural Gas Based (mm mt C)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Based (mm mt C)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Total CO2 Emissions (mm mt C)	0.5555	0.5540	0.5724	0.5890	0.6009

## Agriculture Consumption and Production

Agriculture Consumption and Production					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Corn Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	1,063.52	1,546.81	1,560.99	1,408.64	1,299.50
Corn Production (1000 metric tons)	1,074.76	1,551.58	1,578.96	1,455.01	1,356.08
Corn Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	11.234	4.770	17.971	46.366	56.580
Soybeans Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	23.056	34.494	21.679	14.969	13.446
Soybeans Production (1000 metric tons)	23.086	24.261	21.641	14.811	13.186
Soybeans Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	0.0302	-10.2331	-0.0380	-0.1575	-0.2601
Rice Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	293.217	319.390	307.323	350.957	315.369
Rice Production (1000 metric tons)	241.028	319.385	305.248	347.364	342.134
Rice Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	-52.1889	-0.0052	-2.0753	-3.5924	26.765

	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Coffee Total Consumption (metric tons)	16.600	16.600	16.600	16.600	16.600
Coffee Production (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coffee Net Exports (metric tons)	-16.6000	-16.6000	-16.6000	-16.6000	-16.6000
Cocoa Beans Total Consumption (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Cocoa Beans Production (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Cocoa Beans Net Exports (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Wheat Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	59.920	63.878	78.564	87.049	73.596
Wheat Production (1000 metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Wheat Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	-59.9200	-63.8780	-78.5641	-87.0495	-73.5965

## World Agriculture Pricing Summary

World Agriculture Pricing Summary					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Corn Pricing Summary (\$/metric ton)	291.684	298.417	259.389	192.881	169.750
Soybeans Pricing Summary (\$/metric ton)	540.667	591.417	538.417	491.771	390.417
Rice Pricing Summary (\$/metric ton)	458.558	525.071	473.989	425.148	386.033
Coffee Pricing Summary (\$/kilogram)	5.976	4.111	3.076	4.424	3.526
Cocoa Beans Pricing Summary (\$/kilogram)	2.980	2.392	2.439	3.062	3.135
Wheat Pricing Summary (\$/metric ton)	316.264	313.242	312.248	284.895	203.177

## Metals Consumption and Production

Metals Consumption and Production					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Copper Consumption (1000 mt)	3.213	3.213	3.213	0.1590	0.1394
Copper Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Copper Net Exports (1000 mt)	-3.2133	-3.2133	-3.2133	-0.1590	-0.1394
Zinc Consumption (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Zinc Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Zinc Exports (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Lead Consumption (1000 mt)	0.0944	0.0944	0.0944	0.1022	0.0867
Lead Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Lead Exports (1000 mt)	-0.0944	-0.0944	-0.0944	-0.1022	-0.0867
Tin Consumption (1000 mt)	2.110	2.110	2.110	0.4678	0.4369

	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Tin Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Tin Exports (1000 mt)	-2.1100	-2.1100	-2.1100	-0.4678	-0.4369
Nickel Consumption (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Nickel Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Nickel Exports (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Gold Consumption (kg)	5,570.00	5,570.00	5,570.00	5,570.00	5,570.00
Gold Production (kg)	33,981.06	30,115.48	32,446.08	35,501.73	34,939.45
Gold Exports (kg)	28,411.06	24,545.48	26,876.08	29,931.73	29,369.45
Silver Consumption (mt)	209.333	209.333	209.333	318.500	264.751
Silver Production (mt)	5.195	5.451	5.539	5.733	5.268
Silver Exports (mt)	-204.1380	-203.8820	-203.7939	-312.7674	-259.4829

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**World Metals Pricing Summary**

World Metals Pricing Summary					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Copper (\$/mt)	8,828.19	7,962.35	7,332.10	6,863.40	5,510.46
Zinc (\$/mt)	2,193.90	1,950.41	1,910.26	2,160.97	1,931.68
Tin (\$/mt)	26,053.68	21,125.99	22,282.80	21,898.87	16,066.63
Lead (\$/mt)	2,400.81	2,064.64	2,139.79	2,095.46	1,787.82
Nickel (\$/mt)	22,910.36	17,547.55	15,031.80	16,893.38	11,862.64
Gold (\$/oz)	1,569.21	1,669.52	1,411.46	1,265.58	1,160.66
Silver (\$/oz)	35.224	31.137	23.850	19.071	15.721

## Economic Performance Index

### Economic Performance Index

The Economic Performance rankings are calculated by CountryWatch's editorial team, and are based on criteria including sustained economic growth, monetary stability, current account deficits, budget surplus, unemployment and structural imbalances. Scores are assessed from 0 to 100 using this aforementioned criteria as well as CountryWatch's proprietary economic research data and models.

	Bank stability risk	Monetary/ Currency stability	Government Finances	Empl./ Unempl.	Econ.GNP growth or decline/ forecast
	0 - 100	0 - 100	0 - 100	0 - 100	%
<b>North Americas</b>					
Canada	92	69	35	38	3.14%
United States	94	76	4	29	3.01%
<b>Western Europe</b>					
Austria	90	27	30	63	1.33%
Belgium	88	27	19	23	1.15%
Cyprus	81	91	16	80	-0.69%
Denmark	97	70	45	78	1.20%
Finland	89	27	41	33	1.25%

France	87	27	18	27	1.52%
Germany	86	27	22	21	1.25%
Greece	79	27	5	24	-2.00%
Iceland	90	17	2	34	-3.04%
Italy	85	27	37	24	0.84%
Ireland	92	27	11	10	-1.55%
Luxembourg	99	27	28	66	2.08%
Malta	77	27	41	51	0.54%
Netherlands	91	27	26	74	1.30%
Norway	98	44	10	76	1.08%
Portugal	77	27	13	20	0.29%
Spain	83	27	9	3	-0.41%
Sweden	94	72	54	32	1.23%
Switzerland	97	86	55	77	1.53%
United Kingdom	85	12	9	37	1.34%
<b>Central and Eastern Europe</b>					
Albania	44	60	33	6	2.30%
Armenia	45	59	49	30	1.80%

Azerbaijan	56	4	84	99	2.68%
Belarus	59	21	83	98	2.41%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	34	68	69	N/A	0.50%
Bulgaria	58	75	88	49	0.20%
Croatia	69	68	94	9	0.18%
Czech Republic	80	89	29	70	1.67%
Estonia	72	90	66	92	0.80%
Georgia	36	60	53	56	2.00%
Hungary	70	66	26	54	-0.16%
Latvia	67	100	65	44	-3.97%
Lithuania	65	91	87	79	-1.65%
Macedonia (FYR)	53	69	56	2	2.03%
Moldova	23	36	81	67	2.50%
Poland	74	74	38	12	2.72%
Romania	62	56	70	62	0.75%
Russia	73	18	90	8	4.00%
Serbia	48	49	52	5	1.97%

Montenegro	39	27	73	1	-1.70%
Slovak Republic	80	62	30	14	4.06%
Slovenia	81	27	36	65	1.12%
Ukraine	41	11	57	N/A	3.68%
Africa					
Algeria	57	18	96	7	4.55%
Angola	49	1	97	N/A	7.05%
Benin	19	91	20	N/A	3.22%
Botswana	68	58	76	N/A	6.33%
Burkina Faso	16	91	13	N/A	4.41%
Burundi	2	91	6	N/A	3.85%
Cameroon	26	91	91	N/A	2.58%
Cape Verde	52	87	4	N/A	4.96%
Central African Republic	9	91	32	N/A	3.18%
Chad	22	91	89	N/A	4.42%
Congo	52	87	87	N/A	12.13%
Côte d'Ivoire	25	91	82	28	2.98%
Dem. Republic					

Congo	4	91	47	N/A	5.44%
Djibouti	31	76	50	N/A	4.47%
Egypt	37	20	24	69	5.01%
Equatorial Guinea	82	91	85	N/A	0.94%
Eritrea	1	3	1	18	1.81%
Ethiopia	6	45	8	N/A	6.96%
Gabon	64	91	96	N/A	5.36%
Gambia	8	48	86	N/A	4.82%
Ghana	9	11	69	N/A	4.50%
Guinea	10	7	91	N/A	3.03%
Guinea-Bissau	5	91	46	N/A	3.47%
Kenya	20	41	59	N/A	4.11%
Lesotho	13	40	12	N/A	2.98%
Liberia	12	73	74	N/A	5.92%
Libya	73	2	94	N/A	5.22%
Madagascar	4	22	24	N/A	-1.02%
Malawi	7	25	55	N/A	5.96%
Mali	20	91	82	N/A	5.12%

Mauritania	15	13	93	N/A	4.58%
Mauritius	65	52	56	55	4.10%
Morocco	37	72	48	26	3.23%
Mozambique	12	23	71	N/A	6.45%
Namibia	40	39	62	N/A	1.70%
Niger	10	91	21	N/A	4.41%
Nigeria	30	6	61	N/A	6.98%
Rwanda	21	40	68	N/A	5.39%
Sao Tome & Principe	1	61	100	N/A	3.40%
Senegal	24	91	63	N/A	3.44%
Seychelles	60	67	97	N/A	4.01%
Sierra Leone	5	10	39	N/A	4.77%
Somalia	2	38	59	N/A	3.19%
South Africa	61	37	70	N/A	2.59%
Sudan	16	5	73	N/A	5.52%
Swaziland	32	44	79	N/A	1.09%
Tanzania	15	45	32	N/A	6.17%
Togo	8	91	92	N/A	2.56%

Tunisia	50	61	44	39	4.00%
Uganda	11	17	54	N/A	5.59%
Zambia	29	20	49	N/A	5.84%
Zimbabwe	0	8	16	N/A	2.24%
<b>South and Central America</b>					
Argentina	66	3	80	36	3.50%
Belize	47	76	80	N/A	1.00%
Bolivia	32	51	61	81	3.99%
Brazil	71	47	78	11	5.50%
Chile	78	25	92	73	4.72%
Columbia	47	52	34	47	2.25%
Costa Rica	60	42	39	57	3.45%
Ecuador	43	76	75	64	2.51%
El Salvador	35	76	67	N/A	1.04%
Guatemala	46	59	58	N/A	2.52%
Honduras	27	47	58	N/A	2.00%
Mexico	69	42	52	61	4.07%
Nicaragua	23	49	42	N/A	1.75%

Panama	66	76	72	45	5.00%
Paraguay	35	46	66	16	5.27%
Peru	59	66	75	22	6.33%
Suriname	58	26	81	59	4.02%
Uruguay	70	26	27	N/A	5.71%
Venezuela	55	1	28	13	-2.63%
<b>Caribbean</b>					
Antigua & Barbuda	72	76	15	N/A	-2.01%
Bahamas	74	76	45	87	-0.50%
Barbados	67	76	33	15	-0.50%
Bermuda	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cuba	45	76	18	95	0.25%
Dominica	53	76	65	N/A	1.40%
Dominican Republic	54	39	43	4	3.50%
Grenada	63	76	48	N/A	0.80%
Guyana	28	56	17	N/A	4.36%
Haiti	11	27	89	N/A	-8.50%
Jamaica	42	9	85	19	-0.28%

St Lucia	55	76	67	N/A	1.14%
St Vincent & Grenadines	49	76	95	N/A	0.50%
Trinidad & Tobago	82	37	77	72	2.13%
<b>Middle East</b>					
Bahrain	84	76	62	91	3.48%
Iran	51	19	40	58	3.01%
Iraq	48	9	8	N/A	7.27%
Israel	87	62	12	48	3.20%
Jordan	41	51	3	N/A	4.10%
Kuwait	96	4	99	N/A	3.10%
Lebanon	63	54	2	N/A	6.00%
Oman	76	16	88	N/A	4.71%
Qatar	99	16	83	N/A	18.54%
Saudi Arabia	76	8	98	N/A	3.70%
Syria	61	24	40	N/A	5.00%
Turkey	75	23	27	60	5.20%
United Arab Emirates	96	24	98	94	1.29%

Yemen	28	2	78	N/A	7.78%
<b>Asia</b>					
Afghanistan	17	70	74	N/A	8.64%
Bangladesh	13	43	25	N/A	5.38%
Bhutan	24	55	5	N/A	6.85%
Brunei	78	19	99	75	0.48%
Cambodia	18	67	42	N/A	4.77%
China	54	90	19	68	11.03%
Hong Kong	89	76	14	82	5.02%
India	31	38	34	35	8.78%
Indonesia	42	46	37	31	6.00%
Japan	88	89	6	71	1.90%
Kazakhstan	62	13	76	42	2.40%
Korea North	18	65	23	N/A	1.50%
Korea South	83	63	22	85	4.44%
Kyrgyz Republic	24	15	84	88	4.61%
Laos	17	54	7	N/A	7.22%
Macao	91	76	14	82	3.00%

Malaysia	68	65	44	90	4.72%
Maldives	44	55	17	N/A	3.45%
Mongolia	33	5	77	93	7.22%
Myanmar	3	41	72	N/A	5.26%
Nepal	3	14	25	N/A	2.97%
Pakistan	19	15	31	41	3.00%
Papua New Guinea	75	50	11	N/A	7.96%
Philippines	30	48	53	43	3.63%
Singapore	93	75	63	40	5.68%
Sri Lanka	38	22	10	N/A	5.50%
Taiwan	84	88	35	89	6.50%
Tajikistan	6	6	60	97	4.00%
Thailand	56	64	90	96	5.46%
Turkmenistan	51	53	68	N/A	12.00%
Uzbekistan	40	10	60	100	8.00%
Vietnam	25	12	20	N/A	6.04%
<b>Pacific</b>					
Australia	96	63	31	46	2.96%

Fiji	46	53	3	N/A	2.06%
Marshall Islands	27	76	46	N/A	1.08%
Micronesia (Fed. States)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
New Caledonia	96	73	51	52	2.00%
New Zealand	98	73	51	52	2.00%
Samoa	34	88	64	N/A	-2.77%
Solomon Islands	14	71	1	N/A	3.36%
Tonga	26	57	38	N/A	0.60%
Vanuatu	33	58	47	N/A	3.80%

Source:

CountryWatch Inc. [www.countrywatch.com](http://www.countrywatch.com)

Updated:

This material was produced in 2010; it is subject to updating in 2012.

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# Chapter 4

## Investment Overview

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## Foreign Investment Climate

### Background

One of the poorest countries in the world, landlocked Burkina Faso has few natural resources and a weak industrial base. About 90% of the population is engaged in subsistence agriculture, which is vulnerable to periodic drought. Cotton is the main cash crop and the government has joined with three other cotton producing countries in the region - Mali, Niger, and Chad - to lobby in the World Trade Organization for fewer subsidies to producers in other competing countries. Since 1998, Burkina Faso has embarked upon a gradual but successful privatization of state-owned enterprises. Having revised its investment code in 2004, Burkina Faso hopes to attract foreign investors. Thanks to this new code and other legislation favoring the mining sector, the country has seen an upswing in gold exploration and production. While the bitter internal crisis in neighboring Cote d'Ivoire is en route to be resolved, it is still having a negative effect on Burkina Faso's trade and employment. Burkina Faso received a Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) threshold grant to improve girls' education at the primary school level, and signed an MCC compact that focuses on the areas of infrastructure, agriculture, and land reform in July 2008.

### Foreign Investment Assessment

The government of Burkina Faso is actively seeking foreign investment. Rampant poverty, a lack of infrastructure, and regional instability present the would-be investor with considerable obstacles, however.

### Industries

Cotton lint, beverages, agricultural processing, soap, cigarettes, textiles, gold

### Import Commodities

Capital goods, foodstuffs, petroleum

### **Import Partners**

France 31.2%, Cote d'Ivoire 14.6%, Togo 9%, Belgium 5%

### **Export Commodities**

Cotton, livestock, gold

### **Export Partners**

Singapore 12.8%, China 11.6%, Thailand 8%, Italy 6.4%, India 6%, Colombia 5.2%, Ghana 5.2%, France 4.8%, Niger 4%

### **Ports and Harbors**

None

### **Telephone System**

All services only fair; country code: 226

### **Internet Users**

48,000 in recent years

### **Judicial System**

Based on French civil law system and customary law, Burkina Faso's legal system does have mechanisms in place to facilitate the resolution of commercial disputes through arbitration.

### **Labor Force**

Five million; Note: a large part of the male labor force migrates annually to neighboring countries

for seasonal employment; agriculture 90%

### Corruption Perception Ranking

See Corruption Perception index reported by Transparency International elsewhere in this report, from least to most corrupt countries.

### Cultural Considerations

Visitors should note that elders in Burkina Faso are afforded a high degree of respect, as is common in other African countries.

### Country Website (s)

[www.burkinaembassy-usa.org](http://www.burkinaembassy-usa.org)

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### Foreign Investment Index

#### Foreign Investment Index

**The Foreign Investment Index** is a proprietary index measuring attractiveness to international investment flows. The Foreign Investment Index is calculated using an established methodology by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on a given country's economic stability (sustained economic growth, monetary stability, current account deficits, budget surplus), economic risk (risk of non-servicing of payments for goods or services, loans and trade-related finance, risk of sovereign default), business and investment climate (property rights, labor force and laws, regulatory transparency, openness to foreign investment, market conditions, and stability of government). Scores are assigned from 0-10 using the aforementioned criteria. A score of 0 marks the lowest level of foreign investment viability, while a score of 10 marks the highest level of foreign investment viability, according to this proprietary index.

Country	Assessment
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Afghanistan	2
Albania	4.5
Algeria	6
Andorra	9
Angola	4.5-5
Antigua	8.5
Argentina	5
Armenia	5
Australia	9.5
Austria	9-9.5
Azerbaijan	5
Bahamas	9
Bahrain	7.5
Bangladesh	4.5
Barbados	9
Belarus	4
Belgium	9

Belize	7.5
Benin	5.5
Bhutan	4.5
Bolivia	4.5
Bosnia-Herzegovina	5
Botswana	7.5-8
Brazil	8
Brunei	7
Bulgaria	5.5
Burkina Faso	4
Burma (Myanmar)	4.5
Burundi	4
Cambodia	4.5
Cameroon	5
Canada	9.5
Cape Verde	6
Central African Republic	3
Chad	4

Chile	9
China	7.5
China: Hong Kong	8.5
China: Taiwan	8.5
Colombia	7
Comoros	4
Congo DRC	4
Congo RC	5
Costa Rica	8
Cote d'Ivoire	4.5
Croatia	7
Cuba	4.5
Cyprus	7
Czech Republic	8.5
Denmark	9.5
Djibouti	4.5
Dominica	6
Dominican Republic	6.5

East Timor	4.5
Ecuador	5.5
Egypt	4.5-5
El Salvador	6
Equatorial Guinea	4.5
Eritrea	3.5
Estonia	8
Ethiopia	4.5
Fiji	5
Finland	9
Former Yugoslav Rep. of Macedonia	5
France	9-9.5
Gabon	5.5
Gambia	5
Georgia	5
Germany	9-9.5
Ghana	5.5
Greece	5

Grenada	7.5
Guatemala	5.5
Guinea	3.5
Guinea-Bissau	3.5
Guyana	4.5
Haiti	4
Holy See (Vatican)	n/a
Hong Kong (China)	8.5
Honduras	5.5
Hungary	8
Iceland	8-8.5
India	8
Indonesia	5.5
Iran	4
Iraq	3
Ireland	8
Israel	8.5
Italy	8

Jamaica	5.5
Japan	9.5
Jordan	6
Kazakhstan	6
Kenya	5
Kiribati	5.5
Korea, North	1
Korea, South	9
Kosovo	4.5
Kuwait	8.5
Kyrgyzstan	4.5
Laos	4
Latvia	7
Lebanon	5
Lesotho	5.5
Liberia	3.5
Libya	3
Liechtenstein	9

Lithuania	7.5
Luxembourg	9-9.5
Madagascar	4.5
Malawi	4.5
Malaysia	8.5
Maldives	6.5
Mali	5
Malta	9
Marshall Islands	5
Mauritania	4.5
Mauritius	7.5-8
Mexico	6.5-7
Micronesia	5
Moldova	4.5-5
Monaco	9
Mongolia	5
Montenegro	5.5
Morocco	7.5

Mozambique	5
Namibia	7.5
Nauru	4.5
Nepal	4
Netherlands	9-9.5
New Zealand	9.5
Nicaragua	5
Niger	4.5
Nigeria	4.5
Norway	9-9.5
Oman	8
Pakistan	4
Palau	4.5-5
Panama	7
Papua New Guinea	5
Paraguay	6
Peru	6
Philippines	6

Poland	8
Portugal	7.5-8
Qatar	9
Romania	6-6.5
Russia	6
Rwanda	4
Saint Kitts and Nevis	8
Saint Lucia	8
Saint Vincent and Grenadines	7
Samoa	7
San Marino	8.5
Sao Tome and Principe	4.5-5
Saudi Arabia	7
Senegal	6
Serbia	6
Seychelles	5
Sierra Leone	4
Singapore	9.5

Slovak Republic (Slovakia)	8.5
Slovenia	8.5-9
Solomon Islands	5
Somalia	2
South Africa	8
Spain	7.5-8
Sri Lanka	5.5
Sudan	4
Suriname	5
Swaziland	4.5
Sweden	9.5
Switzerland	9.5
Syria	2.5
Tajikistan	4
Taiwan (China)	8.5
Tanzania	5
Thailand	7.5-8
Togo	4.5-5

Tonga	5.5-6
Trinidad and Tobago	8-8.5
Tunisia	6
Turkey	6.5-7
Turkmenistan	4
Tuvalu	7
Uganda	5
Ukraine	4.5-5
United Arab Emirates	8.5
United Kingdom	9
United States	9
Uruguay	6.5-7
Uzbekistan	4
Vanuatu	6
Venezuela	5
Vietnam	5.5
Yemen	3
Zambia	4.5-5

Zimbabwe	3.5
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### Editor's Note:

As of 2015, the global economic crisis (emerging in 2008) had affected many countries across the world, resulting in changes to their rankings. Among those countries affected were top tier economies, such as the [United Kingdom](#), [Iceland](#), [Switzerland](#) and [Austria](#). However, in all these cases, their rankings have moved back upward in the last couple of years as anxieties have eased. Other top tier countries, such as [Spain](#), [Portugal](#), [Ireland](#), and [Italy](#), suffered some effects due to debt woes and the concomitant effect on the euro zone. Greece, another euro zone nation, was also downgraded due to its sovereign debt crisis; however, Greece's position on the precipice of default incurred a sharper downgrade than the other four euro zone countries mentioned above. Cyprus' exposure to Greek bank yielded a downgrade in its case. Slovenia and [Latvia](#) have been slightly downgraded due to a mix of economic and political concerns but could easily be upgraded in a future assessment, should these concerns abate. Meanwhile, the crisis in eastern [Ukraine](#) fueled downgrades in that country and neighboring [Russia](#).

Despite the "trifecta of tragedy" in [Japan](#) in 2011 -- the earthquake, the ensuing tsunami, and the resulting nuclear crisis -- and the appreciable destabilization of the economic and political terrain therein, this country has only slightly been downgraded. Japan's challenges have been assessed to be transient, the government remains accountable, and there is little risk of default. Both [India](#) and [China](#) retain their rankings; [India](#) holds a slightly higher ranking than [China](#) due to its record of democratic representation and accountability.

There were shifts in opposite directions for [Mali](#) and [Nigeria](#) versus the [Central African Republic](#), [Burkina Faso](#), and [Burundi](#). [Mali](#) was slightly upgraded due to its efforts to return to constitutional order following the 2012 coup and to neutralize the threat of separatists and Islamists. Likewise, a new government in [Nigeria](#) generated a slight upgrade as the country attempts to confront corruption, crime, and terrorism. But the [Central African Republic](#) was downgraded due to the takeover of the government by Seleka rebels and the continued decline into lawlessness in that country. Likewise, the attempts by the leaders of [Burundi](#) and [Burkina Faso](#) to hold onto power by by-passing the constitution raised eyebrows and resulted in downgrades.

Political unrest in [Libya](#) and [Algeria](#) have contributed to a decision to marginally downgrade these countries as well. [Syria](#) incurred a sharper downgrade due to the devolution into de facto civil war and the dire security threat posed by Islamist terrorists. [Iraq](#) saw a similar downgrade as a result of the takeover of wide swaths of territory and the threat of genocide at the hands of Islamist terrorists. [Yemen](#), likewise, has been downgraded due to political instability at the hands of

secessionists, terrorists, Houthi rebels, and the intervention of external parties. Conversely, [Egypt](#) and [Tunisia](#) saw slight upgrades as their political environments stabilize.

At the low end of the spectrum, devolving security conditions and/or economic crisis have resulted in countries like [Pakistan](#), [Afghanistan](#), [Somalia](#), and [Zimbabwe](#) maintaining their low ratings.

The [United States](#) continues to retain its previous slight downgrade due to the enduring threat of default surrounding the debt ceiling in that country, matched by a conflict-ridden political climate. In the case of [Mexico](#), there is limited concern about default, but increasing alarm over the security situation in that country and the government's ability to contain it. In [Argentina](#), a default to bond holders resulted in a downgrade to that country. Finally, a small but significant upgrade was attributed to [Cuba](#) due to its recent pro-business reforms and its normalization of ties with the United States.

Source:

CountryWatch Inc. [www.countrywatch.com](http://www.countrywatch.com)

Updated:

2015

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## **Corruption Perceptions Index**

Corruption Perceptions Index

**Transparency International: [Corruption Perceptions Index](#)**

Editor's Note:

Transparency International's [Corruption Perceptions Index](#) is a composite index which ranks countries in terms of the degree to which corruption is perceived to exist among public officials. This index indicates the views of national and international business people and analysts about the levels of corruption in each country. The highest (and best) level of transparency is indicated by the number, 10. The lower (and worse) levels of transparency are indicated by lower numbers.

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Rank	Country/Territory	CPI 2009 Score	Surveys Used	Confidence Range
1	New Zealand	9.4	6	9.1 - 9.5
2	Denmark	9.3	6	9.1 - 9.5
3	Singapore	9.2	9	9.0 - 9.4
3	Sweden	9.2	6	9.0 - 9.3
5	Switzerland	9.0	6	8.9 - 9.1
6	Finland	8.9	6	8.4 - 9.4
6	Netherlands	8.9	6	8.7 - 9.0
8	Australia	8.7	8	8.3 - 9.0
8	Canada	8.7	6	8.5 - 9.0
8	Iceland	8.7	4	7.5 - 9.4
11	Norway	8.6	6	8.2 - 9.1
12	Hong Kong	8.2	8	7.9 - 8.5
12	Luxembourg	8.2	6	7.6 - 8.8
14	Germany	8.0	6	7.7 - 8.3
14	Ireland	8.0	6	7.8 - 8.4
16	Austria	7.9	6	7.4 - 8.3
17	Japan	7.7	8	7.4 - 8.0

17	United Kingdom	7.7	6	7.3 - 8.2
19	United States	7.5	8	6.9 - 8.0
20	Barbados	7.4	4	6.6 - 8.2
21	Belgium	7.1	6	6.9 - 7.3
22	Qatar	7.0	6	5.8 - 8.1
22	Saint Lucia	7.0	3	6.7 - 7.5
24	France	6.9	6	6.5 - 7.3
25	Chile	6.7	7	6.5 - 6.9
25	Uruguay	6.7	5	6.4 - 7.1
27	Cyprus	6.6	4	6.1 - 7.1
27	Estonia	6.6	8	6.1 - 6.9
27	Slovenia	6.6	8	6.3 - 6.9
30	United Arab Emirates	6.5	5	5.5 - 7.5
31	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	6.4	3	4.9 - 7.5
32	Israel	6.1	6	5.4 - 6.7
32	Spain	6.1	6	5.5 - 6.6
34	Dominica	5.9	3	4.9 - 6.7
35	Portugal	5.8	6	5.5 - 6.2

35	Puerto Rico	5.8	4	5.2 - 6.3
37	Botswana	5.6	6	5.1 - 6.3
37	Taiwan	5.6	9	5.4 - 5.9
39	Brunei Darussalam	5.5	4	4.7 - 6.4
39	Oman	5.5	5	4.4 - 6.5
39	Korea (South)	5.5	9	5.3 - 5.7
42	Mauritius	5.4	6	5.0 - 5.9
43	Costa Rica	5.3	5	4.7 - 5.9
43	Macau	5.3	3	3.3 - 6.9
45	Malta	5.2	4	4.0 - 6.2
46	Bahrain	5.1	5	4.2 - 5.8
46	Cape Verde	5.1	3	3.3 - 7.0
46	Hungary	5.1	8	4.6 - 5.7
49	Bhutan	5.0	4	4.3 - 5.6
49	Jordan	5.0	7	3.9 - 6.1
49	Poland	5.0	8	4.5 - 5.5
52	Czech Republic	4.9	8	4.3 - 5.6
52	Lithuania	4.9	8	4.4 - 5.4

54	Seychelles	4.8	3	3.0 - 6.7
55	South Africa	4.7	8	4.3 - 4.9
56	Latvia	4.5	6	4.1 - 4.9
56	Malaysia	4.5	9	4.0 - 5.1
56	Namibia	4.5	6	3.9 - 5.1
56	Samoa	4.5	3	3.3 - 5.3
56	Slovakia	4.5	8	4.1 - 4.9
61	Cuba	4.4	3	3.5 - 5.1
61	Turkey	4.4	7	3.9 - 4.9
63	Italy	4.3	6	3.8 - 4.9
63	Saudi Arabia	4.3	5	3.1 - 5.3
65	Tunisia	4.2	6	3.0 - 5.5
66	Croatia	4.1	8	3.7 - 4.5
66	Georgia	4.1	7	3.4 - 4.7
66	Kuwait	4.1	5	3.2 - 5.1
69	Ghana	3.9	7	3.2 - 4.6
69	Montenegro	3.9	5	3.5 - 4.4
71	Bulgaria	3.8	8	3.2 - 4.5

71	FYR Macedonia	3.8	6	3.4 - 4.2
71	Greece	3.8	6	3.2 - 4.3
71	Romania	3.8	8	3.2 - 4.3
75	Brazil	3.7	7	3.3 - 4.3
75	Colombia	3.7	7	3.1 - 4.3
75	Peru	3.7	7	3.4 - 4.1
75	Suriname	3.7	3	3.0 - 4.7
79	Burkina Faso	3.6	7	2.8 - 4.4
79	China	3.6	9	3.0 - 4.2
79	Swaziland	3.6	3	3.0 - 4.7
79	Trinidad and Tobago	3.6	4	3.0 - 4.3
83	Serbia	3.5	6	3.3 - 3.9
84	El Salvador	3.4	5	3.0 - 3.8
84	Guatemala	3.4	5	3.0 - 3.9
84	India	3.4	10	3.2 - 3.6
84	Panama	3.4	5	3.1 - 3.7
84	Thailand	3.4	9	3.0 - 3.8
89	Lesotho	3.3	6	2.8 - 3.8

89	Malawi	3.3	7	2.7 - 3.9
89	Mexico	3.3	7	3.2 - 3.5
89	Moldova	3.3	6	2.7 - 4.0
89	Morocco	3.3	6	2.8 - 3.9
89	Rwanda	3.3	4	2.9 - 3.7
95	Albania	3.2	6	3.0 - 3.3
95	Vanuatu	3.2	3	2.3 - 4.7
97	Liberia	3.1	3	1.9 - 3.8
97	Sri Lanka	3.1	7	2.8 - 3.4
99	Bosnia and Herzegovina	3.0	7	2.6 - 3.4
99	Dominican Republic	3.0	5	2.9 - 3.2
99	Jamaica	3.0	5	2.8 - 3.3
99	Madagascar	3.0	7	2.8 - 3.2
99	Senegal	3.0	7	2.5 - 3.6
99	Tonga	3.0	3	2.6 - 3.3
99	Zambia	3.0	7	2.8 - 3.2
106	Argentina	2.9	7	2.6 - 3.1
106	Benin	2.9	6	2.3 - 3.4

106	Gabon	2.9	3	2.6 - 3.1
106	Gambia	2.9	5	1.6 - 4.0
106	Niger	2.9	5	2.7 - 3.0
111	Algeria	2.8	6	2.5 - 3.1
111	Djibouti	2.8	4	2.3 - 3.2
111	Egypt	2.8	6	2.6 - 3.1
111	Indonesia	2.8	9	2.4 - 3.2
111	Kiribati	2.8	3	2.3 - 3.3
111	Mali	2.8	6	2.4 - 3.2
111	Sao Tome and Principe	2.8	3	2.4 - 3.3
111	Solomon Islands	2.8	3	2.3 - 3.3
111	Togo	2.8	5	1.9 - 3.9
120	Armenia	2.7	7	2.6 - 2.8
120	Bolivia	2.7	6	2.4 - 3.1
120	Ethiopia	2.7	7	2.4 - 2.9
120	Kazakhstan	2.7	7	2.1 - 3.3
120	Mongolia	2.7	7	2.4 - 3.0
120	Vietnam	2.7	9	2.4 - 3.1

126	Eritrea	2.6	4	1.6 - 3.8
126	Guyana	2.6	4	2.5 - 2.7
126	Syria	2.6	5	2.2 - 2.9
126	Tanzania	2.6	7	2.4 - 2.9
130	Honduras	2.5	6	2.2 - 2.8
130	Lebanon	2.5	3	1.9 - 3.1
130	Libya	2.5	6	2.2 - 2.8
130	Maldives	2.5	4	1.8 - 3.2
130	Mauritania	2.5	7	2.0 - 3.3
130	Mozambique	2.5	7	2.3 - 2.8
130	Nicaragua	2.5	6	2.3 - 2.7
130	Nigeria	2.5	7	2.2 - 2.7
130	Uganda	2.5	7	2.1 - 2.8
139	Bangladesh	2.4	7	2.0 - 2.8
139	Belarus	2.4	4	2.0 - 2.8
139	Pakistan	2.4	7	2.1 - 2.7
139	Philippines	2.4	9	2.1 - 2.7
143	Azerbaijan	2.3	7	2.0 - 2.6

143	Comoros	2.3	3	1.6 - 3.3
143	Nepal	2.3	6	2.0 - 2.6
146	Cameroon	2.2	7	1.9 - 2.6
146	Ecuador	2.2	5	2.0 - 2.5
146	Kenya	2.2	7	1.9 - 2.5
146	Russia	2.2	8	1.9 - 2.4
146	Sierra Leone	2.2	5	1.9 - 2.4
146	Timor-Leste	2.2	5	1.8 - 2.6
146	Ukraine	2.2	8	2.0 - 2.6
146	Zimbabwe	2.2	7	1.7 - 2.8
154	Côte d'Ivoire	2.1	7	1.8 - 2.4
154	Papua New Guinea	2.1	5	1.7 - 2.5
154	Paraguay	2.1	5	1.7 - 2.5
154	Yemen	2.1	4	1.6 - 2.5
158	Cambodia	2.0	8	1.8 - 2.2
158	Central African Republic	2.0	4	1.9 - 2.2
158	Laos	2.0	4	1.6 - 2.6
158	Tajikistan	2.0	8	1.6 - 2.5

162	Angola	1.9	5	1.8 - 1.9
162	Congo Brazzaville	1.9	5	1.6 - 2.1
162	Democratic Republic of Congo	1.9	5	1.7 - 2.1
162	Guinea-Bissau	1.9	3	1.8 - 2.0
162	Kyrgyzstan	1.9	7	1.8 - 2.1
162	Venezuela	1.9	7	1.8 - 2.0
168	Burundi	1.8	6	1.6 - 2.0
168	Equatorial Guinea	1.8	3	1.6 - 1.9
168	Guinea	1.8	5	1.7 - 1.8
168	Haiti	1.8	3	1.4 - 2.3
168	Iran	1.8	3	1.7 - 1.9
168	Turkmenistan	1.8	4	1.7 - 1.9
174	Uzbekistan	1.7	6	1.5 - 1.8
175	Chad	1.6	6	1.5 - 1.7
176	Iraq	1.5	3	1.2 - 1.8
176	Sudan	1.5	5	1.4 - 1.7
178	Myanmar	1.4	3	0.9 - 1.8
179	Afghanistan	1.3	4	1.0 - 1.5

180	Somalia	1.1	3	0.9 - 1.4
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Methodology:

As noted above, the highest (and best) level of transparency with the least perceived corruption is indicated by the number, 10. The lower (and worse) levels of transparency are indicated by lower numbers.

According to Transparency International, the [Corruption Perceptions Index](#) (CPI) table shows a country's ranking and score, the number of surveys used to determine the score, and the confidence range of the scoring.

The rank shows how one country compares to others included in the index. The CPI score indicates the perceived level of public-sector corruption in a country/territory.

The CPI is based on 13 independent surveys. However, not all surveys include all countries. The surveys used column indicates how many surveys were relied upon to determine the score for that country.

The confidence range indicates the reliability of the CPI scores and tells us that allowing for a margin of error, we can be 90% confident that the true score for this country lies within this range.

Note:

Kosovo, which separated from the Yugoslav successor state of [Serbia](#), is not listed above. No calculation is available for [Kosovo](#) at this time, however, a future corruption index by Transparency International may include the world's newest country in its tally. Taiwan has been listed above despite its contested status; while Taiwan claims sovereign status, [China](#) claims ultimate jurisdiction over Taiwan. Hong Kong, which is also under the rubric of Chinese sovereignty, is listed above. Note as well that Puerto Rico, which is a [United States](#) domain, is also included in the list above. These inclusions likely have to do with the size and fairly autonomous status of their economies.

Source:

Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index; available at URL: <http://www.transparency.org>

Updated:

Uploaded in 2011 using most recent ranking available; reviewed in 2015.

## Competitiveness Ranking

### Competitiveness Ranking

#### Editor's Note:

The Global Competitiveness Report's competitiveness ranking is based on the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI), which was developed for the World Economic Forum. The GCI is based on a number of competitiveness considerations, and provides a comprehensive picture of the competitiveness landscape in countries around the world. The competitiveness considerations are: institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, health and primary education, higher education and training, goods market efficiency, labour market efficiency, financial market development, technological readiness, market size, business sophistication, and innovation. The rankings are calculated from both publicly available data and the Executive Opinion Survey.

Country/Economy	GCI 2010 Rank	GCI 2010 Score	GCI 2009 Rank	Change 2009-2010
Switzerland	1	5.63	1	0
Sweden	2	5.56	4	2
Singapore	3	5.48	3	0
United States	4	5.43	2	-2
Germany	5	5.39	7	2
Japan	6	5.37	8	2
Finland	7	5.37	6	-1

Netherlands	8	5.33	10	2
Denmark	9	5.32	5	-4
Canada	10	5.30	9	-1
Hong Kong SAR	11	5.30	11	0
United Kingdom	12	5.25	13	1
Taiwan, China	13	5.21	12	-1
Norway	14	5.14	14	0
France	15	5.13	16	1
Australia	16	5.11	15	-1
Qatar	17	5.10	22	5
Austria	18	5.09	17	-1
Belgium	19	5.07	18	-1
Luxembourg	20	5.05	21	1
Saudi Arabia	21	4.95	28	7
Korea, Rep.	22	4.93	19	-3
New Zealand	23	4.92	20	-3
Israel	24	4.91	27	3
United Arab Emirates	25	4.89	23	-2

Malaysia	26	4.88	24	-2
China	27	4.84	29	2
Brunei Darussalam	28	4.75	32	4
Ireland	29	4.74	25	-4
Chile	30	4.69	30	0
Iceland	31	4.68	26	-5
Tunisia	32	4.65	40	8
Estonia	33	4.61	35	2
Oman	34	4.61	41	7
Kuwait	35	4.59	39	4
Czech Republic	36	4.57	31	-5
Bahrain	37	4.54	38	1
Thailand	38	4.51	36	-2
Poland	39	4.51	46	7
Cyprus	40	4.50	34	-6
Puerto Rico	41	4.49	42	1
Spain	42	4.49	33	-9
Barbados	43	4.45	44	1

Indonesia	44	4.43	54	10
Slovenia	45	4.42	37	-8
Portugal	46	4.38	43	-3
Lithuania	47	4.38	53	6
Italy	48	4.37	48	0
Montenegro	49	4.36	62	13
Malta	50	4.34	52	2
India	51	4.33	49	-2
Hungary	52	4.33	58	6
Panama	53	4.33	59	6
South Africa	54	4.32	45	-9
Mauritius	55	4.32	57	2
Costa Rica	56	4.31	55	-1
Azerbaijan	57	4.29	51	-6
Brazil	58	4.28	56	-2
Vietnam	59	4.27	75	16
Slovak Republic	60	4.25	47	-13
Turkey	61	4.25	61	0

Sri Lanka	62	4.25	79	17
Russian Federation	63	4.24	63	0
Uruguay	64	4.23	65	1
Jordan	65	4.21	50	-15
Mexico	66	4.19	60	-6
Romania	67	4.16	64	-3
Colombia	68	4.14	69	1
Iran	69	4.14	n/a	n/a
Latvia	70	4.14	68	-2
Bulgaria	71	4.13	76	5
Kazakhstan	72	4.12	67	-5
Peru	73	4.11	78	5
Namibia	74	4.09	74	0
Morocco	75	4.08	73	-2
Botswana	76	4.05	66	-10
Croatia	77	4.04	72	-5
Guatemala	78	4.04	80	2
Macedonia, FYR	79	4.02	84	5

Rwanda	80	4.00	n/a	n/a
Egypt	81	4.00	70	-11
El Salvador	82	3.99	77	-5
Greece	83	3.99	71	-12
Trinidad and Tobago	84	3.97	86	2
Philippines	85	3.96	87	2
Algeria	86	3.96	83	-3
Argentina	87	3.95	85	-2
Albania	88	3.94	96	8
Ukraine	89	3.90	82	-7
Gambia, The	90	3.90	81	-9
Honduras	91	3.89	89	-2
Lebanon	92	3.89	n/a	n/a
Georgia	93	3.86	90	-3
Moldova	94	3.86	n/a	n/a
Jamaica	95	3.85	91	-4
Serbia	96	3.84	93	-3
Syria	97	3.79	94	-3

Armenia	98	3.76	97	-1
Mongolia	99	3.75	117	18
Libya	100	3.74	88	-12
Dominican Republic	101	3.72	95	-6
Bosnia and Herzegovina	102	3.70	109	7
Benin	103	3.69	103	0
Senegal	104	3.67	92	-12
Ecuador	105	3.65	105	0
Kenya	106	3.65	98	-8
Bangladesh	107	3.64	106	-1
Bolivia	108	3.64	120	12
Cambodia	109	3.63	110	1
Guyana	110	3.62	104	-6
Cameroon	111	3.58	111	0
Nicaragua	112	3.57	115	3
Tanzania	113	3.56	100	-13
Ghana	114	3.56	114	0
Zambia	115	3.55	112	-3

Tajikistan	116	3.53	122	6
Cape Verde	117	3.51	n/a	n/a
Uganda	118	3.51	108	-10
Ethiopia	119	3.51	118	-1
Paraguay	120	3.49	124	4
Kyrgyz Republic	121	3.49	123	2
Venezuela	122	3.48	113	-9
Pakistan	123	3.48	101	-22
Madagascar	124	3.46	121	-3
Malawi	125	3.45	119	-6
Swaziland	126	3.40	n/a	n/a
Nigeria	127	3.38	99	-28
Lesotho	128	3.36	107	-21
Côte d'Ivoire	129	3.35	116	-13
Nepal	130	3.34	125	-5
Mozambique	131	3.32	129	-2
Mali	132	3.28	130	-2
Timor-Leste	133	3.23	126	-7

Burkina Faso	134	3.20	128	-6
Mauritania	135	3.14	127	-8
Zimbabwe	136	3.03	132	-4
Burundi	137	2.96	133	-4
Angola	138	2.93	n/a	n/a
Chad	139	2.73	131	-8

#### Methodology:

The competitiveness rankings are calculated from both publicly available data and the Executive Opinion Survey, a comprehensive annual survey conducted by the World Economic Forum together with its network of Partner Institutes (leading research institutes and business organizations) in the countries covered by the Report.

Highlights according to WEF --

- The [United States](#) falls two places to fourth position, overtaken by [Sweden](#) and [Singapore](#) in the rankings of the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2010-2011
- The People's Republic of [China](#) continues to move up the rankings, with marked improvements in several other Asian countries
- [Germany](#) moves up two places to fifth place, leading the Eurozone countries
- [Switzerland](#) tops the rankings

#### Source:

World Economic Forum; available at URL: <http://www.weforum.org>

#### Updated:

2011 using most recent ranking available; reviewed in 2015.

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## **Taxation**

### Corporate tax

The standard corporate tax rate is 35 percent.

### Capital gains

There is a 15 percent property transfer tax that is applied to capital gains from property sales.

### Individual tax

Payroll tax is four percent on gross salaries.

### Other taxes

There is a value added tax (VAT), of 18 percent, which is applied to most goods and services.

### Note

There are social security contributions of 16 percent on gross salaries,

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## **Stock Market**

The Bourse Regionale des Valeurs Mobilieres (BRVM) was opened in September 1998 to serve as a regional financial market for the member-states of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UMOEA), which includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo. At inception, the BRVM had 35 listed companies.

Listing requirements include: a share capital of CFAF 200-500 million; 15-20 percent public ownership; five annual reports; balance sheet.

The BRVM has computerized trading with satellite links. Trading occurs on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Trading is now decentralized so that member-countries can trade simultaneously from their national bourse via satellite links.

For more information on the Bourse Regionale des Valeurs Mobilieres, see URL: <http://www.brvm.org/>.

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## **Partner Links**

Partner Links

# **Chapter 5**

## **Social Overview**

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## People

### Population

Burkina Faso is an ethnically integrated, secular state. An estimated 84 percent of Burkina Faso's population (over 15 million in total) lives in rural areas. Most of Burkina's people are concentrated in the south and center of the country, sometimes exceeding 48 per square kilometer (125 per square mile).

This population density, high for Africa, causes annual migrations of hundreds of thousands of Burkinabe to Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Benin, Mali, Togo and Niger for seasonal agricultural work. These flows of workers are obviously affected by external events; the September 2002 coup attempt in Cote d'Ivoire and the ensuing fighting there have meant that hundreds of thousands of Burkinabe returned to Burkina Faso.

### Religion

A plurality of Burkinabe (over fifty percent) are Muslim. The introduction of Islam to Burkina Faso was initially resisted by the Mossi rulers. Indeed, even among self-professed Muslims, there is also adherence to traditional African religions. Indeed, about 40 percent of the people are said to follow traditional beliefs. The Christians, both Roman Catholics and Protestants, comprise about a tenth of the population, with their largest concentration in urban areas.

### Language

French is the official language, however, many indigenous languages (over 60) are typically spoken. Songhay, Senoufo, Sano, Nuni, More, Marka, Lyele, Lobi, Kasem, Karoboro, Jula, Gourma, Fulfulde, Dagara, Cerne, Bwamu, Bomu, Bobo-Madare, Bissa, and Malba-Birifor are among the main languages -- most of which belong to Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Mande and Nilo-Saharan ethno-linguistic families of languages.

## **Ethnicity**

Burkina Faso has approximately 50 ethnic groups.

Its population of over 15 million people belongs to two major West African cultural groups, the Voltaic and the Mande. The Voltaic are far more numerous and include the Mossi, which make up almost half of the population. The Mossi claim descent from warriors who migrated to present-day Burkina Faso and established an empire that lasted more than 800 years. Predominantly farmers, the Mossi are still bound by the traditions of the Mogho Naba, who holds court in Ouagadougou.

Other ethnic groups include the Gurunsi, Senfo, Lobi, Bobo, and Fulani. In addition to the African population, about 5,000 Europeans reside in Burkina Faso.

## **Cultural and Ethnic Identity**

The most significant ethnic divide in the country is between Mossi farmers and Fulbe herders. The root of the conflict lies in the long history of Mossi domination over its neighbors. In recent years the conflict has escalated along job activity lines. The high population density, rapidly growing population, growing pressure on natural resources, the growth of herds, and the extension of cultivated areas all contribute to the tensions between divergent culturally-based resource users. A minority of scholars has challenged this rationale, asserting that it is not really an ethnically based conflict over resource-use decisions, but rather a "modern" struggle to conceal personal wealth. The result is nonetheless the same. The rich Mossi and Fulbe societies have been clashing with increasing frequency.

Burkina Faso's most ritualized ethnic group is likely the Dagara centered in Birifu. While comprising only three percent of the total population of the country, Dagara ritualistic beliefs transcend much of Burkinabe society. At the center of these rituals are the bagr rituals. Bagr rituals form a series of private and public events that last a season or even a year. They guide social and cultural life. Fundamental to this set of beliefs is the consideration of fate.

As in Christianity, Dagara believe that fate determines what will happen in a person's life. There is a fixed fate and a changeable fate. The former is impossible to alter, but the latter allows room for ritual to guide what happens in daily life. To determine what it is that will happen, it is necessary to pay attention to the signs. Milestones act as reminders of life's purpose, but signs can be read through the divination of cowry shells, bones, and stones. These practices are critical to the weaving of the social fabric, as people are not intended to interpret these signs on their own. Rather, they interpret signs with the assistance of others as an individual's fate can be tied into the fate of the community or even the greater universe. Community decision-making therefore, is tantamount to Dagara actions.

## **Culture**

In recent years the role of "community" in Burkina Faso has been determined to be of great significance to development. The community level commonly determines how development funds are used. Further, the community largely determines the success of credit given to groups for development activities. The greater the community involvement in a particular development activity the more likely the micro-credit load will be repaid.

## **Health and Welfare**

Burkina Faso is one of the world's poorest countries. In the last decade, infant mortality was nearly one in every 10 or 100 deaths per 1,000 live births. But according to recent estimates, the infant mortality rate has decreased somewhat to 82.98 deaths per 1,000 live births. The life expectancy rate is averaged at 53 years of age. The fertility rate is 6.21 children born per woman and the population growth rate is 3.1 percent.

Anemia affects two out of three pregnant mothers due to the precarious nutritional status, iron and folic acid deficiencies, haemolysis due to malaria, and HIV/AIDS, which is now thought to infect 1.6 percent of the adult population.

Women are the hardest hit percentage of the population by both HIV/AIDS and poverty. The role of women in society remains somewhat tenuous in Burkina Faso. Only five percent of households have a female head of household, making land tenure, employment, education, health access and other daily concerns the venue of men.

While forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and rape are illegal, and monogamy is encouraged, polygamy is common with women often relegated to the role of property of their husband in the eyes of society. In a sign that times might be changing, women now run 19 percent of farms. Indeed, a number of studies show that men and women run farms with equal efficiency.

The risk of infectious diseases in Burkina Faso is very high. Food or waterborne diseases in this country include bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever; vectorborne disease include malaria and yellow fever; water contact diseases include schistosomiasis; respiratory diseases include meningococcal meningitis; animal contact diseases include rabies.

Note that 6.4 percent of GDP is spent on health expenditures in this country.

## **Social Conditions**

Female genital mutilation, child labor, child trafficking, and social exclusion of accused sorcerers remain serious problems, although the government has taken steps in recent years to combat these phenomena. Workers and civil servants generally have the right to organize unions, engage in collective bargaining, and strike for better pay and working conditions.

## **Education**

The literacy rate is 21.8 percent -- 29.4 percent for males and 15.2 percent for females. Clearly, there is something of a gender difference to be noted. In addition, rural living tends to go hand in hand with low rates of literacy in this country. Indeed, 92 percent of women in rural Burkina Faso are illiterate.

Not surprisingly, few Burkinabe have had formal education. Schooling is in theory free and compulsory until the age of 16, but only about 44 percent of Burkina's primary school-age children are enrolled in primary school due to actual costs of school supplies and school fees and to opportunity costs of sending a child who could earn money for the family to school. The University of Ouagadougou, founded in 1974, was the country's first institution of higher education. The Polytechnical University in Bobo-Dioulasso was opened in 1995. Note that 4.6 percent of GDP is spent on educational expenditures in this country.

## **Human Development**

One notable indicator used to measure a country's quality of life is the Human Development Index (HDI), which is compiled annually since 1990 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The HDI is a composite of several indicators, which measure a country's achievements in three main areas of human development: longevity, knowledge and education, as well as economic standard of living. In a recent ranking of 169 countries, the HDI places Burkina Faso near the very bottom of its ranking, in the low human development category, at 161st place. Although the concept of human development is complicated and cannot be properly captured by values and indices, the HDI, which is calculated and updated annually, offers a wide-ranging assessment of human development in certain countries, not based solely upon traditional economic and financial indicators.

Written by Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, [www.countrywatch.com](http://www.countrywatch.com); see Bibliography for list of research sources.

## Human Development Index

### Human Development Index

#### Human Development Index (Ranked Numerically)

The [Human Development Index](#) (HDI) is used to measure quality of life in countries across the world. The HDI has been compiled since 1990 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on a regular basis. The HDI is a composite of several indicators, which measure a country's achievements in three main arenas of human development: longevity, education, and economic standard of living. Although the concept of human development is complicated and cannot be properly captured by values and indices, the HDI offers a wide-ranging assessment of human development in certain countries, not based solely upon traditional economic and financial indicators. For more information about the methodology used to calculate the HDI, please see the "Source Materials" in the appendices of this review.

<b>Very High Human Development</b>	<b>High Human Development</b>	<b>Medium Human Development</b>	<b>Low Human Development</b>
1. Norway	43. Bahamas	86. Fiji	128. Kenya
2. Australia	44. Lithuania	87. Turkmenistan	129. Bangladesh
3. New Zealand	45. Chile	88. Dominican Republic	130. Ghana
4. United States	46. Argentina	89. China	131. Cameroon
5. Ireland	47. Kuwait	90. El Salvador	132. Myanmar (Burma)

6. Liechtenstein	48. Latvia	91. Sri Lanka	133. Yemen
7. Netherlands	49. Montenegro	92. Thailand	134. Benin
8. Canada	50. Romania	93. Gabon	135. Madagascar
9. Sweden	51. Croatia	94. Surname	136. Mauritania
10. Germany	52. Uruguay	95. Bolivia	137. Papua New Guinea
11. Japan	53. Libya	96. Paraguay	138. Nepal
12. South Korea	54. Panama	97. Philippines	139. Togo
13. Switzerland	55. Saudi Arabia	98. Botswana	140. Comoros
14. France	56. Mexico	99. Moldova	141. Lesotho
15. Israel	57. Malaysia	100. Mongolia	142. Nigeria
16. Finland	58. Bulgaria	101. Egypt	143. Uganda
17. Iceland	59. Trinidad and Tobago	102. Uzbekistan	144. Senegal
18. Belgium	60. Serbia	103. Micronesia	145. Haiti
19. Denmark	61. Belarus	104. Guyana	146. Angola
20. Spain	62. Costa Rica	105. Namibia	147. Djibouti
21. Hong King	63. Peru	106. Honduras	148. Tanzania
22. Greece	64. Albania	107. Maldives	149. Cote d'Ivoire

23. Italy	65. Russian Federation	108. Indonesia	150. Zambia
24. Luxembourg	66. Kazakhstan	109. Kyrgyzstan	151. Gambia
25. Austria	67. Azerbaijan	110. South Africa	152. Rwanda
26. United Kingdom	68. Bosnia and Herzegovina	111. Syria	153. Malawi
27. Singapore	69. Ukraine	112. Tajikistan	154. Sudan
28. Czech Republic	70. Iran	113. Vietnam	155. Afghanistan
29. Slovenia	71. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	114. Morocco	156. Guinea
30. Andorra	72. Mauritius	115. Nicaragua	157. Ethiopia
31. Slovakia	73. Brazil	116. Guatemala	158. Sierra Leone
32. United Arab Emirates	74. Georgia	117. Equatorial Guinea	159. Central African Republic
33. Malta	75. Venezuela	118. Cape Verde	160. Mali
34. Estonia	76. Armenia	119. India	161. Burkina Faso
35. Cyprus	77. Ecuador	120. East Timor	162. Liberia
36. Hungary	78. Belize	121. Swaziland	163. Chad
37. Brunei	79. Colombia	122. Laos	164. Guinea-Bissau

38. Qatar	80. Jamaica	123. Solomon Islands	165. Mozambique
39. Bahrain	81. Tunisia	124. Cambodia	166. Burundi
40. Portugal	82. Jordan	125. Pakistan	167. Niger
41. Poland	83. Turkey	126. Congo RC	168. Congo DRC
42. Barbados	84. Algeria	127. Sao Tome and Principe	169. Zimbabwe
	85. Tonga		

### Methodology:

For more information about the methodology used to calculate the HDI, please see the "Source Materials" in the appendices of this Country Review.

### Reference:

As published in United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report 2010.

### Source:

United Nations Development Programme's [Human Development Index](http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/) available at URL: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>

### Updated:

Uploaded in 2011 using ranking available; reviewed in 2015

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## **Life Satisfaction Index**

## Life Satisfaction Index

### Life Satisfaction Index

Created by Adrian G. White, an Analytic Social Psychologist at the University of Leicester, the "Satisfaction with Life Index" measures subjective life satisfaction across various countries. The data was taken from a metastudy (see below for source) and associates the notion of subjective happiness or life satisfaction with qualitative parameters such as health, wealth, and access to basic education. This assessment serves as an alternative to other measures of happiness that tend to rely on traditional and quantitative measures of policy on quality of life, such as GNP and GDP. The methodology involved the responses of 80,000 people across the globe.

Rank	Country	Score
1	Denmark	273.4
2	Switzerland	273.33
3	Austria	260
4	Iceland	260
5	The Bahamas	256.67
6	Finland	256.67
7	Sweden	256.67
8	Iran	253.33
9	Brunei	253.33
10	Canada	253.33

11	Ireland	253.33
12	Luxembourg	253.33
13	Costa Rica	250
14	Malta	250
15	Netherlands	250
16	Antiguaand Barbuda	246.67
17	Malaysia	246.67
18	New Zealand	246.67
19	Norway	246.67
20	Seychelles	246.67
21	Saint Kitts and Nevis	246.67
22	United Arab Emirates	246.67
23	United States	246.67
24	Vanuatu	246.67
25	Venezuela	246.67
26	Australia	243.33
27	Barbados	243.33
28	Belgium	243.33

29	Dominica	243.33
30	Oman	243.33
31	Saudi Arabia	243.33
32	Suriname	243.33
33	Bahrain	240
34	Colombia	240
35	Germany	240
36	Guyana	240
37	Honduras	240
38	Kuwait	240
39	Panama	240
40	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	240
41	United Kingdom	236.67
42	Dominican Republic	233.33
43	Guatemala	233.33
44	Jamaica	233.33
45	Qatar	233.33
46	Spain	233.33

47	Saint Lucia	233.33
48	Belize	230
49	Cyprus	230
50	Italy	230
51	Mexico	230
52	Samoa	230
53	Singapore	230
54	Solomon Islands	230
55	Trinidad and Tobago	230
56	Argentina	226.67
57	Fiji	223.33
58	Israel	223.33
59	Mongolia	223.33
60	São Tomé and Príncipe	223.33
61	El Salvador	220
62	France	220
63	Hong Kong	220
64	Indonesia	220

65	Kyrgyzstan	220
66	Maldives	220
67	Slovenia	220
68	Taiwan	220
69	East Timor	220
70	Tonga	220
71	Chile	216.67
72	Grenada	216.67
73	Mauritius	216.67
74	Namibia	216.67
75	Paraguay	216.67
76	Thailand	216.67
77	Czech Republic	213.33
78	Philippines	213.33
79	Tunisia	213.33
80	Uzbekistan	213.33
81	Brazil	210
82	China	210

83	Cuba	210
84	Greece	210
85	Nicaragua	210
86	Papua New Guinea	210
87	Uruguay	210
88	Gabon	206.67
89	Ghana	206.67
90	Japan	206.67
91	Yemen	206.67
92	Portugal	203.33
93	Sri Lanka	203.33
94	Tajikistan	203.33
95	Vietnam	203.33
96	Bhutan	200
97	Comoros	196.67
98	Croatia	196.67
99	Poland	196.67
100	Cape Verde	193.33

101	Kazakhstan	193.33
102	South Korea	193.33
103	Madagascar	193.33
104	Bangladesh	190
105	Republic of the Congo	190
106	The Gambia	190
107	Hungary	190
108	Libya	190
109	South Africa	190
110	Cambodia	186.67
111	Ecuador	186.67
112	Kenya	186.67
113	Lebanon	186.67
114	Morocco	186.67
115	Peru	186.67
116	Senegal	186.67
117	Bolivia	183.33
118	Haiti	183.33

119	Nepal	183.33
120	Nigeria	183.33
121	Tanzania	183.33
122	Benin	180
123	Botswana	180
124	Guinea-Bissau	180
125	India	180
126	Laos	180
127	Mozambique	180
128	Palestinian Authority	180
129	Slovakia	180
130	Myanmar	176.67
131	Mali	176.67
132	Mauritania	176.67
133	Turkey	176.67
134	Algeria	173.33
135	Equatorial Guinea	173.33
136	Romania	173.33

137	Bosnia and Herzegovina	170
138	Cameroon	170
139	Estonia	170
140	Guinea	170
141	Jordan	170
142	Syria	170
143	Sierra Leone	166.67
144	Azerbaijan	163.33
145	Central African Republic	163.33
146	Republic of Macedonia	163.33
147	Togo	163.33
148	Zambia	163.33
149	Angola	160
150	Djibouti	160
151	Egypt	160
152	Burkina Faso	156.67
153	Ethiopia	156.67
154	Latvia	156.67

155	Lithuania	156.67
156	Uganda	156.67
157	Albania	153.33
158	Malawi	153.33
159	Chad	150
160	Côte d'Ivoire	150
161	Niger	150
162	Eritrea	146.67
163	Rwanda	146.67
164	Bulgaria	143.33
165	Lesotho	143.33
166	Pakistan	143.33
167	Russia	143.33
168	Swaziland	140
169	Georgia	136.67
170	Belarus	133.33
171	Turkmenistan	133.33
172	Armenia	123.33

173	Sudan	120
174	Ukraine	120
175	Moldova	116.67
176	Democratic Republic of the Congo	110
177	Zimbabwe	110
178	Burundi	100

Commentary:

European countries, such as [Denmark](#), [Iceland](#), [Finland](#), [Sweden](#), [Switzerland](#), [Austria](#) resided at the top of the ranking with highest levels of self-reported life satisfaction. Conversely, European countries such as [Latvia](#), [Lithuania](#), [Moldova](#), [Belarus](#) and [Ukraine](#) ranked low on the index. African countries such as Democratic Republic of Congo, [Zimbabwe](#) and [Burundi](#) found themselves at the very bottom of the ranking, and indeed, very few African countries could be found in the top 100. [Japan](#) was at the mid-way point in the ranking, however, other Asian countries such as [Brunei](#) and [Malaysia](#) were in the top tier, while [Pakistan](#) was close to the bottom with a low level of self-identified life satisfaction. As a region, the Middle East presented a mixed bag with Saudi Arabians reporting healthy levels of life satisfaction and Egyptians near the bottom of the ranking. As a region, Caribbean countries were ranked highly, consistently demonstrating high levels of life satisfaction. The findings showed that health was the most crucial determining factor in life satisfaction, followed by prosperity and education.

Source:

White, A. (2007). A Global Projection of Subjective Well-being: A Challenge To Positive Psychology? *Psychtalk* 56, 17-20. The data was extracted from a meta-analysis by Marks, Abdallah, Simms & Thompson (2006).

Uploaded:

Based on study noted above in "Source" ; reviewed in 2015

## Happy Planet Index

### Happy Planet Index

The Happy Planet Index (HPI) is used to measure human well-being in conjunction with environmental impact. The HPI has been compiled since 2006 by the New Economics Foundation. The index is a composite of several indicators including subjective life satisfaction, life expectancy at birth, and ecological footprint per capita.

As noted by NEFA, the HPI "reveals the ecological efficiency with which human well-being is delivered." Indeed, the index combines environmental impact with human well-being to measure the environmental efficiency with which, country by country, people live long and happy lives. The countries ranked highest by the HPI are not necessarily the ones with the happiest people overall, but the ones that allow their citizens to live long and fulfilling lives, without negatively impacting this opportunity for either future generations or citizens of other countries. Accordingly, a country like the [United States](#) will rank low on this list due to its large per capital ecological footprint, which uses more than its fair share of resources, and will likely cause planetary damage.

It should be noted that the HPI was designed to be a counterpoint to other well-established indices of countries' development, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which measures overall national wealth and economic development, but often obfuscates the realities of countries with stark variances between the rich and the poor. Moreover, the objective of most of the world's people is not to be wealthy but to be happy. The HPI also differs from the [Human Development Index](#) (HDI), which measures quality of life but not ecology, since it [HPI] also includes sustainability as a key indicator.

Rank	Country	HPI
1	Costa Rica	76.1
2	Dominican Republic	71.8
3	Jamaica	70.1

4	Guatemala	68.4
5	Vietnam	66.5
6	Colombia	66.1
7	Cuba	65.7
8	El Salvador	61.5
9	Brazil	61.0
10	Honduras	61.0
11	Nicaragua	60.5
12	Egypt	60.3
13	Saudi Arabia	59.7
14	Philippines	59.0
15	Argentina	59.0
16	Indonesia	58.9
17	Bhutan	58.5
18	Panama	57.4
19	Laos	57.3
20	China	57.1
21	Morocco	56.8

22	Sri Lanka	56.5
23	Mexico	55.6
24	Pakistan	55.6
25	Ecuador	55.5
26	Jordan	54.6
27	Belize	54.5
28	Peru	54.4
29	Tunisia	54.3
30	Trinidad and Tobago	54.2
31	Bangladesh	54.1
32	Moldova	54.1
33	Malaysia	54.0
34	Tajikistan	53.5
35	India	53.0
36	Venezuela	52.5
37	Nepal	51.9
38	Syria	51.3
39	Burma	51.2

40	Algeria	51.2
41	Thailand	50.9
42	Haiti	50.8
43	Netherlands	50.6
44	Malta	50.4
45	Uzbekistan	50.1
46	Chile	49.7
47	Bolivia	49.3
48	Armenia	48.3
49	Singapore	48.2
50	Yemen	48.1
51	Germany	48.1
52	Switzerland	48.1
53	Sweden	48.0
54	Albania	47.9
55	Paraguay	47.8
56	Palestinian Authority	47.7
57	Austria	47.7

58	Serbia	47.6
59	Finland	47.2
60	Croatia	47.2
61	Kyrgyzstan	47.1
62	Cyprus	46.2
63	Guyana	45.6
64	Belgium	45.4
65	Bosnia and Herzegovina	45.0
66	Slovenia	44.5
67	Israel	44.5
68	South Korea	44.4
69	Italy	44.0
70	Romania	43.9
71	France	43.9
72	Georgia	43.6
73	Slovakia	43.5
74	United Kingdom	43.3
75	Japan	43.3

76	Spain	43.2
77	Poland	42.8
78	Ireland	42.6
79	Iraq	42.6
80	Cambodia	42.3
81	Iran	42.1
82	Bulgaria	42.0
83	Turkey	41.7
84	Hong Kong	41.6
85	Azerbaijan	41.2
86	Lithuania	40.9
87	Djibouti	40.4
88	Norway	40.4
89	Canada	39.4
90	Hungary	38.9
91	Kazakhstan	38.5
92	Czech Republic	38.3
93	Mauritania	38.2

94	Iceland	38.1
95	Ukraine	38.1
96	Senegal	38.0
97	Greece	37.6
98	Portugal	37.5
99	Uruguay	37.2
100	Ghana	37.1
101	Latvia	36.7
102	Australia	36.6
103	New Zealand	36.2
104	Belarus	35.7
105	Denmark	35.5
106	Mongolia	35.0
107	Malawi	34.5
108	Russia	34.5
109	Chad	34.3
110	Lebanon	33.6
111	Macedonia	32.7

112	Republic of the Congo	32.4
113	Madagascar	31.5
114	United States	30.7
115	Nigeria	30.3
116	Guinea	30.3
117	Uganda	30.2
118	South Africa	29.7
119	Rwanda	29.6
120	Democratic Republic of the Congo	29.0
121	Sudan	28.5
122	Luxembourg	28.5
123	United Arab Emirates	28.2
124	Ethiopia	28.1
125	Kenya	27.8
126	Cameroon	27.2
127	Zambia	27.2
128	Kuwait	27.0
129	Niger	26.9

130	Angola	26.8
131	Estonia	26.4
132	Mali	25.8
133	Mozambique	24.6
134	Benin	24.6
135	Togo	23.3
136	Sierra Leone	23.1
137	Central African Republic	22.9
138	Burkina Faso	22.4
139	Burundi	21.8
140	Namibia	21.1
141	Botswana	20.9
142	Tanzania	17.8
143	Zimbabwe	16.6

**Source:** This material is derived from the Happy Planet Index issued by the New Economics Foundation (NEF).

**Methodology:** The methodology for the calculations can be found at URL: <http://www.happyplanetindex.org/>

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## Status of Women

### **Gender Related Development Index (GDI) Rank:**

138th out of 140

### **Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) Rank:**

Not Ranked

### **Female Population:**

7.0 million

### **Female Life Expectancy at birth:**

53 years

### **Total Fertility Rate:**

6.2

### **Maternal Mortality Ratio (2000):**

1,000

### **Total Number of Women Living with HIV/AIDS:**

49,000-110,000

### **Ever Married Women, Ages 15-19 (%):**

35%

### **Mean Age at Time of Marriage:**

19

**Contraceptive Use Among Married Women, Any Method (%):**

14%

**Female Adult Literacy Rate:**

15.2%

**Combined Female Gross enrollment ratio for Primary, Secondary and Tertiary schools:**

20%

**Female-Headed Households (%):**

9%

**Economically Active Females (%):**

74.6%

**Female Contributing Family Workers (%):**

N/A

**Female Estimated Earned Income:**

\$986

**Seats in Parliament held by women (%):**

*Lower or Single House:* 11.7%

*Upper House or Senate:* N/A

**Year Women Received the Right to Vote:**

1958

**Year Women Received the Right to Stand for Election:**

1958

\*The Gender Development Index (GDI) is a composite index which measures the average achievement in a country. While very similar to the Human Development Index in its use of the same variables, the GDI adjusts the average achievement of each country in terms of life expectancy, enrollment in schools, income, and literacy in accordance to the disparities between males and females.

\*The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) is a composite index measuring gender inequality in three of the basic dimensions of empowerment; economic participation and decision-making, political participation and decision-making, and power over economic resources.

\*Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is defined as the average number of babies born to women during their reproductive years. A TFR of 2.1 is considered the replacement rate; once a TFR of a population reaches 2.1 the population will remain stable assuming no immigration or emigration takes place. When the TFR is greater than 2.1 a population will increase and when it is less than 2.1 a population will eventually decrease, although due to the age structure of a population it will take years before a low TFR is translated into lower population.

\*Maternal Mortality Rate is the number of deaths to women per 100,000 live births that resulted from conditions related to pregnancy and or delivery related complications.

\*Economically Active Females are the share of the female population, ages 15 and above, whom supply, or are able to supply, labor for the production of goods and services.

\*Female Contributing Family Workers are those females who work without pay in an economic enterprise operated by a relative living in the same household.

\*Estimated Earned Income is measured according to Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) in US dollars.

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## **Global Gender Gap Index**

### Global Gender Gap Index

#### Editor's Note:

The Global Gender Gap Index by the World Economic Forum ranks most of the world's countries in terms of the division of resources and opportunities among males and females. Specifically, the ranking assesses the gender inequality gap in these four arenas:

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1. Economic participation and opportunity (salaries and high skilled employment participation levels)
2. Educational attainment (access to basic and higher level education)
3. Political empowerment (representation in decision-making structures)
4. Health and survival (life expectancy and sex ratio)

	2010 rank	2010 score	2010 rank among 2009 countries	2009 rank	2009 score	2008 rank	2008 score	2007 rank
Country								
Iceland	1	0.8496	1	1	0.8276	4	0.7999	4
Norway	2	0.8404	2	3	0.8227	1	0.8239	2
Finland	3	0.8260	3	2	0.8252	2	0.8195	3
Sweden	4	0.8024	4	4	0.8139	3	0.8139	1
New Zealand	5	0.7808	5	5	0.7880	5	0.7859	5
Ireland	6	0.7773	6	8	0.7597	8	0.7518	9
Denmark	7	0.7719	7	7	0.7628	7	0.7538	8
Lesotho	8	0.7678	8	10	0.7495	16	0.7320	26
Philippines	9	0.7654	9	9	0.7579	6	0.7568	6
Switzerland	10	0.7562	10	13	0.7426	14	0.7360	40

Spain	11	0.7554	11	17	0.7345	17	0.7281	10
South Africa	12	0.7535	12	6	0.7709	22	0.7232	20
Germany	13	0.7530	13	12	0.7449	11	0.7394	7
Belgium	14	0.7509	14	33	0.7165	28	0.7163	19
United Kingdom	15	0.7460	15	15	0.7402	13	0.7366	11
Sri Lanka	16	0.7458	16	16	0.7402	12	0.7371	15
Netherlands	17	0.7444	17	11	0.7490	9	0.7399	12
Latvia	18	0.7429	18	14	0.7416	10	0.7397	13
United States	19	0.7411	19	31	0.7173	27	0.7179	31
Canada	20	0.7372	20	25	0.7196	31	0.7136	18
Trinidad and Tobago	21	0.7353	21	19	0.7298	19	0.7245	46
Mozambique	22	0.7329	22	26	0.7195	18	0.7266	43
Australia	23	0.7271	23	20	0.7282	21	0.7241	17
Cuba	24	0.7253	24	29	0.7176	25	0.7195	22
Namibia	25	0.7238	25	32	0.7167	30	0.7141	29
Luxembourg	26	0.7231	26	63	0.6889	66	0.6802	58
Mongolia	27	0.7194	27	22	0.7221	40	0.7049	62

Costa Rica	28	0.7194	28	27	0.7180	32	0.7111	28
Argentina	29	0.7187	29	24	0.7211	24	0.7209	33
Nicaragua	30	0.7176	30	49	0.7002	71	0.6747	90
Barbados	31	0.7176	31	21	0.7236	26	0.7188	n/a
Portugal	32	0.7171	32	46	0.7013	39	0.7051	37
Uganda	33	0.7169	33	40	0.7067	43	0.6981	50
Moldova	34	0.7160	34	36	0.7104	20	0.7244	21
Lithuania	35	0.7132	35	30	0.7175	23	0.7222	14
Bahamas	36	0.7128	36	28	0.7179	n/a	n/a	n/a
Austria	37	0.7091	37	42	0.7031	29	0.7153	27
Guyana	38	0.7090	38	35	0.7108	n/a	n/a	n/a
Panama	39	0.7072	39	43	0.7024	34	0.7095	38
Ecuador	40	0.7072	40	23	0.7220	35	0.7091	44
Kazakhstan	41	0.7055	41	47	0.7013	45	0.6976	32
Slovenia	42	0.7047	42	52	0.6982	51	0.6937	49
Poland	43	0.7037	43	50	0.6998	49	0.6951	60
Jamaica	44	0.7037	44	48	0.7013	44	0.6980	39

Russian Federation	45	0.7036	45	51	0.6987	42	0.6994	45
France	46	0.7025	46	18	0.7331	15	0.7341	51
Estonia	47	0.7018	47	37	0.7094	37	0.7076	30
Chile	48	0.7013	48	64	0.6884	65	0.6818	86
Macedonia, FYR	49	0.6996	49	53	0.6950	53	0.6914	35
Bulgaria	50	0.6983	50	38	0.7072	36	0.7077	25
Kyrgyz Republic	51	0.6973	51	41	0.7058	41	0.7045	70
Israel	52	0.6957	52	45	0.7019	56	0.6900	36
Croatia	53	0.6939	53	54	0.6944	46	0.6967	16
Honduras	54	0.6927	54	62	0.6893	47	0.6960	68
Colombia	55	0.6927	55	56	0.6939	50	0.6944	24
Singapore	56	0.6914	56	84	0.6664	84	0.6625	77
Thailand	57	0.6910	57	59	0.6907	52	0.6917	52
Greece	58	0.6908	58	85	0.6662	75	0.6727	72
Uruguay	59	0.6897	59	57	0.6936	54	0.6907	78
Peru	60	0.6895	60	44	0.7024	48	0.6959	75
China	61	0.6881	61	60	0.6907	57	0.6878	73

Botswana	62	0.6876	62	39	0.7071	63	0.6839	53
Ukraine	63	0.6869	63	61	0.6896	62	0.6856	57
Venezuela	64	0.6863	64	69	0.6839	59	0.6875	55
Czech Republic	65	0.6850	65	74	0.6789	69	0.6770	64
Tanzania	66	0.6829	66	73	0.6797	38	0.7068	34
Romania	67	0.6826	67	70	0.6805	70	0.6763	47
Malawi	68	0.6824	68	76	0.6738	81	0.6664	87
Paraguay	69	0.6804	69	66	0.6868	100	0.6379	69
Ghana	70	0.6782	70	80	0.6704	77	0.6679	63
Slovak Republic	71	0.6778	71	68	0.6845	64	0.6824	54
Vietnam	72	0.6776	72	71	0.6802	68	0.6778	42
Dominican Republic	73	0.6774	73	67	0.6859	72	0.6744	65
Italy	74	0.6765	74	72	0.6798	67	0.6788	84
Gambia, The	75	0.6762	75	75	0.6752	85	0.6622	95
Bolivia	76	0.6751	76	82	0.6693	80	0.6667	80
Brueni Darussalem	77	0.6748	77	94	0.6524	99	0.6392	n/a

Albania	78	0.6726	78	91	0.6601	87	0.6591	66
Hungary	79	0.6720	79	65	0.6879	60	0.6867	61
Madagascar	80	0.6713	80	77	0.6732	74	0.6736	89
Angola	81	0.6712	81	106	0.6353	114	0.6032	110
Bangladesh	82	0.6702	82	93	0.6526	90	0.6531	100
Malta	83	0.6695	83	88	0.6635	83	0.6634	76
Armenia	84	0.6669	84	90	0.6619	78	0.6677	71
Brazil	85	0.6655	85	81	0.6695	73	0.6737	74
Cyprus	86	0.6642	86	79	0.6706	76	0.6694	82
Indonesia	87	0.6615	87	92	0.6580	93	0.6473	81
Georgia	88	0.6598	88	83	0.6680	82	0.6654	67
Tajikistan	89	0.6598	89	86	0.6661	89	0.6541	79
El Salvador	90	0.6596	90	55	0.6939	58	0.6875	48
Mexico	91	0.6577	91	98	0.6503	97	0.6441	93
Zimbabwe	92	0.6574	92	95	0.6518	92	0.6485	88
Belize	93	0.6536	93	87	0.6636	86	0.6610	94
Japan	94	0.6524	94	101	0.6447	98	0.6434	91
Mauritius	95	0.6520	95	96	0.6513	95	0.6466	85

Kenya	96	0.6499	96	97	0.6512	88	0.6547	83
Cambodia	97	0.6482	97	104	0.6410	94	0.6469	98
Malaysia	98	0.6479	98	100	0.6467	96	0.6442	92
Maldives	99	0.6452	99	99	0.6482	91	0.6501	99
Azerbaijan	100	0.6446	100	89	0.6626	61	0.6856	59
Senegal	101	0.6414	101	102	0.6427	n/a	n/a	n/a
Suriname	102	0.6407	102	78	0.6726	79	0.6674	56
United Arab Emirates	103	0.6397	103	112	0.6198	105	0.6220	105
Korea, Rep.	104	0.6342	104	115	0.6146	108	0.6154	97
Kuwait	105	0.6318	105	105	0.6356	101	0.6358	96
Zambia	106	0.6293	106	107	0.6310	106	0.6205	101
Tunisia	107	0.6266	107	109	0.6233	103	0.6295	102
Fiji	108	0.6256	108	103	0.6414	n/a	n/a	n/a
Guatemala	109	0.6238	109	111	0.6209	112	0.6072	106
Bahrain	110	0.6217	110	116	0.6136	121	0.5927	115
Burkina Faso	111	0.6162	111	120	0.6081	115	0.6029	117
India	112	0.6155	112	114	0.6151	113	0.6060	114

Mauritania	113	0.6152	113	119	0.6103	110	0.6117	111
Cameroon	114	0.6110	114	118	0.6108	117	0.6017	116
Nepal	115	0.6084	115	110	0.6213	120	0.5942	125
Lebanon*	116	0.6084	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Qatar	117	0.6059	116	125	0.5907	119	0.5948	109
Nigeria	118	0.6055	117	108	0.6280	102	0.6339	107
Algeria	119	0.6052	118	117	0.6119	111	0.6111	108
Jordan	120	0.6048	119	113	0.6182	104	0.6275	104
Ethiopia	121	0.6019	120	122	0.5948	122	0.5867	113
Oman	122	0.5950	121	123	0.5938	118	<a href="#">0.5960</a>	119
Iran	123	0.5933	122	128	0.5839	116	0.6021	118
Syria	124	0.5926	123	121	0.6072	107	0.6181	103
Egypt	125	0.5899	124	126	0.5862	124	0.5832	120
Turkey	126	0.5876	125	129	0.5828	123	0.5853	121
Morocco	127	0.5767	126	124	0.5926	125	0.5757	122
Benin	128	0.5719	127	131	0.5643	126	0.5582	123
Saudi Arabia	129	0.5713	128	130	0.5651	128	0.5537	124
Côte d'Ivoire*	130	0.5691	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Mali	131	0.5680	129	127	0.5860	109	0.6117	112
Pakistan	132	0.5465	130	132	0.5458	127	0.5549	126
Chad	133	0.5330	131	133	0.5417	129	0.5290	127
Yemen	134	0.4603	132	134	0.4609	130	0.4664	128
Belarus	n/a	n/a	n/a	34	0.7141	33	0.7099	23
Uzbekistan	n/a	n/a	n/a	58	0.6913	55	0.6906	41

\*new country 2010

#### Commentary:

According to the report's index, Nordic countries, such as [Iceland](#), [Norway](#), [Finland](#), and [Sweden](#) have continued to dominate at the top of the ranking for gender equality. Meanwhile, [France](#) has seen a notable decline in the ranking, largely as a result of decreased number of women holding ministerial portfolios in that country. In the Americas, the [United States](#) has risen in the ranking to top the region, predominantly as a result of a decreasing wage gap, as well as higher number of women holding key positions in the current Obama administration. [Canada](#) has continued to remain as one of the top ranking countries of the Americas, followed by the small Caribbean island nation of Trinidad and Tobago, which has the distinction of being among the top three countries of the Americans in the realm of gender equality. [Lesotho](#) and South African ranked highly in the index, leading not only among African countries but also in global context. Despite [Lesotho](#) still lagging in the area of life expectancy, its high ranking was attributed to high levels of female participation in the labor force and female literacy. The [Philippines](#) and [Sri Lanka](#) were the top ranking countries for gender equality for Asia, ranking highly also in global context. The [Philippines](#) has continued to show strong performance in all strong performance on all four dimensions (detailed above) of the index. Finally, in the Arab world, the [United Arab Emirates](#) held the highest-rank within that region of the world; however, its placement near the bottom of the global list highlights the fact that Arab countries are generally poor performers when it comes to the matter of gender equality in global scope.

Source:

This data is derived from the latest edition of The Global Gender Gap Report by the World Economic Forum.

Available at URL:

<http://www.weforum.org/en/Communities/Women%20Leaders%20and%20Gender%20Parity/Gende>

Updated:

Based on latest available data as set forth in chart; reviewed in 2014

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## Culture and Arts

### Cultural and Ethnic Identity

The most significant ethnic divide in the country is between Mossi farmers and Fulbe herders. The root of the conflict lies in the long history of Mossi domination over its neighbors. In recent years the conflict has escalated along job activity lines. The high population density, rapidly growing population, growing pressure on natural resources, the growth of herds, and the extension of cultivated areas all contribute to the tensions between divergent culturally-based resource users. A minority of scholars has challenged this rationale, asserting that it is not really an ethnically based conflict over resource-use decisions, but rather a "modern" struggle to conceal personal wealth. The result is nonetheless the same. The rich Mossi and Fulbe societies have been clashing with increasing frequency.

Burkina Faso's most ritualized ethnic group is likely the Dagara centered in Birifu. While comprising only three percent of the total population of the country, Dagara ritualistic beliefs transcend much of Burkinabe society. At the center of these rituals are the bagr rituals. Bagr rituals form a series of private and public events that last a season or even a year. They guide social and cultural life. Fundamental to this set of beliefs is the consideration of fate.

As in Christianity, Dagara believe that fate determines what will happen in a person's life. There is a fixed fate and a changeable fate. The former is impossible to alter, but the latter allows room for ritual to guide what happens in daily life. To determine what it is that will happen, it is necessary to pay attention to the signs. Milestones act as reminders of life's purpose, but signs can be read through the divination of cowry shells, bones, and stones. These practices are critical to the weaving of the social fabric, as people are not intended to interpret these signs on their own. Rather, they interpret signs with the assistance of others as an individual's fate can be tied into the fate of the community or even the greater universe. Community decision-making therefore, is tantamount to Dagara actions.

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## Etiquette

### Cultural Dos and Taboos

1. A handshake is an appropriate form of greeting. Muslims may choose not to shake hands with persons of the opposite sex. Greetings should include inquiring after the acquaintance's family and health.
2. The left hand is taboo. Never take or give anything with the left hand. Never eat or drink with the left hand.
3. Traditional dinners may have women and men eating separately.
4. Dress should be casual and modest. Certain social functions will require a formal style of dress.
5. Elders must always be given the utmost respect.

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## Travel Information

**Please Note: This is a generalized travel guide and it is intended to coalesce several resources, which a traveler might find useful, regardless of a particular destination. As such, it does not include travel warnings for specific "hot spot" destinations.**

**For travel alerts and warnings, please see the United States Department of State's listings available at URL:**

**<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html>**

**Please note that travel to the following countries, based on these warnings, is ill-advised, or should be undertaken with the utmost precaution:**

**Afghanistan, Algeria, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Honduras, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories of West Bank and Gaza, Philippines areas of Sulu Archipelago, Mindanao, and southern Sulu Sea, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Yemen.**

## **International Travel Guide**

### **Checklist for Travelers**

- 1.** Take out travel insurance to cover hospital treatment or medical evacuation. Overseas medical costs are expensive to most international travelers, where one's domestic, nationalized or even private health insurance plans will not provide coverage outside one's home country. Learn about "reciprocal insurance plans" that some international health care companies might offer.
- 2.** Make sure that one's travel insurance is appropriate. If one intends to indulge in adventurous activities, such as parasailing, one should be sure that one is fully insured in such cases. Many traditional insurance policies do not provide coverage in cases of extreme circumstances.
- 3.** Take time to learn about one's destination country and culture. Read and learn about the place one is traveling. Also check political, economic and socio-cultural developments at the destination by reading country-specific travel reports and fact sheets noted below.
- 4.** Get the necessary visas for the country (or countries) one intends to visit - but be aware that a visa does not guarantee entry. A number of useful sites regarding visa and other entry requirements are noted below.
- 5.** Keep in regular contact with friends and relatives back at home by phone or email, and be sure to leave a travel itinerary.
- 6.** Protect one's personal information by making copies of one's passport details, insurance policy, travelers checks and credit card numbers. Taking copies of such documents with you, while leaving another collection copies with someone at home is also good practice for travelers. Taking copies of one's passport photograph is also recommended.

- 7.** Stay healthy by taking all possible precautions against illness. Also, be sure to take extra supplies of prescription drugs along for the trip, while also taking time to pack general pharmaceutical supplies, such as aspirin and other such painkillers, bandages, stomach ailment medication, anti-inflammatory medication and anti-bacterial medication.
- 8.** Do not carry illicit drugs. Understand that the punishment for possession or use of illegal drugs in some countries may be capital punishment. Make sure your prescription drugs are legal in the countries you plan to visit.
- 9.** Know the laws of one's destination country and culture; be sure to understand the repercussions of breaking those laws and regulations. Often the transparency and freedoms of the juridical system at home is not consistent with that of one's destination country. Become aware of these complexities and subtleties before you travel.
- 10.** For longer stays in a country, or where the security situation is volatile, one should register one's self and traveling companions at the local embassy or consulate of one's country of citizenship.
- 11.** Women should take care to be prepared both culturally and practically for traveling in a different country and culture. One should be sure to take sufficient supplies of personal feminine products and prescription drugs. One should also learn about local cultural standards for women, including norms of dressing. Be aware that it is simply inappropriate and unsafe for women to travel alone in some countries, and take the necessary precautions to avoid risk-filled situations.
- 12.** If one is traveling with small children, one should pack extra supplies, make arrangements with the travel carrier for proper seating that would adequately accommodate children, infants or toddlers. Note also that whether one is male or female, traveling with children means that one's hands are thus not free to carry luggage and bags. Be especially aware that this makes one vulnerable to pickpockets, thieves and other sorts of crime.
- 13.** Make proper arrangements for accommodations, well in advance of one's arrival at a destination. Some countries have limited accommodation, while others may have culturally distinctive facilities. Learning about these practicalities before one travels will greatly aid the enjoyment of one's trip.
- 14.** Travel with different forms of currency and money (cash, traveler's checks and credit cards) in anticipation that venues may not accept one or another form of money. Also, ensuring that one's financial resources are not contained in one location, or by one person (if one is traveling with others) can be a useful measure, in the event that one loses a wallet or purse.
- 15.** Find out about transportation in the destination country. In some places, it might be advisable to hire a local driver or taxi guide for safety reasons, while in other countries, enjoying one's travel experience may well be enhanced by renting a vehicle and seeing the local sights and culture independently. Costs may also be prohibitive for either of these choices, so again, prior planning is suggested.

## **Tips for Travelers**

A passport and visa are required. Travelers should obtain the latest information and details from the Embassy of Burkina Faso before their journey.

Foreign citizens traveling to and residing in Burkina Faso are urged to exercise caution and maintain a high level of security awareness at all times. The capital of Ouagadougou periodically experiences demonstrations and civil unrest. Although the demonstrations are generally peaceful, there have been several incidents of violence and destruction within recent years. Foreign citizens should avoid crowds, political gatherings and street demonstrations and contact the consular section of their embassy upon arrival to register and to obtain the latest information on travel and security.

Street crime in Burkina Faso poses high risks for visitors. Most reported incidents involve purse-snatchers and street scam artists, who target wallets, jewelry and other valuables. Thieves are especially active during international meetings or events, which draw large crowds to the capital. The areas near and around the U.N. Circle and the Central Market in Ouagadougou, experience the highest incidence of purse snatchings and muggings. Travelers should stay alert, remain in groups and avoid poorly lit areas. Be especially cautious at night.

The loss or theft abroad of a passport should be reported immediately to local police and to their nearest embassy or consulate.

Medical facilities and emergency hospital care are very limited, particularly in areas outside the capital, Ouagadougou. Some medicines are, however, available through local pharmacies. Travelers requiring medicines should bring an adequate supply for the duration of their stay in Burkina Faso.

Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for health services. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas may face extreme difficulties.

Check with your own insurance company to confirm whether your policy applies overseas, including provision for medical evacuation, and for adequacy of coverage. Serious medical problems requiring hospitalization and/or medical evacuation to your country can be very expensive. Ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas hospital or doctor or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses you incur. Some insurance policies also include coverage for psychiatric treatment and for disposition of remains in the event of death.

While in a foreign country, you may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in your home country. The information below concerning Burkina Faso is provided for general reference only, and may not be totally accurate in a particular location or circumstance.

Safety of Public Transportation: Poor

Urban Road Conditions/Maintenance: Poor

Rural Road Conditions/Maintenance: Poor

Availability of Roadside Assistance: Poor

Travelers should exercise great caution when traveling by land in Burkina Faso. The few roads that exist are in very bad condition. Most roads are unpaved, narrow, and full of potholes. Road travel at night is especially dangerous and, if at all possible, should be avoided. At night, there is a high volume of truck traffic passing through the country; and pedestrians, bicycles, and carts pose a major hazard on unlit, unmarked roads.

A valid photo permit must be obtained from the Ministry of Tourism; the Ministry's list of photo restrictions should be observed.

Credit cards are rarely accepted. Travelers' checks may be cashed at local banks.

Local telephone service is adequate but expensive. International calls cannot always be made from hotels. It is often necessary to make international calls from a Post and Telecommunications Office, where only local currency is accepted. Collect calls are not possible.

While in a foreign country, you are subject to that country's laws and regulations. Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in your home country for similar offenses. Persons violating Burkina Faso law, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested or imprisoned. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in the Burkina Faso are strict and convicted offenders can expect jail sentences and heavy fines.

Note: This information is directly quoted from the United States Department of State Consular Information Sheet.

Sources: *United States Department of State Consular Information Sheet*

### **Business Culture: Information for Business Travelers**

Doing business is quite formal in Burkina Faso. Greetings and titles are part of the formalities. No verbal transactions between two people takes place unless greetings have been exchanged, including the shaking of hands. It is polite to greet an official or send him/her correspondence using his/her title rather than a proper name.

The telephone has made inroads in Burkinabe daily life, especially among civil servants in the capitol, but much business is conducted face to face. Meetings may involve many people who speak formally and at length about a subject. Meetings between a handful of people usually conclude with the formal exchange of business cards. Organizational hierarchies are widely respected, and accomplishing a task or getting information quickly requires approaching the appropriate person.

Sources: *United States Department of State Commercial Guides*

## **Online Resources Regarding Entry Requirements and Visas**

Online Resources Regarding Entry Requirements and Visas

Foreign Entry Requirements for Americans from the United States Department of State  
[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1765.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html)

Visa Services for Non-Americans from the United States Department of State  
[http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa\\_1750.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html)

Visa Bulletins from the United States Department of State  
[http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/bulletin/bulletin\\_1360.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/bulletin/bulletin_1360.html)

Visa Waivers from the United States Department of State  
[http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without\\_1990.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without_1990.html) - new

Passport and Visa Information from the Government of the United Kingdom  
<http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

Visa Information from the Government of Australia  
<http://www.dfat.gov.au/visas/index.html>

Passport Information from the Government of Australia  
<https://www.passports.gov.au/Web/index.aspx>

Passport Information from the Government of Canada  
[http://www.voyage.gc.ca/preparation\\_information/passport\\_passeport-eng.asp](http://www.voyage.gc.ca/preparation_information/passport_passeport-eng.asp)

Visa Information from the Government of Canada  
[http://www.voyage.gc.ca/preparation\\_information/visas-eng.asp](http://www.voyage.gc.ca/preparation_information/visas-eng.asp)

Online Visa Processing by Immigration Experts by VisaPro  
<http://www.visapro.com>

Sources: United States Department of State, United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Government of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of Canada Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

## Useful Online Resources for Travelers

Country-Specific Travel Information from United States

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1765.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html)

Travel Advice by Country from Government of United Kingdom

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country/>

General Travel Advice from Government of Australia

<http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/General>

Travel Bulletins from the Government of Australia

<http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/TravelBulletins/>

Travel Tips from Government of Australia

<http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/tips/index.html>

Travel Checklist by Government of Canada

[http://www.voyage.gc.ca/preparation\\_information/checklist\\_sommaire-eng.asp](http://www.voyage.gc.ca/preparation_information/checklist_sommaire-eng.asp)

Travel Checklist from Government of United Kingdom

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/staying-safe/checklist>

Your trip abroad from United States Department of State

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/brochures/brochures\\_1225.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/brochures/brochures_1225.html)

A safe trip abroad from United States Department of State

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety\\_1747.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html)

Tips for expatriates abroad from United States Department of State

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/residing/residing\\_1235.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/residing/residing_1235.html)

Tips for students from United States Department of State

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/studying/studying\\_1238.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/studying/studying_1238.html) <http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/broc>

Medical information for travelers from United States Department of State

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health\\_1185.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health_1185.html)

US Customs Travel information

<http://www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/travel/>

Sources: United States Department of State; United States Customs Department, United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Government of Australia; Government of Canada: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

#### Other Practical Online Resources for Travelers

##### Foreign Language Phrases for Travelers

<http://www.travlang.com/languages/>

<http://www.omniglot.com/language/phrases/index.htm>

##### World Weather Forecasts

<http://www.intellicast.com/>

<http://www.wunderground.com/>

<http://www.worldweather.org/>

##### Worldwide Time Zones, Map, World Clock

<http://www.timeanddate.com/>

<http://www.worldtimezone.com/>

##### International Airport Codes

<http://www.world-airport-codes.com/>

##### International Dialing Codes

<http://www.kropla.com/dialcode.htm>

<http://www.countrycallingcodes.com/>

##### International Phone Guide

<http://www.kropla.com/phones.htm>

##### International Mobile Phone Guide

<http://www.kropla.com/mobilephones.htm>

##### International Internet Café Search Engine

<http://cybercaptive.com/>

##### Global Internet Roaming

<http://www.kropla.com/roaming.htm>

World Electric Power Guide

<http://www.kropla.com/electric.htm>

<http://www.kropla.com/electric2.htm>

World Television Standards and Codes

<http://www.kropla.com/tv.htm>

International Currency Exchange Rates

<http://www.xe.com/ucc/>

Banking and Financial Institutions Across the World

<http://www.123world.com/banks/index.html>

International Credit Card or Automated Teller Machine (ATM) Locator

<http://visa.via.infonow.net/locator/global/>

<http://www.mastercard.com/us/personal/en/cardholderservices/atmlocations/index.html>

International Chambers of Commerce

<http://www.123world.com/chambers/index.html>

World Tourism Websites

<http://123world.com/tourism/>

Diplomatic and Consular Information

United States Diplomatic Posts Around the World

<http://www.usembassy.gov/>

United Kingdom Diplomatic Posts Around the World

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-the-fco/embassies-and-posts/find-an-embassy-overseas/>

Australia's Diplomatic Posts Around the World

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/missions/>

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/embassies.html>

Canada's Embassies and High Commissions

<http://www.international.gc.ca/ciw-cdm/embassies-ambassades.aspx>

Resources for Finding Embassies and other Diplomatic Posts Across the World

<http://www.escapeartist.com/embassy1/embassy1.htm>

## Safety and Security

Travel Warnings by Country from Government of Australia

<http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/>

Travel Warnings and Alerts from United States Department of State

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/tw/tw\\_1764.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html)

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/pa/pa\\_1766.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1766.html)

Travel Reports and Warnings by Government of Canada

[http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries\\_pays/menu-eng.asp](http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp)

[http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries\\_pays/updates\\_mise-a-jour-eng.asp](http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/updates_mise-a-jour-eng.asp)

Travel Warnings from Government of United Kingdom

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country/>

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country/?action=noTravelAll#noTravelAll>

Sources: United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the United States Department of State, the Government of Canada: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Government of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

## Other Safety and Security Online Resources for Travelers

United States Department of State Information on Terrorism

<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/>

Government of the United Kingdom Resource on the Risk of Terrorism

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?>

[pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1044011304926](http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1044011304926)

Government of Canada Terrorism Guide

<http://www.international.gc.ca/crime/terrorism-terrorisme.aspx?lang=eng>

Information on Terrorism by Government of Australia

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/icat/index.html>

FAA Resource on Aviation Safety

<http://www.faasafety.gov/>

In-Flight Safety Information for Air Travel (by British Airways crew trainer, Anna Warman)

<http://www.warman.demon.co.uk/anna/inflight.html>

Hot Spots: Travel Safety and Risk Information

<http://www.airsecurity.com/hotspots/HotSpots.asp>

Information on Human Rights

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/hr/>

Sources: The United States Department of State, the United States Customs Department, the Government of Canada, the Government of United Kingdom, the Government of Australia, the Federal Aviation Authority, Anna Warman's In-flight Website, Hot Spots Travel and Risk Information

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## **Diseases/Health Data**

**Please Note: Most of the entry below constitutes a generalized health advisory, which a traveler might find useful, regardless of a particular destination.**

**As a supplement, however, reader will also find below a list of countries flagged with current health notices and alerts issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).**

**Please note that travel to the following countries, based on these 3 levels of warnings, is ill-advised, or should be undertaken with the utmost precaution:**

**Level 3 (highest level of concern; avoid non-essential travel) --**

**Guinea - Ebola**

**Liberia - Ebola**

**Nepal - Earthquake zone**

**Sierra Leone - Ebola**

**Level 2 (intermediate level of concern; use utmost caution during travel) --**

**Cameroon - Polio**

**Somalia - Polio**

**Vanuatu - Tropical Cyclone zone**

**Throughout Middle East and Arabia Peninsula - MERS ((Middle East Respiratory Syndrome)**

**Level 1 (standard level of concern; use practical caution during travel) -**

**Australia - Ross River disease**

**Bosnia-Herzegovina - Measles**

**Brazil - Dengue Fever**

**Brazil - Malaria**

**Brazil - Zika**

**China - H7N9 Avian flu**

**Cuba - Cholera**

**Egypt - H5N1 Bird flu**

**Ethiopia - Measles**

**Germany - Measles**

**Japan - Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD)**

**Kyrgyzstan - Measles**

**Malaysia -Dengue Fever**

**Mexico - Chikungunya**

**Mexico - Hepatitis A**

**Nigeria - Meningitis**

**Philippines - Measles**

**Scotland - Mumps**

**Singapore - Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD)**

**South Korea - MERS ((Middle East Respiratory Syndrome)**

**Throughout Caribbean - Chikungunya**

**Throughout Central America - Chikungunya**

**Throughout South America - Chikungunya**

**Throughout Pacific Islands - Chikungunya**

**For specific information related to these health notices and alerts please see the CDC's listing available at URL:**

**<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>**

## Health Information for Travelers to Burkina Faso

An outbreak of meningitis is currently occurring in several central, east, and west African countries, including Ethiopia, Chad, Cameroon, Burkino Faso, and Benin. For more information on this outbreak and recommendations, see the following sites:

Travelers' Health Information on Meningococcal Disease

(<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/menin.htm>)

World Health Organization Disease Outbreak News

(<http://www.who.int/disease-outbreak-news/>)

Food and waterborne diseases are the number one cause of illness in travelers. Travelers' diarrhea can be caused by viruses, bacteria, or parasites, which are found throughout the region and can contaminate food or water. Infections may cause diarrhea and vomiting (*E. coli*, *Salmonella*, cholera, and parasites), fever (typhoid fever and toxoplasmosis), or liver damage (hepatitis). Make sure your food and drinking water are safe. (See below.)

Malaria is a preventable infection that can be fatal if left untreated. Prevent infection by taking prescription antimalarial drugs and protecting yourself against mosquito bites (see below). Most travelers to malaria risk areas in this region should take mefloquine to prevent malaria. Your risk of malaria is high in all parts of these countries, including cities, except for most of the Cape Verde Islands. For more detailed information about the risk in specific locations, see Malaria in West Africa (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/regionalmalaria/wafrica.htm>).

Yellow fever vaccination is recommended and may be required for entry into certain of these countries. If you travel to West Africa, the easiest and safest thing to do is get a yellow fever vaccination and a signed certificate. For detailed information, see Comprehensive Yellow Fever Vaccination Requirements (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/yelfever.htm>).

Dengue, filariasis, leishmaniasis, onchocerciasis, and trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness) are diseases carried by insects that also occur in this region. Protecting yourself against insect bites (see below) will help to prevent these diseases.

Schistosomiasis, a parasitic infection, is found in fresh water in the region. Do not swim in fresh water (except in well-chlorinated swimming pools) in these countries. (For more information, please see the Swimming Precautions on the Making Travel Safe page at URL <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/safety.htm>.)

Because motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of injury among travelers, walk and drive

defensively. Avoid nighttime travel if possible and always use seat belts.

### **CDC Recommends the Following Vaccines (as Appropriate for Age):**

See your doctor at least 4-6 weeks before your trip to allow time for shots to take effect.

- Hepatitis A or immune globulin (IG).
- Hepatitis B, if you might be exposed to blood (for example, health-care workers), have sexual contact with the local population, stay longer than 6 months, or be exposed through medical treatment.
- Meningococcal meningitis, for travel to most of these countries (see meningitis map) from December through June.
- Yellow fever.
- Rabies, if you might be exposed to wild or domestic animals through your work or recreation.
- Typhoid, particularly if you are visiting developing countries in this region.
- As needed, booster doses for tetanus-diphtheria, measles, and a one-time dose of polio vaccine for adults. Hepatitis B vaccine is now recommended for all infants and for children ages 11-12 years who did not complete the series as infants.

### **To Stay Healthy, Do:**

- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Drink only bottled or boiled water, or carbonated (bubbly) drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes. If this is not possible, make water safer by BOTH filtering through an "absolute 1-micron or less" filter AND adding iodine tablets to the filtered water. "Absolute 1-micron filters" are found in camping/outdoor supply stores.
- Eat only thoroughly cooked food or fruits and vegetables you have peeled yourself. Remember: boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it.
- Take your malaria prevention medication before, during, and after travel, as directed. (See your doctor for a prescription.)
- Protect yourself from insects by remaining in well-screened areas, using repellents (applied sparingly at 4-hour intervals) and permethrin-impregnated mosquito nets, and wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants from dusk through dawn.
- To prevent fungal and parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry, and do not go barefoot.
- Always use latex condoms to reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

### **To Avoid Getting Sick:**

- Don't eat food purchased from street vendors.
- Don't drink beverages with ice.
- Don't eat dairy products unless you know they have been pasteurized.

- Don't share needles with anyone.
- Don't handle animals (especially monkeys, dogs, and cats), to avoid bites and serious diseases (including rabies and plague). (For more information, please see the Animal-Associated Hazards on the Making Travel Safe page.)
- Don't swim in fresh water. Salt water is usually safer. (For more information, please see the Swimming Precautions on the Making Travel Safe page.)

### **What You Need To Bring with You:**

- Long-sleeved shirt and long pants to wear while outside whenever possible, to prevent illnesses carried by insects (e.g., malaria, dengue, filariasis, leishmaniasis, and onchocerciasis).
- Insect repellent containing DEET (diethylmethyltoluamide), in 30%-35% strength for adults and 6%-10% for children. Unless you are staying in air-conditioned or well-screened housing, purchase a bed net impregnated with the insecticide permethrin. (Bed nets can be purchased in camping or military supply stores.)
- Over-the-counter antidiarrheal medicine to take if you have diarrhea.
- Iodine tablets and water filters to purify water if bottled water is not available. See Do's above for more details about water filters.
- Sunblock, sunglasses, hat.
- Prescription medications: make sure you have enough to last during your trip, as well as a copy of the prescription(s).

### **After You Return Home:**

If you have visited an area where there is risk for malaria, continue taking your malaria medication weekly for 4 weeks after you leave the area.

If you become ill after your trip-even as long as a year after you return-tell your doctor where you have traveled.

### **For More Information:**

Ask your doctor or check the CDC web sites for more information about how to protect yourself against diseases that occur in West Africa, such as:

#### **For information about diseases-**

Carried by Insects

Dengue, Malaria, Yellow Fever

Carried in Food or Water

Cholera, *Escherichia coli*, diarrhea, Hepatitis A, Schistosomiasis, Typhoid Fever

Person-to-Person Contact  
Hepatitis B, HIV/AIDS

For more information about these and other diseases, please check the Diseases (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/diseases.htm>) section and the Health Topics A-Z (<http://www.cdc.gov/health/diseases.htm>).

*Note:*

*Burkina Faso is located in the West Africa health region.*

*Sources:*

*The Center for Disease Control Destinations Website:*  
<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/indianrg.htm>

# Chapter 6

## Environmental Overview

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## **Environmental Issues**

### **General Overview:**

Burkina Faso built a reputation as being highly committed to environmental issues. Despite this expressed commitment, however, few results have been accrued in actuality. As such, Burkina Faso continues to deal with the deleterious effects of certain key environmental challenges.

### **Current Issues:**

- Soil degradation
- Deforestation
- Drought and such related water management challenges
- Land degradation and encroaching desertification
- Over-exploitation of already-fragile land and water resources
- Threatened and diminishing bio-diversity
- Lack of fuel and other basic resources, as well as the concomitant effect on human life

### **Total Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Mtc):**

5.7

### **Country Rank (GHG output):**

103rd

### **Natural Hazards:**

- Recurring droughts

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## Environmental Policy

### Regulation and Jurisdiction:

The regulation and protection of the environment in Burkina Faso is under the jurisdiction of the following:

- Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources

### Major Non-Governmental Organizations:

N/A

### International Environmental Accords:

*Party to:*

- Biodiversity
- Climate Change
- Desertification
- Endangered Species
- Hazardous Wastes
- Law of the Sea
- Marine Life Conservation
- Ozone Layer Protection
- Wetlands

*Signed but not ratified:*

- Nuclear Test Ban

*Kyoto Protocol Status (year ratified):*

2005

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## Greenhouse Gas Ranking

Greenhouse Gas Ranking

## GHG Emissions Rankings

<b>Country Rank</b>	<b>Country</b>
1	United States
2	China
4	Russia
5	Japan
6	India
7	Germany
8	United Kingdom

9	Canada
10	Korea, South
11	Italy
12	Mexico
13	France
14	South Africa
15	Iran
16	Indonesia
17	Australia
18	Spain
19	Brazil
20	Saudi Arabia
21	Ukraine
22	Poland
23	Taiwan
24	Turkey
25	Thailand
26	Netherlands

27	Kazakhstan
28	Malaysia
29	Egypt
30	Venezuela
31	Argentina
32	Uzbekistan
33	Czech Republic
34	Belgium
35	Pakistan
36	Romania
37	Greece
38	United Arab Emirates
39	Algeria
40	Nigeria
41	Austria
42	Iraq
43	Finland
44	Philippines

45	Vietnam
46	Korea, North
47	Israel
48	Portugal
49	Colombia
50	Belarus
51	Kuwait
52	Hungary
53	Chile
54	Denmark
55	Serbia & Montenegro
56	Sweden
57	Syria
58	Libya
59	Bulgaria
60	Singapore
61	Switzerland
62	Ireland

63	Turkmenistan
64	Slovakia
65	Bangladesh
66	Morocco
67	New Zealand
68	Oman
69	Qatar
70	Azerbaijan
71	Norway
72	Peru
73	Cuba
74	Ecuador
75	Trinidad & Tobago
76	Croatia
77	Tunisia
78	Dominican Republic
79	Lebanon
80	Estonia

81	Yemen
82	Jordan
83	Slovenia
84	Bahrain
85	Angola
86	Bosnia & Herzegovina
87	Lithuania
88	Sri Lanka
89	Zimbabwe
90	Bolivia
91	Jamaica
92	Guatemala
93	Luxembourg
94	Myanmar
95	Sudan
96	Kenya
97	Macedonia
98	Mongolia

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99	Ghana
100	Cyprus
101	Moldova
102	Latvia
103	El Salvador
104	Brunei
105	Honduras
106	Cameroon
107	Panama
108	Costa Rica
109	Cote d'Ivoire
110	Kyrgyzstan
111	Tajikistan
112	Ethiopia
113	Senegal
114	Uruguay
115	Gabon
116	Albania

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117	Nicaragua
118	Botswana
119	Paraguay
120	Tanzania
121	Georgia
122	Armenia
123	Congo, RC
124	Mauritius
125	Nepal
126	Mauritius
127	Nepal
128	Mauritania
129	Malta
130	Papua New Guinea
131	Zambia
132	Suriname
133	Iceland
134	Togo

135	Benin
136	Uganda
137	Bahamas
138	Haiti
139	Congo, DRC
140	Guyana
141	Mozambique
142	Guinea
143	Equatorial Guinea
144	Laos
145	Barbados
146	Niger
147	Fiji
148	Burkina Faso
149	Malawi
150	Swaziland
151	Belize
152	Afghanistan

153	Sierra Leone
154	Eritrea
155	Rwanda
156	Mali
157	Seychelles
158	Cambodia
159	Liberia
160	Bhutan
161	Maldives
162	Antigua & Barbuda
163	Djibouti
164	Saint Lucia
165	Gambia
166	Guinea-Bissau
167	Central African Republic
168	Palau
169	Burundi
170	Grenada

171	Lesotho
172	Saint Vincent & the Grenadines
173	Solomon Islands
174	Samoa
175	Cape Verde
176	Nauru
177	Dominica
178	Saint Kitts & Nevis
179	Chad
180	Tonga
181	Sao Tome & Principe
182	Comoros
183	Vanuatu
185	Kiribati
Not Ranked	Andorra
Not Ranked	East Timor
Not Ranked	Holy See
Not Ranked	Hong Kong

Not Ranked	Liechtenstein
Not Ranked	Marshall Islands
Not Ranked	Micronesia
Not Ranked	Monaco
Not Ranked	San Marino
Not Ranked	Somalia
Not Ranked	Tuvalu

\* European Union is ranked 3rd

Cook Islands are ranked 184th

Niue is ranked 186th

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## Global Environmental Snapshot

### **Introduction**

The countries of the world face many environmental challenges in common. Nevertheless, the nature and intensity of problem vary from region to region, as do various countries' respective capacities, in terms of affluence and infrastructure, to remediate threats to environmental quality.

Consciousness of perils affecting the global environment came to the fore in the last third or so of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has continued to intensify well into the new millennium. According to the United Nations Environment Programme, considerable environmental progress has been made at the level of institutional developments, international cooperation accords, and public participation. Approximately two-dozen international environmental protection accords with global implications have been promulgated since the late 1970s under auspices of the United Nations and other international organizations, together with many additional regional agreements. Attempts to address and rectify environmental problems take the form of legal frameworks, economic instruments,

environmentally sound technologies and cleaner production processes as well as conservation efforts. Environmental impact assessments have increasingly been applied across the globe.

Environmental degradation affects the quality, or aesthetics, of human life, but it also displays potential to undermine conditions necessary for the sustainability of human life. Attitudes toward the importance of environmental protection measures reflect ambivalence derived from this bifurcation. On one hand, steps such as cleaning up pollution, dedicating parkland, and suchlike, are seen as embellishments undertaken by wealthy societies already assured they can successfully perform those functions deemed, ostensibly, more essential—for instance, public health and education, employment and economic development. On the other hand, in poorer countries, activities causing environmental damage—for instance the land degradation effects of unregulated logging, slash-and-burn agriculture, overgrazing, and mining—can seem justified insofar as such activities provide incomes and livelihoods.

Rapid rates of resource depletion are associated with poverty and high population growth, themselves correlated, whereas consumption per capita is much higher in the most developed countries, despite these nations' recent progress in energy efficiency and conservation. It is impossible to sequester the global environmental challenge from related economic, social and political challenges.

First-tier industrialized countries have recently achieved measurable decreases in environmental pollution and the rate of resource depletion, a success not matched in middle income and developing countries. It is believed that the discrepancy is due to the fact that industrialized countries have more developed infrastructures to accommodate changes in environmental policy, to apply environmental technologies, and to invest in public education. The advanced industrialized countries incur relatively lower costs in alleviating environmental problems, in comparison to developing countries, since in the former even extensive environmental programs represent a rather minuscule percentage of total expenditures. Conversely, budget constraints, lagged provision of basic services to the population, and other factors such as debt service and militarization may preclude institution of minimal environmental protection measures in the poorest countries.

A synopsis for the current situation facing each region of the world follows:

### **Regional Synopsis: Africa**

The African continent, the world's second-largest landmass, encompasses many of the world's least developed countries. By global standards, urbanization is comparatively low but rising at a rapid rate. More heavily industrialized areas at the northern and southern ends of the continent experience the major share of industrial pollution. In other regions the most serious environmental problems typically stem from inefficient subsistence farming methods and other forms of land

degradation, which have affected an increasingly extensive area under pressure of a widely impoverished, fast-growing population. Africa's distribution of natural resources is very uneven. It is the continent at greatest risk of desertification, especially in the Sahel region at the edge of the Sahara but also in other dry-range areas. Yet at the same time, Africa also harbors some of the earth's richest and most diverse biological zones.

Key Points:

Up to half a billion hectares of African land are moderately to severely degraded, an occurrence reflecting short-fallow shifting cultivation and overgrazing as well as a climatic pattern of recurrent droughts.

Soil degradation is severe along the expanse directly south of the Sahara, from the west to the east coasts. Parts of southern Africa, central-eastern Africa, and the neighboring island of Madagascar suffer from serious soil degradation as well.

Africa contains about 17 percent of the world's forest cover, concentrated in the tropical belt of the continent. Many of the forests, however, are severely depleted, with an estimated 70 percent showing some degree of degradation.

Population growth has resulted in continuing loss of arable land, as inefficient subsistence farming techniques affect increasingly extensive areas. Efforts to implement settled, sustainable agriculture have met with some recent success, but much further progress in this direction is needed. Especially in previously uninhabited forestlands, concern over deforestation is intensifying.

By contrast, the African savanna remains the richest grassland in the world, supporting a substantial concentration of animal and plant life. Wildlife parks are sub-Saharan Africa's greatest tourist attraction, and with proper management-giving local people a stake in conservation and controlling the pace of development-could greatly enhance African economies.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of northern, southern and eastern Africa are currently threatened, while the biological diversity in Mauritania and Madagascar is even further compromised with over 20 percent of the mammal species in these two countries currently under threat.

With marine catch trends increasing from 500,000 metric tons in the 1950s to over 3,000,000 metric tons by 2000, there was increasing concern about the reduction in fisheries and marine life, should this trend continue unabated.

Water resource vulnerability is a major concern in northeastern Africa, and a moderate concern across the rest of the continent. An exception is central Africa, which has plentiful water supplies.

Many Africans lack adequate access to resources, not just (if at all) because the resources are unevenly distributed geographically, but also through institutional failures such as faulty land tenure systems or political upheaval. The quality of Africa's natural resources, despite their spotty distribution, is in fact extraordinarily rich. The infrastructure needed to protect and benefit from this natural legacy, however, is largely lacking.

### **Regional Synopsis: Asia and the Pacific**

Asia-earth's largest landmass-and the many large and nearly innumerable small islands lying off its Pacific shore display extraordinarily contrasting landscapes, levels of development, and degrees of environmental stress. In the classification used here, the world's smallest continent, Australia, is also included in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Asia-Pacific region is home to 9 of the world's 14 largest urban areas, and as energy use for utilities, industry and transport increases in developing economies, urban centers are subject to worsening air quality. Intense population density in places such as Bangladesh or Hong Kong is the quintessential image many people have of Asia, yet vast desert areas such as the Gobi and the world's highest mountain range, the Himalayas, span the continent as well. Forested areas in Southeast Asia and the islands of Indonesia and the Philippines were historically prized for their tropical hardwood, but in many places this resource is now severely depleted. Low-lying small island states are extremely vulnerable to the effects of global warming, both rising sea levels and an anticipated increase in cyclones.

#### **Key Points:**

Asian timber reserves are forecast to be depleted in the next 40 years. Loss of natural forest is irreversible in some areas, but plantation programs to restore tree cover may ameliorate a portion of the resulting land degradation.

Increased usage of fossil fuels in China and other parts of southern Asia is projected to result in a marked increase in emissions, especially in regard to carbon dioxide. The increased usage of energy has led to a marked upsurge in air pollution across the region.

Acidification is an emerging problem regionally, with sulfur dioxide emissions expected to triple by 2010 if the current growth rate is sustained. China, Thailand, India, and Korea seem to be suffering from particularly high rates of acid deposition. By contrast, Asia's most highly developed economy, Japan, has effected substantial improvements in its environmental indicators.

Water pollution in the Pacific is an urgent concern since up to 70 percent of the water discharged

into the region's waters receives no treatment. Additionally, the disposal of solid wastes, in like manner, poses a major threat in a region with many areas of high population density.

The Asia-Pacific region is the largest expanse of the world's land that is adversely affected by soil degradation.

The region around Australia reportedly suffers the largest degree of ozone depletion.

The microstates of the Pacific suffer land loss due to global warming, and the consequent rise in the levels of ocean waters. A high-emissions scenario and anthropogenic climate impact at the upper end of the currently predicted range would probably force complete evacuation of the lowest-elevation islands sometime in this century.

The species-rich reefs surrounding Southeast Asia are highly vulnerable to the deleterious effects of coastal development, land-based pollution, over-fishing and exploitative fishing methods, as well as marine pollution from oil spills and other activities.

With marine catch trends increasing from 5,000,000 metric tons in the 1950s to over 20,000,000 metric tons by 2000, there was increasing concern about the reduction in fisheries and marine life, should this trend continue unabated.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of China and south-east Asia are currently threatened, while the biological diversity in India, Japan, Australia, the Philippines, Indonesia and parts of Malaysia is even further compromised with over 20 percent of the mammal species in these countries currently under threat.

Water resource vulnerability is a serious concern in areas surrounding the Indian subcontinent.

### **Regional Synopsis: Central Asia**

The Central Asian republics, formerly in the Soviet Union, experience a range of environmental problems as the result of poorly executed agricultural, industrial, and nuclear programs during the Soviet era. Relatively low population densities are the norm, especially since upon the breakup of the U.S.S.R. many ethnic Russians migrated back to European Russia. In this largely semi-arid region, drought, water shortages, and soil salinization pose major challenges.

#### **Key Points:**

The use of agricultural pesticides, such as DDT and other chemicals, has contributed to the contamination of soil and groundwater throughout the region.

Land and soil degradation, and in particular, increased salinization, is mostly attributable to faulty irrigation practices.

Significant desertification is also a problem in the region.

Air pollution is prevalent, mostly due to use of low octane automobile fuel.

Industrial pollution of the Caspian Sea and the Aral Sea, as a result of industrial effluents as well as mining and metal production, presents a challenge to the countries bordering these bodies of water.

One of the most severe environmental problems in the region is attributable to the several billion tons of hazardous materials stored in landfills across Central Asia.

Uzbekistan's particular problem involves the contraction of the Aral Sea, which has decreased in size by a third, as a consequence of river diversions and poor irrigation practices. The effect has been the near-total biological destruction of that body of water.

Kazakhstan, as a consequence of being the heartland of the former Soviet Union's nuclear program, has incurred a high of cancerous malignancies, biogenetic abnormalities and radioactive contamination.

While part of the Soviet Union, the republics in the region experienced very high levels of greenhouse gas emissions, as a consequence of rapid industrialization using cheap but dirty energy sources, especially coal.

By contrast, however, there have recently been substantial reductions in the level of greenhouse gas emissions, especially those attributable to coal burning, with further decreases anticipated over the next decade. These changes are partially due to the use of cleaner energy technologies, such as natural gas, augmented by governmental commitment to improving environmental standards.

### **Regional Synopsis: Europe**

Western Europe underwent dramatic transformation of its landscape, virtually eliminating large-scale natural areas, during an era of rapid industrialization, which intensified upon its recovery from World War II. In Eastern Europe and European Russia, intensive land development has been less prevalent, so that some native forests and other natural areas remain. Air and water pollution from use of dirty fuels and industrial effluents, however, are more serious environmental problems in Eastern than in Western Europe, though recent trends show improvement in many indicators. Acid rain has inflicted heavy environmental damage across much of Europe, particularly on forests.

Europe and North America are the only regions in which water usage for industry exceeds that for agriculture, although in Mediterranean nations agriculture is the largest water consumer.

Key Points:

Europe contributes 36 percent of the world's chlorofluorocarbon emissions, 30 percent of carbon dioxide emissions, and 25 percent of sulfur dioxide emissions.

Sulfur and nitrogen oxide emissions are the cause of 30 to 50 percent of Central and Eastern Europe's deforestation.

Acid rain has been an environmental concern for decades and continues to be a challenge in parts of Western Europe.

Overexploitation of up to 60 percent of Europe's groundwater presents a problem in industrial and urban areas.

With marine catch trends increasing from 5,000,000 metric tons in the 1950s to over 20,000,000 metric tons by 2000, there was increasing concern about the reduction in fisheries and marine life, should this trend continue unabated.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of western Europe, Eastern Europe and Russia are currently threatened, while the biological diversity on the Iberian Peninsula is even further compromised with over 40 percent of the mammal species in this region currently under threat. As a result, there has been a 10 percent increase in protected areas of Europe.

A major environmental issue for Europe involves the depletion of various already endangered or threatened species, and most significantly, the decline of fish stocks. Some estimates suggest that up to 50 percent of the continent's fish species may be considered endangered species. Coastal fisheries have been over-harvested, resulting in catch limits or moratoriums on many commercially important fish species.

Fortunately, in the last few years, these policies have started to yield measurable results with decreasing trends in marine fish catch.

Recently, most European countries have adopted cleaner production technologies, and alternative methods of waste disposal, including recycling.

The countries of Eastern Europe have made air quality a major environmental priority. This is exemplified by the Russian Federation's addition to the 1995 "Berlin Mandate" (transnational legislation based on resolutions of the Rio Earth Summit) compelling nations to promote "carbon

sinks" to absorb greenhouse gases.

On a relative basis, when compared with the degree of industrial emissions emitted by many Eastern European countries until the late 1980s, there has been some marked increase in air quality in the region, as obsolete plants are closed and a transition to cleaner fuels and more efficient energy use takes place.

### **Regional Synopsis: The Middle and Near East**

Quite possibly, the Middle East will exemplify the adage that, as the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a century fixated on oil, the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be devoted to critical decisions about water. Many (though far from all) nations in the Middle East rank among those countries with the largest oil and gas reserves, but water resources are relatively scarce throughout this predominantly dry region. Effects of global warming may cause moderately high elevation areas that now typically receive winter "snowpack" to experience mainly rain instead, which would further constrain dry-season water availability. The antiquities and religious shrines of the region render it a great magnet for tourism, which entails considerable economic growth potential but also intensifies stresses on the environment.

#### **Key Points:**

Water resource vulnerability is a serious concern across the entire region. The increased usage of, and further demand for water, has exacerbated long-standing water scarcity in the region. For instance, river diversions and industrial salt works have caused the Dead Sea to shrink by one-third from its original surface area, with further declines expected.

The oil industry in the region contributes to water pollution in the Persian Gulf, as a result of oil spills, which have averaged 1.2 million barrels of oil spilt per year (some sources suggest that this figure is understated). The consequences are severe because even after oil spills have been cleaned up, environmental damage to the food webs and ecosystems of marine life will persist for a prolonged period.

The region's coastal zone is considered one of the most fragile and endangered ecosystems of the world. Land reclamation, shoreline construction, discharge of industrial effluents, and tourism (such as diving in the Red Sea) contribute to widespread coastal damage.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of the Middle East are currently threatened.

Since the 1980s, 11 percent of the region's natural forest has been depleted.

## **Regional Synopsis: Latin America and the Caribbean**

The Latin American and Caribbean region is characterized by exceedingly diverse landforms that have generally seen high rates of population growth and economic development in recent decades. The percentage of inhabitants residing in urban areas is quite high at 73.4 percent; the region includes the megacities of Mexico City, Sao Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro. The region also includes the world's second-highest mountain range, the Andes; significant expanses of desert and grassland; the coral reefs of the Caribbean Sea; and the world's largest contiguous tropical forest in the Amazon basin. Threats to the latter from subsistence and commercial farming, mineral exploitation and timbering are well publicized. Nevertheless, of eight countries worldwide that still retain at least 70 percent of their original forest cover, six are in Latin America. The region accounts for nearly half (48.3 percent) of the world's greenhouse gas emissions derived from land clearing, but as yet a comparatively minuscule share (4.3 percent) of such gases from industrial sources.

### **Key Points:**

Although Latin America is one of the most biologically diverse regions of the world, this biodiversity is highly threatened, as exemplified by the projected extinction of up to 100,000 species in the next few decades. Much of this loss will be concentrated in the Amazon area, although the western coastline of South America will also suffer significant depletion of biological diversity. The inventory of rainforest species with potentially useful commercial or medical applications is incomplete, but presumed to include significant numbers of such species that may become extinct before they are discovered and identified.

Up to 50 percent of the region's grazing land has lost its soil fertility as a result of soil erosion, salinization, alkalinization and overgrazing.

The Caribbean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Pacific Ocean have all been contaminated by agricultural wastes, which are discharged into streams that flow into these major waters. Water pollution derived from phosphorous, nitrates and pesticides adversely affects fish stocks, contributes to oxygen depletion and fosters overgrowth of aquatic vegetation. Marine life will continue to be severely compromised as a result of these conditions.

Due to industrial development in the region, many beaches of eastern Latin America and the Caribbean suffer from tar deposits.

Most cities in the region lack adequate sewage treatment facilities, and rapid migration of the rural poor into the cities is widening the gap between current infrastructure capacity and the much greater level needed to provide satisfactory basic services.

The rainforest region of the Amazon Basin suffers from dangerously high levels of deforestation, which may be a significant contributory factor to global warming or "the greenhouse effect." In the late 1990s and into the new millennium, the rate of deforestation was around 20 million acres of rainforest being destroyed annually.

Deforestation on the steep rainforest slopes of Caribbean islands contributes to soil erosion and landslides, both of which then result in heavy sedimentation of nearby river systems. When these sedimented rivers drain into the sea and coral reefs, they poison the coral tissues, which are vital to the maintenance of the reef ecosystem. The result is marine degradation and nutrient depletion. Jamaica's coral reefs have never quite recovered from the effects of marine degradation.

The Southern Cone of Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay) suffers the effects of greatly increased ultraviolet-B radiation, as a consequence of more intense ozone depletion in the southern hemisphere.

Water resource vulnerability is an increasingly major concern in the northwestern portion of South America.

### **Regional Synopsis: North America**

North American nations, in particular the United States and Canada, rank among the world's most highly developed industrial economies—a fact which has generated significant pollution problems, but also financial resources and skills that have enabled many problems to be corrected. Although efforts to promote energy efficiency, recycling, and suchlike have helped ease strains on the environment in a part of the world where per capita consumption levels are high, sprawling land development patterns and recent preferences many households have demonstrated for larger vehicles have offset these advances.

Meanwhile, a large portion of North America's original forest cover has been lost, though in many cases replaced by productive second-growth woodland. In recent years, attitudes toward best use of the region's remaining natural or scenic areas seem to be shifting toward recreation and preservation and away from resource extraction. With increasing attention on the energy scarcity in the United States, however, there is speculation that this shift may be short-lived. Indeed, the energy shortage on the west coast of the United States and associated calls for energy exploration, indicate a possible retrenchment toward resource extraction. At the same time, however, it has also served to highlight the need for energy conservation as well as alternative energy sources.

Despite generally successful anti-pollution efforts, various parts of the region continue to suffer significant air, water and land degradation from industrial, vehicular, and agricultural emissions and

runoff. Mexico, as a middle-income country, displays environmental problems characteristic of a developing economy, including forest depletion, pollution from inefficient industrial processes and dirty fuels, and lack of sufficient waste-treatment infrastructure.

Key Points:

Because of significantly greater motor vehicle usage in the United States (U.S.) than in the rest of the world, the U.S. contribution of urban air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, especially carbon dioxide, is disproportionately high in relation to its population.

Acid rain is an enduring issue of contention in the northeastern part of the United States, on the border with Canada.

Mexico's urban areas suffer extreme air pollution from carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and other toxic air pollutants. Emissions controls on vehicles are in their infancy, compared to analogous regulations in the U.S.

The cities of Mexico, including those on the U.S. border, also discharge large quantities of untreated or poorly treated sewage, though officials are currently planning infrastructure upgrades.

Deforestation is noteworthy in various regions of the U.S., especially along the northwest coastline. Old growth forests have been largely removed, but in the northeastern and upper midwestern sections of the United States, evidence suggests that the current extent of tree cover probably surpasses the figure for the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Extreme weather conditions in the last few years have resulted in a high level of soil erosion along the north coast of California; in addition, the coastline itself has shifted substantially due to soil erosion and concomitant landslides.

Agricultural pollution-including nitrate contamination of well water, nutrient runoff to waterways, and pesticide exposure-is significant in various areas. Noteworthy among affected places are California's Central Valley, extensive stretches of the Midwest, and land in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Inland waterways, especially around the Great Lakes, have substantially improved their water quality, due to concentrated efforts at reducing water pollution by governmental, commercial and community representatives. Strict curbs on industrial effluents and near-universal implementation of sewage treatment are the chief factors responsible for this improvement.

A major environmental issue for Canada and the United States involves the depletion of various

already endangered or threatened species, and most significantly, the decline of fish stocks. Coastal fisheries have been over-harvested, resulting in catch limits or moratoriums on many commercially important fish species. In the last few years, these policies have started to yield measurable results with decreasing trends in marine fish catch.

Due to the decay of neighboring ecosystems in Central America and the Caribbean, the sea surrounding Florida has become increasingly sedimented, contributing to marine degradation, nutrient depletion of the ecosystem, depletion of fish stocks, and diseases to coral species in particular.

## **Polar Regions**

### **Key Points:**

The significant rise in sea level, amounting 10 to 25 centimeters in the last 100 years, is due to the melting of the Arctic ice sheets, and is attributed to global warming.

The Antarctic suffers from a significant ozone hole, first detected in 1976. By 1985, a British scientific team reported a 40 percent decrease in usual regeneration rates of the ozone. Because a sustained increase in the amount of ultraviolet-B radiation would have adverse consequences upon all planetary life, recent environmental measures have been put into effect, aimed at reversing ozone depletion. These measures are projected to garner significant results by 2050.

Due to air and ocean currents, the Arctic is a sink for toxic releases originally discharged thousands of miles away. Arctic wildlife and Canada's Inuit population have higher bodily levels of contaminants such as PCB and dioxin than those found in people and animals in much of the rest of the world.

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## **Global Environmental Concepts**

### **1. Global Warming and Greenhouse Gases**

#### **The Greenhouse Effect:**

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the French physicist, Jean Fourier, contended that the earth's atmosphere functions in much the same way as the glass of a greenhouse, thus describing what is now understood as the "greenhouse effect." Put simply, the "greenhouse effect" confines some of the sun's energy to the earth, preserving some of the planet's warmth, rather than allowing it to flow back into space. In so doing, all kinds of life forms can flourish on earth. Thus, the "greenhouse effect" is necessary to sustain and preserve life forms and ecosystems on earth.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, a Swedish chemist, Svante Arrhenius, noticed that human activities, such as the burning of coal and other fossil fuels for heat, and the removal of forested lands for urban development, led to higher concentrations of greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide and methane, in the atmosphere. This increase in the levels of greenhouse gases was believed to advance the "greenhouse effect" exponentially, and might be related to the trend in global warming.

In the wake of the Industrial Revolution, after industrial development took place on a large scale and the total human population burgeoned simultaneously with industrialization, the resulting increase in greenhouse gas emissions could, many scientists believe, be significant enough to have some bearing on climate. Indeed, many studies in recent years support the idea that there is a linkage between human activities and global warming, although there is less consensus on the extent to which this linkage may be relevant to environmental concerns.

That said, some scientists have argued that temperature fluctuations have existed throughout the evolution of the planet. Indeed, Dr. S. Fred Singer, the president of the Science and Environment Policy Project has noted that 3,000-year-old geological records of ocean sediment reveal changes in the surface temperature of the ocean. Hence, it is possible that climate variability is merely a normal fact of the planet's evolution. Yet even skeptics as to anthropogenic factors concur that any substantial changes in global temperatures would likely have an effect upon the earth's ecosystems, as well as the life forms that inhabit them.

### **The Relationship Between Global Warming and Greenhouse Gases:**

A large number of climatologists believe that the increase in atmospheric concentrations of "greenhouse gas emissions," mostly a consequence of human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels, are contributing to global warming. The cause notwithstanding, the planet has reportedly warmed 0.3°C to 0.6°C over the last century. Indeed, each year during the 1990s was one of the very warmest in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the mean surface temperature for 1999 being the fifth warmest on record since 1880.

In early 2000, a panel of atmospheric scientists for the National Research Council concluded in a report that global warming was, indeed, a reality. While the panel, headed by Chairman John Wallace, a professor of atmospheric sciences at the University of Washington, stated that it

remained unclear whether human activities have contributed to the earth's increasing temperatures, it was apparent that global warming exists.

In 2001, following a request for further study by the incoming Bush administration in the [United States](#), the National Academy of Sciences again confirmed that global warming had been in existence for the last 20 years. The study also projected an increase in temperature between 2.5 degrees and 10.4 degrees Fahrenheit by the year 2100. Furthermore, the study found the leading cause of global warming to be emissions of carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels, and it noted that greenhouse gas accumulations in the earth's atmosphere was a result of human activities.

Within the scientific community, the controversy regarding has centered on the difference between surface air and upper air temperatures. Information collected since 1979 suggests that while the earth's surface temperature has increased by about a degree in the past century, the atmospheric temperature five miles above the earth's surface has indicated very little increase. Nevertheless, the panel stated that this discrepancy in temperature between surface and upper air does not invalidate the conclusion that global warming is taking place. Further, the panel noted that natural events, such as volcanic eruptions, can decrease the temperature in the upper atmosphere.

The major consequences of global warming potentially include the melting of the polar ice caps, which, in turn, contribute to the rise in sea levels. Many islands across the globe have already experienced a measurable loss of land as a result. Because global warming may increase the rate of evaporation, increased precipitation, in the form of stronger and more frequent storm systems, is another potential outcome. Other consequences of global warming may include the introduction and proliferation of new infectious diseases, loss of arable land (referred to as "desertification"), destructive changes to existing ecosystems, loss of biodiversity and the isolation of species, and concomitant adverse changes in the quality of human life.

### **International Policy Development in Regard to Global Warming:**

Regardless of what the precise nature of the relationship between greenhouse gas emissions and global warming may be, it seems that there is some degree of a connection between the phenomena. Any substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and global warming trends will likely involve systematic changes in industrial operations, the use of advanced energy sources and technologies, as well as global cooperation in implementing and regulating these transformations.

In this regard, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) stipulated the following objectives:

1. To stabilize "greenhouse gas" concentrations within the atmosphere, in such a manner that would preclude hazardous anthropogenic intervention into the existing biosphere and ecosystems of the world. This stabilization process would facilitate the natural adaptation of ecosystems to

changes in climate.

2. To ensure and enable sustainable development and food production on a global scale.

\*\*\* See section on "International Environmental Agreements and Associations" for information related to international policies related to limiting greenhouse gases and controlling climate change emanating from historic summits at Kyoto, Copenhagen, Doha, and Paris. \*\*\*

## **2. Air Pollution**

Long before global warming reared its head as a significant issue, those concerned about the environment and public health noted the deleterious effects of human-initiated combustion upon the atmosphere. Killer smogs from coal burning triggered acute health emergencies in London and other places. At a lower level of intensity motor vehicle, power plant, and industrial emissions impaired long-range visibility and probably had some chronic adverse consequences on the respiratory systems of persons breathing such air.

In time, scientists began associating the sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides released from coal burning with significant acid deposition in the atmosphere, eventually falling as "acid rain." This phenomenon has severely degraded forestlands, especially in Europe and a few parts of the [United States](#). It has also impaired some aquatic ecosystems and eaten away the surface of some human artifacts, such as marble monuments. Scrubber technology and conversion to cleaner fuels have enabled the level of industrial production to remain at least constant while significantly reducing acid deposition. Technologies aimed at cleaning the air and curtailing acid rain, soot, and smog may, nonetheless, boomerang as the perils of global warming become increasingly serious. In brief, these particulates act as sort of a sun shade -- comparable to the effect of volcanic eruptions on the upper atmosphere whereby periods of active volcanism correlate with temporarily cooler weather conditions. Thus, while the carbon dioxide releases that are an inevitable byproduct of combustion continue, by scrubbing the atmosphere of pollutants, an industrial society opens itself to greater insolation (penetration of the sun's rays and consequent heating), and consequently, it is likely to experience a correspondingly greater rise in ambient temperatures.

The health benefits of removing the sources of acid rain and smog are indisputable, and no one would recommend a return to previous conditions. Nevertheless, the problematic climatic effects of continually increasing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases pose a major global environmental challenge, not as yet addressed adequately.

### **3. Ozone Depletion**

The stratospheric ozone layer functions to prevent ultraviolet radiation from reaching the earth. Normally, stratospheric ozone is systematically disintegrated and regenerated through natural photochemical processes. The stratospheric ozone layer, however, has been depleted unnaturally as a result of anthropogenic (man-made) chemicals, most especially chlorine and bromide compounds such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), halons, and various industrial chemicals in the form of solvents, refrigerants, foaming agents, aerosol propellants, fire retardants, and fumigants. Ozone depletion is of concern because it permits a greater degree of ultraviolet-B radiation to reach the earth, which then increases the incidences of cancerous malignancies, cataracts, and human immune deficiencies. In addition, even in small doses, ozone depletion affects the ecosystem by disturbing food chains, agriculture, fisheries and other forms of biological diversity.

Transnational policies enacted to respond to the dangers of ozone depletion include the 1985 Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. The Montreal Protocol was subsequently amended in London in 1990, Copenhagen in 1992 and Vienna in 1995. By 1996, 155 countries had ratified the Montreal Protocol, which sets out a time schedule for the reduction (and eventual elimination) of ozone depleting substances (OPS), and bans exports and imports of ODS from and to non-participant countries.

In general, the Protocol stipulates that developed countries must eliminate halon consumption by 1994 and CFC consumption by 1996, while developing countries must eliminate these substances by 2010. Consumption of methyl bromide, which is used as a fumigant, was to be frozen at the 1995 in developed countries, and fully eliminated in 2010, while developing countries are to freeze consumption by 2002, based on average 1995-1998 consumption levels. Methyl chloroform is to be phased out by 2005. Under the Montreal Protocol, most ODS will be completely eliminated from use by 2010.

### **4. Land Degradation**

In recent decades, land degradation in more arid regions of the world has become a serious concern. The problem, manifest as both "desertification" and "devegetation," is caused primarily by climate variability and human activities, such as "deforestation," excessive cultivation, overgrazing, and other forms of land resource exploitation. It is also exacerbated by inadequate irrigation practices. Although the effects of droughts on drylands have been temporary in the past, today, the productivity and sustainability of these lands have been severely compromised for the long term. Indeed, in every region of the world, land degradation has become an acute issue.

**Desertification and Devegetation:**

"Desertification" is a process of land degradation causing the soil to deteriorate, thus losing its nutrients and fertility, and eventually resulting in the loss of vegetation, known as "devegetation." As aforementioned, "desertification" and "devegetation" are caused by human activities, yet human beings are also the greatest casualties. Because these forms of land degradation affect the ability of the soil to produce crops, they concomitantly contribute to poverty. As population increases and demographic concentrations shift, the extent of land subject to stresses by those seeking to wrest subsistence from it has inexorably risen.

In response, the United Nations has formed the Convention to Combat Desertification-aimed at implementing programs to address the underlying causes of desertification, as well as measures to prevent and minimize its effects. Of particular significance is the formulation of policies on transboundary resources, such as areas around lakes and rivers. At a broader level, the Convention has established a Conference of Parties (COP), which includes all ratifying governments, for directing and advancing international action.

To ensure more efficacious use of funding, the Convention intends to reconfigure international aid to utilize a consultative and coordinated approach in the disbursement and expenditure of donor funds. In this way, local communities that are affected by desertification will be active participants in the solution-generation process. In-depth community education projects are envisioned as part of this new international aid program, and private donor financing is encouraged. Meanwhile, as new technologies are developed to deal with the problem of desertification, they need to be distributed for application across the world. Hence, the Convention calls for international cooperation in scientific research in this regard.

Desertification is a problem of sustainable development. It is directly connected to human challenges such as poverty, social and economic well-being and environmental protection as well. Broader environmental issues, such as climate change, biological diversity, and freshwater supplies, are indirectly related, so any effort to resolve this environmental challenge must entail coordinated research efforts and joint action.

**Deforestation:**

Deforestation is not a recent phenomenon. For centuries, human beings have cut down trees to clear space for land cultivation, or in order to use the wood for fuel. Over the last 200 years, and most especially after World War II, deforestation increased because the logging industry became a globally profitable endeavor, and so the clearing of forested areas was accelerated for the purposes of industrial development. In the long term, this intensified level of deforestation is considered problematic because the forest is unable to regenerate itself quickly. The deforestation that has

occurred in tropical rainforests is seen as an especially serious concern, due to the perceived adverse effects of this process upon the entire global ecosystem.

The most immediate consequence of deforestation is soil degradation. Soil, which is necessary for the growth of vegetation, can be a fragile and vital property. Organically, an extensive evolution process must take place before soil can produce vegetation, yet at the same time, the effects of natural elements, such as wind and rain, can easily and quickly degrade this resource. This phenomenon is known as soil erosion. In addition, natural elements like wind and rain reduce the amount of fertile soil on the ground, making soil scarcity a genuine problem. When fertile topsoil that already exists is removed from the landscape in the process of deforestation, soil scarcity is further exacerbated. Equally significant is the fact that once land has been cleared so that the topsoil can be cultivated for crop production, not only are the nutrient reserves in the soil depleted, thus producing crops of inferior quality, but the soil structure itself becomes stressed and deteriorates further.

Another direct result of deforestation is flooding. When forests are cleared, removing the cover of vegetation, and rainfall occurs, the flow of water increases across the surface of land. When extensive water runoff takes place, the frequency and intensity of flooding increases. Other adverse effects of deforestation include the loss of wildlife and biodiversity within the ecosystem that supports such life forms.

At a broader level, tropical rainforests play a vital role in maintaining the global environmental system. Specifically, destruction of tropical rainforests affects the carbon dioxide cycle. When forests are destroyed by burning (or rotting), carbon dioxide is released into the air, thus contributing to an intensified "greenhouse effect." The increase in greenhouse gas emissions like carbon dioxide is a major contributor to global warming, according to many environmental scientists. Indeed, trees themselves absorb carbon dioxide in the process of photosynthesis, so their loss also reduces the absorption of greenhouse gases.

Tropical rainforest destruction also adversely affects the nitrogen cycle. Nitrogen is a key nutrient for both plants and animals. Plants derive nitrogen from soil, while animals obtain it via nitrogen-enriched vegetation. This element is essential for the formation of amino acids, and thereby for proteins and biochemicals that all living things need for metabolism and growth. In the nitrogen cycle, vegetation acquires these essential proteins and biochemicals, and then cyclically returns them to the atmosphere and global ecosystem. Accordingly, when tropical rainforest ecosystems are compromised, not only is vegetation removed; the atmosphere is also affected and climates are altered. At a more immediate level, the biodiversity within tropical rainforests, including wildlife and insect species and a wealth of plant varieties, is depleted. Loss of rare plants is of particular concern because certain species as yet unknown and unused could likely yield many practical benefits, for instance as medicines.

As a result of the many challenges associated with deforestation, many environmental groups and agencies have argued for government policies on the sustainable development of forests by governments across the globe. While many countries have instituted national policies and programs aimed at reducing deforestation, and substantial research has been advanced in regard to sustainable and regenerative forestry development, there has been very little progress on an international level. Generally speaking, most tropical rainforests are located in developing and less developed countries, where economic growth is often dependent upon the exploitation of tropical rainforests. Timber resources as well as wildlife hunting tend to be particularly lucrative arenas.

In places such as the Amazon, where deforestation takes place for the construction of energy plants aimed at industrialization and economic development, there is an exacerbated effect on the environment. After forests are cleared in order to construct such projects, massive flooding usually ensues. The remaining trees then rot and decay in the wake of the flooding. As the trees deteriorate, their biochemical makeup becomes more acidic, producing poisonous substances such as hydrogen sulphide and methane gases. Acidified water subsequently corrodes the mechanical equipment and operations of the plants, which are already clogged by rotting wood after the floodwaters rise.

Deforestation generally arises from an economically plausible short-term motivation, but nonetheless poses a serious global concern because the effects go beyond national boundaries. The United Nations has established the World Commission on Forest and Sustainable Development. This body's task is to determine the optimal means of dealing with the issue of deforestation, without unduly affecting normal economic development, while emphasizing the global significance of protecting tropical forest ecosystems.

## **5. Water Resources**

For all terrestrial fauna, including humans, water is the most immediate necessity to sustain life. As the population has increased and altered an ever-greater portion of the landscape from its natural condition, demand on water resources has intensified, especially with the development of industrialization and large-scale irrigation. The supply of freshwater is inherently limited, and moreover distributed unevenly across the earth's landmasses. Moreover, not just demand for freshwater but activities certain to degrade it are becoming more pervasive. By contrast, the oceans form a sort of "last wilderness," still little explored and in large part not seriously affected by human activity. However, coastal environments - the biologically richest part of the marine ecosystem-are experiencing major depletion due to human encroachment and over-exploitation.

### **Freshwater:**

In various regions, for instance the Colorado River in the western [United States](#), current withdrawals of river water for irrigation, domestic, and industrial use consume the entire streamflow so that almost no water flows into the sea at the river's mouth. Yet development is ongoing in many such places, implying continually rising demand for water. In some areas reliant on groundwater, aquifers are being depleted at a markedly faster rate than they are being replenished. An example is the San Joaquin Valley in California, where decades of high water withdrawals for agriculture have caused land subsidence of ten meters or more in some spots. Naturally, the uncertainty of future water supplies is particularly acute in arid and semi-arid regions. Speculation that the phenomenon of global warming will alter geographic and seasonal rainfall patterns adds further uncertainty.

Water conservation measures have great potential to alleviate supply shortages. Some city water systems are so old and beset with leaking pipes that they lose as much water as they meter. Broad-scale irrigation could be replaced by drip-type irrigation, actually enhancing the sustainability of agriculture. In many areas where heavy irrigation has been used for decades, the result is deposition of salts and other chemicals in the soil such that the land becomes unproductive for farming and must be abandoned.

Farming is a major source of water pollution. Whereas restrictions on industrial effluents and other "point sources" are relatively easy to implement, comparable measures to reform hydraulic practices at farms and other "nonpoint sources" pose a significantly knottier challenge. Farm-caused water pollution takes the following main forms:

- Nitrate pollution found in wells in intensive farming areas as a consequence of heavy fertilizer use is a threat to human health. The most serious danger is to infants, who by ingesting high-nitrate water can contract methemoglobinemia, sometimes called "blue baby syndrome," a potentially fatal condition.
- Fertilizer runoff into rivers and lakes imparts unwanted nutrients that cause algae growth and eventual loss of oxygen in the body of water, degrading its ability to support fish and other desirable aquatic life.
- Toxic agricultural chemicals - insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides - are detectable in some aquifers and waterways.

In general, it is much easier to get a pollutant into water than to retrieve it out. Gasoline additives, dry cleaning chemicals, other industrial toxins, and in a few areas radionuclides have all been found in water sources intended for human use. The complexity and long time scale of subterranean hydrological movements essentially assures that pollutants already deposited in aquifers will continue to turn up for decades to come. Sophisticated water treatment processes are available, albeit expensive, to reclaim degraded water and render it fit for human consumption. Yet

source protection is unquestionably a more desirable alternative.

In much of the developing world, and even some low-income rural enclaves of the developed world, the population lacks ready access to safe water. Surface water and shallow groundwater supplies are susceptible to contamination from untreated wastewater and failing septic tanks, as well as chemical hazards. The occurrence of waterborne disease is almost certainly greatly underreported.

### **Marine Resources:**

Coastal areas have always been desirable places for human habitation, and population pressure on them continues to increase. Many types of water degradation that affect lakes and rivers also affect coastal zones: industrial effluents, untreated or partially treated sewage, nutrient load from agriculture figure prominently in both cases. Prospects for more extreme storms as a result of global warming, as well as the pervasiveness of poorly planned development in many coastal areas, forebode that catastrophic hurricanes and landslides may increase in frequency in the future. Ongoing rise in sea levels will force remedial measures and in some cases abandonment of currently valuable coastal property.

Fisheries over much of the globe have been overharvested, and immediate conservation measures are required to preserve stocks of many species. Many governments subsidized factory-scale fishing fleets in the 1970s and 1980s, and the resultant catch increase evidently surpassed a sustainable level. It is uncertain how much of the current decline in fish stocks stems from overharvesting and how much from environmental pollution. The deep ocean remains relatively unaffected by human activity, but continental shelves near coastlines are frequently seriously polluted, and these close-to-shore areas are the major biological nurseries for food fish and the smaller organisms they feed on.

## **6. Environmental Toxins**

Toxic chemical pollution exploded on the public consciousness with disclosure of spectacularly polluted industrial areas such as Love Canal near Buffalo, New York. There is no question that pollutants such as organophosphates or radionucleides can be highly deleterious to health, but evidence to date suggests that seriously affected areas are a localized rather than universal problem.

While some explore the possibilities for a lifestyle that fully eschews use of modern industrial chemicals, the most prevalent remediative approach is to focus on more judicious use. The most efficient chemical plants are now able to contain nearly all toxic byproducts of their production processes within the premises, minimizing the release of such substances into the environment.

Techniques such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) dictate limited rather than broadcast use of pesticides: application only when needed using the safest available chemical, supplemented as much as possible with nontoxic controls.

While heightened public awareness and growing technical sophistication suggest a hopeful outlook on limiting the damage from manmade environmental toxins, one must grant that previous incidents of their misuse and mishandling have already caused environmental damage that will have to be dealt with for many years to come. In the case of the most hazardous radioactive substances, the time scale for successful remediation actually extends beyond that of the recorded history of civilization. Moreover, in this era of high population density and rapid economic growth, quotidian activities such as the transport of chemicals will occasionally, seemingly inevitably result in accidents with adverse environmental consequences.

## **7. "Islandization" and Biodiversity**

With increased awareness regarding the adverse effects of unregulated hunting and habitat depletion upon wildlife species and other aspects of biodiversity, large-scale efforts across the globe have been initiated to reduce and even reverse this trend.

In every region of the world, many species of wildlife and areas of biodiversity have been saved from extinction. Nationally, many countries have adopted policies aimed at preservation and conservation of species, and one of the most tangible measures has been the proliferation of protected habitats. Such habitats exist in the form of wildlife reserves, marine life reserves, and other such areas where biodiversity can be protected from external encroachment and exploitation.

Despite these advances in wildlife and biodiversity protection, further and perhaps more intractable challenges linger. Designated reserves, while intended to prevent further species decline, exist as closed territories, fragmented from other such enclaves and disconnected from the larger ecosystem. This environmental scenario is referred to as "islandization." Habitat reserves often serve as oversized zoos or game farms, with landscapes and wildlife that have effectively been "tamed" to suit. Meanwhile, the larger surrounding ecosystem continues to be seriously degraded and transformed, while within the islandized habitat, species that are the focus of conservation efforts may not have sufficient range and may not be able to maintain healthy genetic variability.

As a consequence, many conservationists and preservationists have demanded that substantially larger portions of land be withheld as habitat reserves, and a network of biological corridors to connect continental reserves be established. While such efforts to combat islandization have considerable support in the [United States](#), how precisely such a program would be instituted, especially across national boundaries, remains a matter of debate. International conservationists and preservationists say without a network of reserves a massive loss of biodiversity will result.

The concept of islandization illustrates why conservation and preservation of wildlife and biodiversity must consider and adopt new, broader strategies. In the past, conservation and preservation efforts have been aimed at specific species, such as the spotted owl and grizzly bear in North America, the Bengal tiger in Southeast Asia, the panda in [China](#), elephants in Africa. Instead, the new approach is to simultaneously protect many and varied species that inhabit the same ecosystem. This method, referred to as "bio-regional conservation," may more efficaciously generate longer-term and more far-reaching results precisely because it is aimed at preserving entire ecosystems, and all the living things within.

### **More About Biodiversity Issues:**

This section is directly taken from the United Nations Environmental Program: "[Biodiversity Assessment](#)"

The Global Biodiversity Assessment, completed by 1500 scientists under the auspices of United Nations Environmental Program in 1995, updated what is known (or unknown) about global biological diversity at the ecosystem, species and genetic levels. The assessment was uncertain of the total number of species on Earth within an order of magnitude. Of its working figure of 13 million species, only 13 percent are scientifically described. Ecological community diversity is also poorly known, as is its relationship to biological diversity, and genetic diversity has been studied for only a small number of species. The effects of human activities on biodiversity have increased so greatly that the rate of species extinctions is rising to hundreds or thousands of times the background level. These losses are driven by increasing demands on species and their habitats, and by the failure of current market systems to value biodiversity adequately. The Assessment calls for urgent action to reverse these trends.

There has been a new recognition of the importance of protecting marine and aquatic biodiversity. The first quantitative estimates of species losses due to growing coral reef destruction predict that almost 200,000 species, or one in five presently contributing to coral reef biodiversity, could die out in the next 40 years if human pressures on reefs continue to increase.

Since Rio, many countries have improved their understanding of the status and importance of their biodiversity, particularly through biodiversity country studies such as those prepared under the auspices of UNEP/GEF. The [United Kingdom](#) identified 1250 species needing monitoring, of which 400 require action plans to ensure their survival. Protective measures for biodiversity, such as legislation to protect species, can prove effective. In the USA, almost 40 percent of the plants and animals protected under the Endangered Species Act are now stable or improving as a direct result of recovery efforts. Some African countries have joined efforts to protect threatened species through the 1994 Lusaka Agreement, and more highly migratory species are being protected by

specialized cooperative agreements among range states under the Bonn Agreement.

There is an emerging realization that a major part of conservation of biological diversity must take place outside of protected areas and involve local communities. The extensive agricultural areas occupied by small farmers contain much biodiversity that is important for sustainable food production. Indigenous agricultural practices have been and continue to be important elements in the maintenance of biodiversity, but these are being displaced and lost. There is a new focus on the interrelationship between agrobiodiversity conservation and sustainable use and development practices in smallholder agriculture, with emphasis on use of farmers' knowledge and skills as a source of information for sustainable farming.

Perhaps even more important than the loss of biodiversity is the transformation of global biogeochemical cycles, the reduction in the total world biomass, and the decrease in the biological productivity of the planet. While quantitative measurements are not available, the eventual economic and social consequences may be so significant that the issue requires further attention.

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USFWS. 1994. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report to Congress, cited in news release 21 July 1994.

Online resources used generally in the Environmental Overview:

Environmental Protection Agency Global Warming Site. URL: <http://www.epa.gov/globalwarming>

Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations: Forestry. URL: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/sofo/en/>

Global Warming Information Page. URL: <http://globalwarming.org>

U n i t e d N a t i o n s E n v i r o n m e n t a l P r o g r a m . U R L : [http://www.unep.org/GEO/GEO\\_Products/Assessment\\_Reports/](http://www.unep.org/GEO/GEO_Products/Assessment_Reports/)

United Nations Global Environmental Outlook. URL: <http://www.unep.org/geo/geo4/media/>

Note on Edition Dates:

The edition dates for textual resources are noted above because they were used to formulate the original content. We also have used online resources (cited above) to update coverage as needed.

Information Resources

For more information about environmental concepts, CountryWatch recommends the following resources:

The United Nations Environmental Program Network (with country profiles)

[<http://www.unep.net/>](http://www.unep.net/)

The United Nations Environment Program on Climate Change

[<http://climatechange.unep.net/>](http://climatechange.unep.net/)

The United Nations Environmental Program on Waters and Oceans

[<http://www.unep.ch/earthw/Pdepwat.htm>](http://www.unep.ch/earthw/Pdepwat.htm)

The United Nations Environmental Program on Forestry: "Forests in Flux"

[<http://www.unep-wcmc.org/forest/flux/homepage.htm>](http://www.unep-wcmc.org/forest/flux/homepage.htm)

FAO "State of the World's Forests"

[<http://www.fao.org/forestry/FO/SOFO/SOFO99/sofo99-e.stm>](http://www.fao.org/forestry/FO/SOFO/SOFO99/sofo99-e.stm)

World Resources Institute.

[<http://www.wri.org/>](http://www.wri.org/)

Harvard University Center for Health and the Global Environment

[<http://www.med.harvard.edu/chge/the-review.html>](http://www.med.harvard.edu/chge/the-review.html)

The University of Wisconsin Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment

<http://sage.aos.wisc.edu/>

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## **International Environmental Agreements and Associations**

## **International Policy Development in Regard to Global Warming:**

### **Introduction**

Regardless of what the precise nature of the relationship between greenhouse gas emissions and global warming may be, it seems that there is some degree of a connection between the phenomena. Any substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and global warming trends will likely involve systematic changes in industrial operations, the use of advanced energy sources and technologies, as well as global cooperation in implementing and regulating these transformations.

In this regard, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) stipulated the following objectives:

1. To stabilize "greenhouse gas" concentrations within the atmosphere, in such a manner that would preclude hazardous anthropogenic intervention into the existing biosphere and ecosystems of the world. This stabilization process would facilitate the natural adaptation of ecosystems to changes in climate.
2. To ensure and enable sustainable development and food production on a global scale.

Following are two discussions regarding international policies on the environment, followed by listings of international accords.

### ***Special Entry: The Kyoto Protocol***

The UNFCCC was adopted at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, and entered into force in 1994. Over 175 parties were official participants.

Meanwhile, however, many of the larger, more industrialized nations failed to reach the emissions' reduction targets, and many UNFCCC members agreed that the voluntary approach to reducing emissions had not been successful. As such, UNFCCC members reached a consensus that legally binding limits were necessitated, and agreed to discuss such a legal paradigm at a meeting in Kyoto, [Japan](#) in 1997. At that meeting, the UNFCCC forged the Kyoto Protocol. This concord is the first legally binding international agreement that places limits on emissions from industrialized countries. The major greenhouse gas emissions addressed in the Kyoto Protocol include carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride, and methane.

The provisions of the Kyoto Protocol stipulate that economically advanced nations must reduce their combined emissions of greenhouse gases, by approximately five percent from their 1990

levels, before the 2008-2010 deadline. Countries with the highest carbon dioxide emissions, such as the [United States](#) (U.S.), many of the European Union (EU) countries, and [Japan](#), are to reduce emissions by a scale of 6 to 8 percent. All economically advanced nations must show "demonstrable progress" by 2005. In contrast, no binding limits or timetable have been set on developing countries. Presumably, this distinction is due to the fact that most developing countries - - with the obvious exceptions of [India](#) and [China](#) -- simply do not emit as many greenhouse gases as do more industrially advanced countries. Meanwhile, these countries are entrenched in the process of economic development.

Regardless of the aforementioned reasoning, there has been strong opposition against the asymmetrical treatment assigned to emissions limits among developed and developing countries. Although this distinction might be regarded as unfair in principle, associations such as the Alliance of Small Island States have been vocal in expressing how global warming -- a result of greenhouse gas emissions - has contributed to the rise in sea level, and thus deleteriously affected their very existence as island nation states. For this reason, some parties have suggested that economically advanced nations, upon returning to their 1990 levels, should be required to further reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by a deadline of 2005. In response, interested parties have observed that even if such reductions were undertaken by economically advanced nations, they would not be enough to completely control global warming. Indeed, a reduction in the rate of fossil fuel usage by developing nations would also be necessary to have substantial ameliorative effect on global warming. Indeed, a reduction in the rate of fossil fuel usage by developing nations would also be necessary to have substantial ameliorative effect on global warming.

As such, the Protocol established a "Clean Development Mechanism" which permits developed countries to invest in projects aimed at reducing emissions within developing countries in return for credit for the reductions. Ostensibly, the objective of this mechanism is to curtail emissions in developing countries without unduly penalizing them for their economic development. Under this model, the countries with more potential emissions credits could sell them to other signatories of the Kyoto Protocol, whose emissions are forecast to significantly rise in the next few years. Should this trading of emissions credits take place, it is estimated that the Kyoto Protocol's emissions targets could still be met.

In 1999, the International Energy Outlook projected that Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and Newly Independent States, as well as parts of Asia, are all expected to show a marked decrease in their level of energy-related carbon emissions in 2010. Nations with the highest emissions, specifically, the U.S., the EU and [Japan](#), are anticipated to reduce their emissions by up to 8 percent by 2012. By 2000, however, the emissions targets were not on schedule for achievement. Indeed, the U.S. Department of Energy estimates forecast that by 2010, there will be a 34 percent increase in carbon emissions from the 1990 levels, in the absence of major shifts in policy, economic growth, energy prices, and consumer trends. Despite this assessment in the U.S., international support for the Kyoto Protocol remained strong, especially among European countries

and island states, who view the pact as one step in the direction away from reliance on fossil fuels and other sources of greenhouse gases.

In 2001, U.S. President, George W. Bush, rejected his country's participation in the Kyoto Protocol, saying that the costs imposed on the global economic system, and especially, on the US, overshadowed the benefits of the Protocol. He also cited the unfair burden on developed nations to reduce emissions, as another primary reasons for withdrawal from the international pact, as well as insufficient evidence regarding the science of global warming. Faced with impassioned international disapproval for his position, the U.S. president stated that his administration remained interested in dealing with the matter of global warming, but would endorse alternative measures to combat the problem, such as voluntary initiatives limiting emissions. Critics of Bush's position, however, have noted that it was the failure of voluntary initiatives to reduce emissions following the Rio Summit that led to the establishment of the Kyoto Protocol in the first place.

In the wake of the Bush administration's decision, many participant countries resigned themselves to the reality that the goals of the Kyoto Protocol might not be achieved without U.S. involvement. Nevertheless, in Bonn, [Germany](#), in July 2001, the remaining participant countries struck a political compromise on some of the key issues and sticking points, and planned to move forward with the Protocol, irrespective of the absence of the U.S. The key compromise points included the provision for countries to offset their targets with carbon sinks (these are areas of forest and farmland which can absorb carbon through the process of photosynthesis). Another compromise point within the broader Bonn Agreement was the reduction of emissions cuts of six gases from over 5 percent to a more achievable 2 percent. A third key change was the provision of funding for less wealthy countries to adopt more progressive technologies.

In late October and early November 2001, the UNFCCC's 7<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties met in Marrakesh, [Morocco](#), to finalize the measures needed to make the Kyoto Protocol operational. Although the UNFCCC projected that ratification of the Protocol would make it legally binding within a year, many critics noted that the process had fallen short of implementing significant changes in policy that would be necessary to actually stop or even slow climate change. They also maintained that the absence of U.S. participation effectively rendered the Protocol into being a political exercise without any substance, either in terms of transnational policy or in terms of environmental concerns.

The adoption of the compromises ensconced within the Bonn Agreement had been intended to make the provisions of the Kyoto Protocol more palatable to the U.S. In this regard, it failed to achieve its objective as the Bush administration continued to eschew participation in the international accord. Still, however, the Bonn Agreement did manage to render a number of other positive outcomes. Specifically, in 2002, key countries, such as [Russia](#), [Japan](#) and [Canada](#) agreed to ratify the protocol, bringing the number of signatories to 178. The decision by key countries to

ratify the protocol was regarded as "the kiss of life" by observers.

By 2005, on the eve of a climate change conference in London, British Prime Minister Tony Blair was hoping to deal with the problems of climate change beyond the provisions set forth in the Kyoto Protocol. Acknowledging that the Kyoto Protocol could not work in its current form, Blair wanted to open the discussion for a new climate change plan.

Blair said that although most of the world had signed on to Kyoto, the protocol could not meet any of its practical goals of cutting greenhouse gas emissions without the participation of the United States, the world's largest polluter. He also noted that any new agreement would have to include India and China -- significant producers of greenhouse gas emissions, but exempt from Kyoto because they have been classified as developing countries. Still, he said that progress on dealing with climate change had been stymied by "a reluctance to face up to reality and the practical action needed to tackle problem."

Blair also touted the "huge opportunities" in technology and pointed toward the possibilities offered by wind, solar and nuclear power, along with fuel cell technology, eco-friendly biofuels, and carbon capture and storage which could generate low carbon power. Blair also asserted that his government was committed to achieving its domestic goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 20 percent by 2010.

In the United States, President George W. Bush has said that global warming remained a debatable issue and despite conclusions reached by his own Environmental Protection Agency, he has not agreed with the conclusion that global warming and climate change are linked with human activities. Bush has also refused to ratify Kyoto on the basis of its economic costs.

Australia, an ally of the United States, has taken a similarly dim view of the Kyoto Protocol. Ahead of the November 2005 climate change meeting in Canada in which new goals for the protocol were to be discussed, Australia's Environment Minister, Ian Campbell, said that negotiating new greenhouse gas emission levels for the Kyoto Protocol would be a waste of time. Campbell said, "There is a consensus that the caps, targets and timetables approach is flawed. If we spend the next five years arguing about that, we'll be fiddling and negotiating while Rome burns." Campbell, like the Bush administration, has also advocated a system of voluntary action in which industry takes up new technologies rather than as a result of compelling the reduction of emissions. But the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) has called on its government to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, to establish a system of emissions trading, and to set binding limits on emissions. Interestingly, although it did not sign on to Kyoto, Australia was expected to meet its emissions target by 2012 (an 8 percent increase in 1990 levels in keeping with the country's reliance on coal). But this success has nothing to do with new technologies and is due to state-based regulations on land clearing.

Note: The Kyoto Protocol calls for developed nations to cut greenhouse emissions by 5.2 percent

of 1990 levels by 2012.

***Special Entry: Climate Change Summit in Copenhagen (2009) --***

In December 2009, the United Nations Climate Change Summit opened in the Danish capital of Copenhagen. The summit was scheduled to last from Dec. 7-18, 2009. Delegates from more than 190 countries were in attendance, and approximately 100 world leaders, including British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and [United States](#) President Barack Obama, were expected to participate. At issue was the matter of new reductions targets on greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

Despite earlier fears that little concurrence would come from the conference, effectively pushing significant actions forward to a 2010 conference in [Mexico](#) City, negotiators were now reporting that the talks were productive and several key countries, such as [South Africa](#), had pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The two main issues that could still lead to cleavages were questions of agreement between the industrialized countries and the developing countries of the world, as well as the overall effectiveness of proposals in seriously addressing the perils of climate change.

On Dec. 9, 2009, four countries -- the [United Kingdom](#), [Australia](#), [Mexico](#) and [Norway](#) -- presented a document outlining ideas for raising and managing billions of dollars, which would be intended to help vulnerable countries dealing with the perils of climate change. Described as a "green fund," the concept could potentially help small island states at risk because of the rise in sea level. [Bangladesh](#) identified itself as a potential recipient of an assistance fund, noting that as a country plagued by devastating floods, it was particularly hard-hit by climate change. The "green fund" would fall under the rubric of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, for which developed countries have been committed to quantifying their emission reduction targets, and also to providing financial and technical support to developing countries.

The [United Kingdom](#), [Australia](#), [Mexico](#) and [Norway](#) also called for the creation of a new legal treaty that would replace the Kyoto Protocol. This new treaty, which could go into force in 2012, would focus largely on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. But [Australia](#) went even further in saying that the successor treaty to the Kyoto Protocol, should be one with provisions covering all countries. Such a move would be a departure from the structure of the Kyoto Protocol, which contained emissions targets for industrialized countries due to the prevailing view that developed countries had a particular historic responsibility to be accountable for climate change. More recently, it has become apparent that substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions demanded by scientists would only come to pass with the participation also of significant developing nation states, such as [China](#) and [India](#). Indeed, one of the most pressing critiques of the Kyoto Protocol was that it was a "paper tiger" that failed to address the impact of the actions of emerging economies like [China](#) and [India](#), with its focus on the developed economies.

Now, in 2009, [China](#) -- as the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitter -- was responding this dubious distinction by vocalizing its criticism of the current scenario and foregrounding its new commitments. Ahead of the Copenhagen summit, [China](#) had announced it would reduce the intensity of its carbon emissions per unit of its GDP in 2020 by 40 to 45 percent against 2005 levels. With that new commitment at hand, [China](#) was now accusing the [United States](#) and the European Union of shirking their own responsibilities by setting weak targets for greenhouse gas emissions cuts. Senior Chinese negotiator, Su Wei, characterized the goals of the world's second largest greenhouse gas emitter -- the [United States](#) -- as "not notable," and the European Union's target as "not enough." Su Wei also took issue with [Japan](#) for setting implausible preconditions.

On Dec. 11, 2009, [China](#) demanded that developed and wealthy countries in Copenhagen should help deliver a real agreement on climate change by delivering on their promises to reduce carbon emissions and provide financial support for developing countries to adapt to global warming. In so doing, China's Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei said his country was hoping that a "balanced outcome" would emerge from the discussions at the summit. Echoing the position of the Australian government, He Yafei spoke of a draft agreement as follows: "The final document we're going to adopt needs to be taking into account the needs and aspirations of all countries, particularly the most vulnerable ones."

China's Vice Foreign Minister emphasized the fact that climate change was "a matter of survival" for developing countries, and accordingly, such countries need wealthier and more developed countries to accentuate not only their pledges of emissions reduction targets, but also their financial commitments under the aforementioned United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. To that end, scientists and leaders of small island states in the Indian Ocean, the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, have highlighted the existential threat posed by global warming and the concomitant rise in sea level.

China aside, attention was also on [India](#) -- another major player in the developing world and a country with an industrializing economy that was impacting the environment. At issue was the Indian government's decision to set a carbon intensity target, which would slow emissions growth by up to 25 percent by the 2020 deadline. This strong position was resisted by some elements in [India](#), who argued that their country should not be taking such a strong position when developed wealthy countries were yet to show accountability for their previous commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The matter grew so heated that the members of the opposition stormed out of the parliament in protest as Indian Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh defended the policy. But the political pressure at home in [India](#) was leaving the Indian delegation in Copenhagen in a state of chaos as well. In fact, India's top environmental negotiator refused to travel to Copenhagen in protest of the government's newly-announced stance.

China and [India](#) were joined by [Brazil](#) and [South Africa](#) in the crafting of a draft document calling for a new global climate treaty to be completed by June 2010. Of concern has been the realization

that there was insufficient time to find concurrence on a full legal treaty, which would leave countries only with a politically-binding text by the time the summit at Copenhagen closed. But Guyana's leader, President Bharrat Jagdeo, warned that the summit in [Denmark](#) would be classified as a failure unless a binding document was agreed upon instead of just political consensus. He urged his cohorts to act with purpose saying, "Never before have science, economics, geo-strategic self-interest and politics intersected in such a way on an issue that impacts everyone on the planet."

Likewise, [Tuvalu](#) demanded that legally binding agreements emerge from Copenhagen. Its proposal was supported by many of the vulnerable countries, from small island states and sub-Saharan Africa, all of whom warned of the catastrophic impact of climate change on their citizens. [Tuvalu](#) also called for more aggressive action, such as an amendment to the 1992 agreement, which would focus on sharp greenhouse gas emissions and the accepted rise in temperatures, due to the impact the rise in seas. The delegation from [Kiribati](#) joined the call by drawing attention to the fact that one village had to be abandoned due to waist-high water, and more such effects were likely to follow. Kiribati's Foreign Secretary, Tessie Lambourne, warned that the people of [Kiribati](#) could well be faced with no homeland in the future saying, "Nobody in this room would want to leave their homeland." But despite such impassioned pleas and irrespective of warnings from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that the rise in sea level from melting polar ice caps would deleteriously affect low-lying atolls such as such as [Tuvalu](#) and [Kiribati](#) in the Pacific, and the [Maldives](#) in the Indian Ocean, the oil-giant [Saudi Arabia](#) was able to block this move.

Meanwhile, within the developed countries, yet another power struggle was brewing. The European Union warned it would only agree to raise its target of 20 percent greenhouse gas emissions reductions to 30 percent if the [United States](#) demonstrated that it would do more to reduce its own emissions. It was unknown if such pressure would yield results. [United States](#) President Barack Obama offered a "provisional" 2020 target of 17 percent reductions, noting that he could not offer greater concessions at Copenhagen due to resistance within the [United States](#) Congress, which was already trying to pass a highly controversial "cap and trade" emissions legislation. However, should that emissions trading bill fail in the Senate, the [United States](#) Environment Protection Agency's declaration that greenhouse gases pose a danger to human health and the environment was expected to facilitate further regulations and limits on power plants and factories at the national level. These moves could potentially strengthen the Obama administration's offering at Copenhagen. As well, President Obama also signaled that he would be willing to consider the inclusion of international forestry credits.

Such moves indicated willingness by the Obama administration to play a more constructive role on the international environmental scene than its predecessor, the Bush administration. Indeed, ahead of his arrival at the Copenhagen summit, President Barack Obama's top environmental advisors promised to work on a substantial climate change agreement. To that end, [United States](#)

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson said at a press conference, "We are seeking robust engagement with all of our partners around the world." But would this pro-engagement assertion yield actual results?

By Dec. 12, 2009, details related to a draft document prepared by Michael Zammit Cutajar, the head of the Ad-hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action, were released at the Copenhagen climate conference. Included in the document were calls for countries to make major reductions in carbon emissions over the course of the next decade. According to the Washington Post, industrialized countries were called on to make cuts of between 25 percent and 40 percent below 1990 levels -- reductions that were far more draconian than the [United States](#) was likely to accept. As discussed above, President Obama had offered a provisional reduction target of 17 percent. The wide gap between the released draft and the United States' actual stated position suggested there was much more negotiating in the offing if a binding agreement could be forged, despite the Obama administration's claims that it was seeking greater engagement on this issue.

In other developments, the aforementioned call for financial support of developing countries to deal with the perils of climate change was partly answered by the European Union on Dec. 11, 2009. The European bloc pledged an amount of 2.4 billion euros (US\$3.5 billion) annually from 2010 to 2012. Environment Minister Andreas Carlgren of [Sweden](#) -- the country that holds the rotating presidency of the European Union at the time of the summit -- put his weight behind the notion of a "legally binding deal." Meanwhile, Yvo de Boer, a top United Nations climate change official, focused less on the essence of the agreement and more on tangible action and effects saying, "Copenhagen will only be a success if it delivers significant and immediate action that begins the day the conference ends."

The division between developed and developing countries in Copenhagen reached new heights on Dec. 14, 2009, when some of the poor and less developed countries launched a boycott at the summit. The move, which was spurred by African countries but backed by [China](#) and [India](#), appeared to be geared toward redirecting attention and primary responsibility to the wealthier and more industrialized countries. The impasse was resolved after the wealthier and more industrialized countries offered assurances that they did not intend on shirking from their commitments to reducing greenhouse gases. As a result, the participating countries ceased the boycott.

Outside the actual summit, thousands of protestors had gathered to demand crucial global warming, leading to clashes between police and demonstrators elsewhere in the Danish capital city. There were reports of scattered violence across Copenhagen and more than 1,000 people were arrested.

Nevertheless, by the second week of the climate change summit, hopes of forging a strong deal were eroding as developed and developing nations remained deadlocked on sharing cuts in greenhouse gases, and particularly on the matters of financing and temperature goals. In a bid to

shore up support for a new climate change, [United States](#) President Barack Obama joined other world leaders in Copenhagen. On Dec. 14, 2009, there was a standoff brewing between the [United States](#) and [China](#). At issue was China's refusal to accept international monitoring of its expressed targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The [United States](#) argued that China's opposition to verification could be a deal-breaker.

By the close of the summit, the difficult process eventually resulted in some consensus being cultivated. A draft text called for \$100 billion a year by 2020 to assist poor nations cope with climate change, while aiming to limit global warming to two degrees Celsius compared with pre-industrial levels. The deal also included specific targets for developed countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and called for reductions by developing countries as a share of their economies. Also included in the agreement was a mechanism to verify compliance. The details of the agreement were supported by President Barack Obama, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

This draft would stand as an interim agreement, with a legally-binding international pact unlikely to materialize until 2010. In this way, the summit in Copenhagen failed to achieve its central objective, which was to negotiate a successor to the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gas emissions.

#### Editor's Note

In the background of these developments was the growing global consciousness related to global warming and climate change. Indeed, as the Copenhagen summit was ongoing, it was clear there was enormous concurrence on the significance of the stakes with an editorial on the matter of climate change being published in 56 newspapers in 45 countries. That editorial warned that without global action, climate change would "ravage our planet." Meanwhile, a global survey taken by Globescan showed that concern over global warming had exponentially increased from 1998 -- when only 20 percent of respondents believed it to be a serious problem -- to 64 percent in 2009. Such survey data, however, was generated ahead of the accusations by climate change skeptics that some climate scientists may have overstated the case for global warming, based on emails derived in an illicit manner from a British University.

#### ***Special Entry: Climate change talks in Doha in [Qatar](#) extend life of Kyoto Protocol (2012)***

December 2012 saw climate talks ensue in the Qatari city of Doha as representatives from countries across the world gathered to discuss the fate of the Kyoto Protocol, which seeks to minimize greenhouse gas emissions. The summit yielded results with decisions made (1) to extend the Kyoto Protocol until 2020, and (2) for wealthier countries to compensate poorer countries for the losses and damage incurred as a result of climate change.

In regards to the second matter, Malia Talakai of [Nauru](#), a leading negotiator for the Alliance of Small Island States, explained the necessity of the compensation package as follows: “We are trying to say that if you pollute you must help us.”

This measure was being dubbed the "Loss and Damage" mechanism, and was being linked with [United States](#) President Barack Obama's request for \$60 billion from Congress to deal with the devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy months before. The sight of a hurricane bearing down on the northern Atlantic seaboard, along with the reality of the scope of reconstruction, appeared to have illustrated the economic costs of climate change -- not so much as a distant environmental issue -- but as a danger to the quotidian lives of people. Still, there was blame to be placed on the [United States](#) and European countries -- some of world's largest emitters -- for failing to do more to reduce emissions.

To that latter end, there was in fact little progress made on the central issue of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Had those emissions been reduced, there would have been less of a need to financially deal with the devastation caused by climate change. One interpretation was that the global community was accepting the fact that industrialization was contributing to global warming, which had deleterious effects on the polar ice caps and concomitantly on the rise of sea level, with devastating effects for small island nations. Thus, wealthier countries were willing to pay around \$10 billion a year through 2020, effectively in "damages," to the poor countries that could be viewed as the "collateral damage" of industrial progress. But damages today could potentially be destruction tomorrow, leaving in place the existential challenges and burdens to be born by some of the world's smallest and least wealthy island countries.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the representative for the small island nation states at the Doha summit responded with ire, characterizing the lack of progress on reducing emissions as follows: "We see the package before us as deeply deficient in mitigation (carbon cuts) and finance. It's likely to lock us on the trajectory to a 3,4,5C rise in global temperatures, even though we agreed to keep the global average temperature rise of 1.5C to ensure survival of all islands. There is no new finance (for adapting to climate change and getting clean energy) -- only promises that something might materialize in the future. Those who are obstructive need to talk not about how their people will live, but whether our people will live."

Indeed, in most small island countries not just in the Pacific, but also the Caribbean and Indian Ocean, ecological concerns and the climate crisis have been dominant themes with dire life and death consequences looming in the background for their people. Small island nations in these region are already at risk from the rise of sea-level, tropical cyclones, floods. But their very livelihoods of fishing and subsistence farming were also at risk as a result of ecological and environmental changes. Increasingly high storm surges can wipe out entire villages and contaminate water supplies. Accordingly, the very existence of island nations, such as [Kiribati](#) and [Tuvalu](#), are at severe risk of being obliterated from the map. Yet even with the existential threat of being wiped

off the map in the offing, the international community has been either slow or restrictive in its efforts to deal with global warming, climate change, economic and ecological damage, as well as the emerging global challenge of environmental refugees.

A 2012 report from the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the Pacific Regional Environment Program underlined the concerns of small island nations and their people as it concluded that the livelihoods of approximately 10 million people in Pacific island communities were increasingly vulnerable to climate change. In fact, low-lying islands in that region would likely confront losses of up to 18 percent of gross domestic product due to climate change, according to the report. The report covers 21 countries and territories, including [Fiji](#), [Kiribati](#), [Samoa](#) and [Tonga](#), and recommended environmental legislation intended to deal with the climate crisis facing the small island countries particularly. As noted by David Sheppard, the director general of the Pacific Regional Environment Program that co-sponsored this study: "The findings... emphasize the need more than ever to raise the bar through collective actions that address the region's environmental needs at all levels."

Regardless of the failures of the summit in [Qatar](#) (discussed above), the meeting did facilitate a process starting in 2015, which would bind both wealthy and poor countries together in the mission of forging a new binding treaty that would replace the Kyoto Protocol and tackle the central causes of climate change.

For more information on the threats faced in small island nations by climate change and the measures being undertaken to lobby for international action, please see the Alliance for Small Island States available online at the URL: <http://aosis.org/>

### ***Special Report***

#### ***COP 21 summit in Paris ends with historic agreement to tackle climate change; rare international consensus formed on environmental crisis facing the planet (2015) --***

In mid-December 2015, the highly-anticipated United Nations climate conference of parties (COP) in Paris, [France](#), ended with a historic agreement. In fact, it would very likely be understood as the most significant international agreement signed by all the recognized countries of the world since the Cold War. Accordingly, the Paris Agreement was being distinguished as the first multilateral pact that would compel all countries across the world to cut its carbon emissions -- one of the major causes of increasing greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to global warming, and its deleterious effects ranging from the dangerous rise in sea level to catastrophic climate change.

The accord, which was dubbed to be the "Paris Agreement," was the work of rigorous diplomacy

and fervent environmental advocacy, and it aimed to address the climate change crisis facing the planet. As many as 195 countries were represented in the negotiations that led to the landmark climate deal. Indeed, it was only after weeks of passionate debate that international concurrence was reached in addressing the environmental challenges confronting the world, with particular attention to moving beyond fossil fuels and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The success of the COP 21 summit in Paris and the emergence of the landmark Paris Agreement was, to some extent, attributed to the efforts of France's Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius who presided over the negotiations. The French foreign minister's experience and credentials as a seasoned diplomat and respected statesman paid dividends. He skillfully guided the delegates from almost 200 countries and interest groups along the negotiations process, with ostensibly productive results and a reasonably robust deal to show for it.

On Dec. 12, 2015, French Foreign Minister Fabius officially adopted the agreement, declaring: "I now invite the COP to adopt the decision entitled Paris Agreement outlined in the document. Looking out to the room I see that the reaction is positive, I see no objections. The Paris agreement is adopted." Once Foreign Minister Fabius' gavel was struck, symbolically inaugurating the Paris Agreement into force, the COP delegate rushed to their feet with loud and bouyant cheers as well as thunderous applause.

In general, the Paris Agreement was being hailed as a victory for enviromental activists and a triumph for international diplomats, while at the same time being understood as simply an initial -- and imperfect -- move in the direction of a sustainable future. China's chief negotiator, Xie Zhenhua, issued this message, saying that while the accord was not ideal, it should "not prevent us from marching historical steps forward."

United States President Barack Obama lauded the deal as both "ambitious" and "historic," and the work of strenuous multilateral negotiations as he declared, "Together, we've shown what's possible when the world stands as one." The [United States](#) leader acknowledged that the accord was not "perfect," but he reminded the critics that it was "the best chance to save the one planet we have."

Former [United States](#) Vice President Al Gore, one of the world's most well known environmental advocates, issued a lengthy statement on the accomplishments ensconced in the Paris Agreement. He highlighted the fact that the Paris Agreement was a first step towards a future with a reduced carbon footprint on Planet Earth as he said, "The components of this agreement -- including a strong review mechanism to enhance existing commitments and a long-term goal to eliminate global-warming pollution this century -- are essential to unlocking the necessary investments in our future. No agreement is perfect, and this one must be strengthened over time, but groups across every sector of society will now begin to reduce dangerous carbon pollution through the framework of this agreement."

The central provisions of the Paris Agreement included the following items:

- Greenhouse gas emissions should peak as quickly as possible, with a move towards balancing energy sources, and ultimately the decrease of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century
- Global temperature increase would be limited to 1.5 degrees Centigrade above pre-industrial levels and would be held "well below" the two degrees Centigrade threshold
- Progress on these goals would be reviewed every five years beginning in 2020 with new greenhouse gas reduction targets issued every five years
- \$100 billion would be expended each year in climate finance for developing countries to move forward with green technologies, with further climate financing to be advanced in the years beyond

It should be noted that there both legally binding and voluntary elements contained within the Paris Agreement. Specifically, the submission of an emissions reduction target and the regular review of that goal would be legally mandatory for all countries. Stated differently, there would be a system in place by which experts would be able to track the carbon-cutting progress of each country. At the same time, the specific targets to be set by countries would be determined at the discretion of the countries, and would not be binding. While there was some criticism over this non-binding element, the fact of the matter was that the imposition of emissions targets was believed to be a major factor in the failure of climate change talks in Copenhagen, [Denmark](#), in 2009.

In 2015, the talks faced challenges as several countries, such as [China](#) and [India](#), objected to conditions that would stymie economic and development. In order to avoid that kind of landmine, a system Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) was developed and formed the basis of the accord. As such, the Paris Agreement would, in fact, facilitate economic growth and development, as well as technological progress, but with the goal of long-term ecological sustainability based on low carbon sources. In fact, the agreement heralded as "the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel era." As noted by Nick Mabey, the head of the climate diplomacy organization E3G, said, "Paris means governments will go further and faster to tackle climate change than ever before. The transition to a low carbon economy is now unstoppable, ensuring the end of the fossil fuel age."

A particular sticking point in the agreement was the \$100 billion earmarked for climate financing for developing countries to transition from traditional fossil fuels to green energy technologies and a low carbon future. In 2014, a report by the International Energy Agency indicated that the cost of that transition would actually be around \$44 trillion by the mid-century -- an amount that would render the \$100 billion being promised to be a drop in the proverbial bucket. However, the general expectation was that the Republican-controlled Senate in the [United States](#), which would have to ratify the deal in that country, was not interested in contributing significant funds for the cause of climate change.

A key strength of the Paris Agreement was the ubiquitous application of measures to all countries. Of note was the frequently utilized concept of "flexibility" with regard to the Paris Agreement. Specifically, the varying capacities of the various countries in meeting their obligations would be anticipated and accorded flexibility. This aspect presented something of a departure from the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which drew a sharp distinction between developed and developing countries, and mandated a different set of obligations for those categories of countries. Thus, under Kyoto, [China](#) and [India](#) were not held to the same standards as the [United States](#) and European countries. In the Paris Agreement, there would be commitments from all countries across the globe.

Another notable strength of the Paris Agreement was the fact that the countries of the world were finally able to reach consensus on the vital necessity to limit global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Centigrade. Ahead of the global consensus on the deal, and as controversy continued to surface over the targeted global temperature limits, the leaders of island countries were sounding the alarm about the melting of the Polar ice caps and the associated rise in sea level. Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga of [Tuvalu](#) issued this dismal reminder: "Tuvalu's future ... is already bleak and any further temperature increase will spell the total demise of [Tuvalu](#). No leader in this room carries such a level of worry and responsibility. Just imagine you are in my shoes, what would you do?" It was thus something of a victory for environmental advocates that the countries of the world could find consensus on the lower number -- 1.5 degrees rather than 2 degrees.

A significant weak point with regard to the Paris deal was a "loss and damage" provision, which anticipates that even with all the new undertakings intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and move to a low carbon future, there would nonetheless be unavoidable climate change consequences. Those consequences ranged from the loss of arable land for farmers as well as soil erosion and contamination of potable water by sea water, to the decimation of territory in coastal zones and on small islands, due to the rise in sea level, with entire small island countries being rendered entirely uninhabitable. The reality was that peoples' homes across the world would be destroyed along with their way of life.

With that latter catastrophic effect being a clear and present danger for small island countries, the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) demanded that the developed world acknowledge its responsibility for this irreversible damage.. Despite the fact that greenhouse gas emissions and the ensuing plague of global warming was, indeed, the consequence of development in the West (the [United States](#) and Europe) and the large power house countries, such as [Russia](#), [China](#) and [India](#), there was no appetite by those countries to sign on to unlimited liability. Under the Paris Agreement, there was a call for research on insurance mechanisms that would address loss and damage issues, with recommendations to come in the future.

The call for research was being regarded as an evasion of sorts and constituted the weakest aspect of the Paris Agreement. Not surprisingly, a coalition of small island nations demanded a "Marshall

Plan" for the Pacific. Borrowing the term "Marshall Plan" from the post-World War II reconstruction effort, the coalition of Pacific island nation, which included [Kiribati](#), [Tuvalu](#), [Fiji](#), and the [Marshall Islands](#), called for an initiative that would include investment in renewable energy and shoreline protection, cultural preservation, economic assistance for economies in transition, and a plan for migration and resettlement for these countries as they confront the catastrophic effects of the melting of the Polar ice caps and the concomitant rise in sea level. The precise contours of the initiative remained unknown, unspecified, and a mere exercise in theory at the time of writing. Yet such an initiative would, at some point, have to be addressed, given the realities of climate change and the slow motion calamity unfolding each day for low-lying island nations across the world.

As noted by Vice President Greg Stone of Conservation International, who also functions as an adviser to the government of [Kiribati](#), "Imagine living in a place where you know it's going to go away someday, but you don't know what day that wave's going to come over and wash your home away." He added, "It's a disaster we know is going to happen." Meanwhile, the intervening years promised to be filled with hardship for small island nations, such as [Kiribati](#). Stone explained, "For every inch of sea-level rise, these islands lose 10 feet of their freshwater table to saltwater intrusion," Stone explained. "So it's not just about the day the water finally goes over the island; it's also about the day that there's just not enough water left and everyone has to move off the island." Presaging the future for island nations that could face submersion, Stone said, "If you look ahead 50 years, a country like [Kiribati](#) could become the first aqueous nation. possibility of migration. That is, they own this big patch of ocean, and they administer it from elsewhere."

Foreign Minister Minister Tony Debrum of the [Marshall Islands](#) emerged as the champion advocating on behalf of small island nation states and a loose coalition of concerned countries from the Pacific to the Caribbean, but with support from the [United States](#). He addressed the comprehensive concerns of small island nations regarding the weaknesses of the deal, while simultaneously making clear that the Paris Agreement signified hope for the countries most at risk. In a formal statement, Debrum declared: "We have made history today. Emissions targets are still way off track, but this agreement has the tools to ramp up ambition, and brings a spirit of hope that we can rise to this challenge. I can go back home to my people and say we now have a pathway to survival." Debrum highlighted the imperatives of Pacific island nations, saying, "Our High Ambition Coalition was the lightning rod we needed to lift our sights and expectations for a strong agreement here in Paris. We were joined by countries representing more than half the world. We said loud and clear that a bare-bones, minimalist agreement would not fly. We instead demanded an agreement to mark a turning point in history, and the beginning of our journey to the post-carbon era."

Debrum of the [Marshall Islands](#) espoused the quintessential synopsis of the accord and its effects for those most likely to be affected by climate change as he noted, "Climate change won't stop

overnight, and my country is not out of the firing line just yet, but today we all feel a little safer.”

Editor's Entry on [Environmental Policy](#):

The low-lying Pacific island nations of the world, including [Kiribati](#), [Tuvalu](#), the [Marshall Islands](#), [Fiji](#), among others, are vulnerable to the threats posed by global warming and climate change, derived from carbon emissions, and resulting in the rise in sea level. Other island nations in the Caribbean, as well as poor countries with coastal zones, were also at particular risk of suffering the deleterious effects of climate change.

Political policy in these countries are often connected to ecological issues, which have over time morphed into an existential crisis of sorts. Indeed, ecological concerns and the climate crisis have also been dominant themes with life and death consequences for the people of island nations in the Pacific. Indeed, the very livelihoods of fishing and subsistence farming remain at risk as a result of ecological and environmental changes. Yet even so, these countries are threatened by increasingly high storm surges, which could wipe out entire villages and contaminate water supplies. Moreover, because these are low lying island nations, the sustained rise in sea level can potentially lead to the terrain of these countries being uninhabitable at best, and submerged at worst. Stated in plain terms, these countries are at severe risk of being obliterated from the map and their plight illuminates the emerging global challenge of environmental refugees. In these manifold senses, climate change is the existential crisis of the contemporary era.

Since the time of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, there have been efforts aimed at extending the life of that agreement, with an eye on minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, and thus minimizing the effects of climate change. Those endeavors have largely ended in failure, as exemplified by the unsuccessful Copenhagen talks in 2009 and the fruitless Doha talks in 2012 respectively. The success of the COP 21 talks in [France](#), with the adoption of the landmark Paris Agreement in 2015, was regarded as the first glimmer of hope. Not only did the Paris Agreement signify the triumph of international diplomacy and global consensus, but it also marked the start of the end of the fossil fuel era, with the path forward toward a low carbon future reliant on greener technologies. Most crucially, the Paris Agreement stood as the first significant response in recent times to the central challenge of climate change and its quotidian effects on the lives of real human beings across the world.

## **1. Major International Environmental Accords:**

### **General Environmental Concerns**

Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, Espoo, 1991.

## **Accords Regarding Atmosphere**

Annex 16, vol. II (Environmental Protection: Aircraft Engine Emissions) to the 1044 Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation, Montreal, 1981

Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP), Geneva, 1979

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), New York, 1992

Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, Vienna, 1985 including the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Depleted the Ozone Layer, Montreal, 1987

## **Accords Regarding Hazardous Substances**

Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movements and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa, Bamako, 1991

Convention on Civil Liability for Damage Caused during Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road, Rail and Inland Navigation Vessels (CRTD), Geneva, 1989

Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (Basel Convention), Basel, 1989

Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, Helsinki, 1992

Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region (Waigani Convention), Waigani, 1995

European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR), Geneva 1957

FAO International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides, Rome, 1985

## **2. Major International Marine Accords:**

### **Global Conventions**

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Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter (London Convention 1972), London, 1972

International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by Protocol of 1978 relation thereto (MARPOL 73/78), London, 1973 and 1978

International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage 1969 (1969 CLC), Brussels, 1969, 1976, and 1984

International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage 1971 (1971 Fund Convention), Brussels, 1971

Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea (HNS), London 1996

International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response, and Co-operation (OPRC), London, 1990

International Convention Relation to Intervention on the High Seas in Cases of Oil Pollution Casualties (Intervention Convention), Brussels, 1969

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Montego Bay, 1982

### **Regional Conventions**

Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft (Oslo Convention), Oslo, 1972

Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution from Land-based Sources (Paris Convention), Paris, 1974

Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention), Paris, 1992

Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (1974 Helsinki Convention), Helsinki 1974

Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (1992 Helsinki Convention), Helsinki 1992

## Conventions within the UNEP Regional Seas Programme

Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution, Bucharest, 1992

Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, Cartagena de Indias, 1983

Convention for the Protection, Management, and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region, Nairobi, 1985

Kuwait Regional Convention for Co-operation on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Pollution, [Kuwait](#), 1978

Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment and Coastal Region of the Mediterranean Sea (Barcelona Convention), Barcelona, 1976

Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment, Jeddah, 1982

Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region, Noumea, 1986

Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and Coastal Area of the South-East Pacific, Lima, 1981

Convention for Co-operation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region, Abidjan, 1981

### **3. Major Conventions Regarding Living Resources:**

#### **Marine Living Resources**

Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), Canberra, 1980

International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), Rio de Janeiro, 1966

International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW), Washington, 1946

## **Nature Conservation and Terrestrial Living Resources**

Antarctic Treaty, Washington, D.C., 1959

Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention), Paris, 1972

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Nairobi, 1992

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), Bonn, 1979

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Washington, D.C., 1973

Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention), Ramsar, 1971

Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD), Paris 1994

FAO International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources, Rome, 1983

International Tropical Timber Agreement, 1994 (ITTA, 1994), Geneva, 1994

## **Freshwater Resources**

Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, Helsinki, 1992

## **4. Major Conventions Regarding Nuclear Safety:**

Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency (Assistance Convention), Vienna, 1986

Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident (Notification Convention), Vienna, 1986

Convention on Nuclear Safety, Vienna, 1994

Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage, Vienna, 1963

## **5. Major Intergovernmental Organizations**

Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)

European Union (EU): Environment

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

International Labour Organization (ILO)

International Maritime Organization (IMO)

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC Funds)

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Environment Policy Committee (EPOC)

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

World Bank

World Food Programme (WFP)

World Health Organization (WHO)

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

World Trade Organization (WTO)

## **6. Major Non-Governmental Organizations**

Atmosphere Action Network East Asia (AANE)

Climate Action Network (CAN)

Consumers International (CI)

Earth Council

Earthwatch Institute

Environmental Liaison Centre International (ELCI)

European Environmental Bureau (EEB)

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

Friends of the Earth International (FoEI)

Greenpeace International

International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)

International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)

International Solar Energy Society (ISES)

IUCN-The World Conservation Union

Pesticide Action Network (PAN)

Sierra Club

Society for International Development (SID)

Third World Network (TWN)

Water Environment Federation (WEF)

Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)

World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)

World Federalist Movement (WFM)

World Resources Institute (WRI)

World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF)

### **7. Other Networking Instruments**

Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED)

Global Legislators for a Balanced Environment (GLOBE)

Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)

United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS)



# Appendices

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#### **Methodology Note for Demographic Data:**

The demographic numbers for cities and national populations listed in CountryWatch content are derived from the Geoba.se website, which analyzes data from the World Bank. The current demographic numbers displayed on the Countrywatch website are reflective of the latest available estimates.

The demographic information for language, ethnicity and religion listed in CountryWatch content is

derived from a mix of sources including the Altapedia, Central Intelligence Agency Factbook, Infoplease, and State Department Background Notes.

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Methodology Notes for Economic Data:

Estimates by CountryWatch.com of GDP in dollars in most countries are made by converting local currency GDP data from the International Monetary Fund World Economic Outlook to US dollars by market exchange rates estimated from the International Monetary Fund International Financial Statistics and projected out by the CountryWatch Macroeconomic Forecast. Real GDP was estimated by deflating current dollar values by the US GDP Implicit Price Deflator.

Exceptions to this method were used for:

- Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Nauru
- Cuba
- Palau
- Holy See
- San Marino
- Korea, North
- [Serbia](#) & Montenegro
- Liberia
- Somalia
- Liechtenstein
- Tonga
- Monaco
- Tuvalu

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#### Note on Edition Dates:

The earlier edition dates are noted above because they were used to formulate the original country reviews and serve as the baseline for some of the information covered. Later editions have been used in some cases, and are cited as such, while other more recent online resources (cited above) contain recent and ever-updated data sets used for research.

#### Methodology Notes for the HDI:

Since 1990, the United Nations Development Programme, in concert with organizations across the globe, has produced the [Human Development Index](#) (or HDI). According to the UNDP, the index measures average achievement in basic human development in one simple composite index, and produces from this index a ranking of countries. The HDI is a composite of three basic components of human development: longevity, knowledge and standard of living. Longevity is measured by life expectancy. Knowledge is measured by combination of adult literacy and mean

years of schooling. Standard of living is measured by purchasing power, based on real GDP per capita (in constant US\$) adjusted for differences in international living costs (or, purchasing power parity, PPP). While the index uses these social indicators to measure national performance with regard to human welfare and development, not all countries provide the same level of information for each component needed to compute the index; therefore, as in any composite indicator, the final index is predicated on projections, predictions and weighting schemes. The index is a static measure, and thus, an incomplete measure of human welfare. In fact, the UNDP says itself the concept of human development focuses on the ends rather than the means of development and progress, examining in this manner, the average condition of all people in a given country.

Specifically, the index is calculated by determining the maximum and minimum for each of the three components (as listed above) and then measuring where each country stands in relation to these scales-expressed as a value between 0 and 1. For example, the minimum adult literary rate is zero percent, the maximum is 100 percent, and the reading skills component of knowledge in the HDI for a country where the literacy rate is 75 percent would be 0.75. The scores of all indicators are then averaged into the overall index.

For a more extensive examination of human development, as well as the ranking tables for each participating country, please visit: <http://www.undp.org>

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Note: Some or all these news services have been used to research various sections of this Country Review.

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#### **Commentary**

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#### **Individual Works**

**Basic form, using an Internet protocol:**

Author/editor. *Title of Print Version of Work*. Edition statement (if given). Publication information (Place of publication: publisher, date), if given. *Title of Electronic Work*. Medium. Available Protocol (if applicable):Site/Path/File. Access date.

**Examples:**

Youngblood-Coleman, Denise. *Country Review: France*. 2003. Houston, Texas: CountryWatch Publications, 2003. *Country Review:France*. Online. Available URL : [http://www.countrywatch.com/cw\\_country.asp?vCOUNTRY=61](http://www.countrywatch.com/cw_country.asp?vCOUNTRY=61) October, 12, 2003.

Note:

This is the citation format used when the print version is not used in the reference.

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Note:

This is the citation format used when the print version is not used in the reference.

***For further source citation information, please email:*** editor@countrywatch.com or education@countrywatch.com.

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