

Djibouti



Background:

The French Territory of the Afars and the Issas became Djibouti in 1977. Hassan Gouled APTIDON installed an authoritarian one-party state and proceeded to serve as president until 1999. Unrest among the Afars minority during the 1990s led to a civil war that ended in 2001 following the conclusion of a peace accord between Afar rebels and the Issa-dominated government. Djibouti's first multi-party presidential elections in 1999 resulted in the election of Ismail Omar GUELLEH. Djibouti occupies a very strategic geographic location at the mouth of the Red Sea and serves as an important transshipment location for goods entering and leaving the east African highlands. The present leadership favors close ties to France, which maintains a significant military presence in the country, but has also developed increasingly stronger ties with the United States in recent years. Djibouti currently hosts the only United States military base in sub-Saharan Africa and is a front-line state in the global war on terrorism.

Geography Djibouti

Location:

Eastern Africa, bordering the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, between Eritrea and Somalia

Area:

total: 23,000 sq km

land: 22,980 sq km

water: 20 sq km

Coastline:

314 km

Climate:

desert; torrid, dry

Terrain:

coastal plain and plateau separated by central mountains

Natural resources:

geothermal areas, gold, clay, granite, limestone, marble, salt, diatomite, gypsum, pumice, petroleum

Environment - current issues:

inadequate supplies of potable water; limited arable land; desertification; endangered species

People Djibouti**Population:**

476,703

Population growth rate:

2.06% (2005 est.)

Net migration rate:

0 migrant(s)/1,000 population

Languages:

French (official), Arabic (official), Somali, Afar

Government Djibouti**Country name:**

conventional long form: Republic of Djibouti

Government type:

republic

Capital:

Djibouti

Independence:

27 June 1977 (from France)

Legal system:

based on French civil law system, traditional practices, and Islamic law

Executive branch:

chief of state: President Ismail Omar GUELLEH

International organization participation:

ACCT, ACP, AfDB, AFESD, AMF, AU, FAO, G-77, IBRD, ICAO, ICCT, ICFTU, ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, IGAD, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, ITU, LAS, NAM, OIC, OPCW (signatory), UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WToO, WTO

Economy Djibouti**Economy - overview:**

The economy is based on service activities connected with the country's strategic location and status as a free trade zone in northeast Africa. Two-thirds of the inhabitants live in the capital city, the remainder are mostly nomadic herders. Scanty rainfall limits crop production to fruits and vegetables, and most food must be imported. Djibouti provides services as both a transit port for the region and an international transshipment and refueling center. Djibouti has few natural resources and little industry. The nation is, therefore, heavily dependent on foreign assistance to help support its balance of payments and to finance development projects. An unemployment rate of at least 50% continues to be a major problem. While inflation is not a concern, due to the fixed tie of the Djiboutian franc to the US dollar, the artificially high value of the Djiboutian franc adversely affects Djibouti's balance of payments. Per capita consumption dropped an estimated

35% over the last seven years because of recession, civil war, and a high population growth rate (including immigrants and refugees). Faced with a multitude of economic difficulties, the government has fallen in arrears on long-term external debt and has been struggling to meet the stipulations of foreign aid donors.

GDP:

purchasing power parity - \$619 million

GDP - real growth rate:

3.5% (2002 est.)

GDP - per capita:

purchasing power parity - \$1,300

GDP - composition by sector:

agriculture: 3.5%

industry: 15.8%

services: 80.7%

Population below poverty line:

50%

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

2%

Labor force:

282,000

Unemployment rate:

50%

Budget:

revenues: \$135 million

expenditures: \$182 million, including capital expenditures of NA

Agriculture - products:

fruits, vegetables; goats, sheep, camels, animal hides

Industries:

construction, agricultural processing, salt

Oil - production:

0 bbl/day

Oil - consumption:

11,300 bbl/day

Exports:

\$155 million f.o.b.

Exports - commodities:

reexports, hides and skins, coffee (in transit)

Exports - partners:

Somalia 63.9%, Yemen 22.6%, Ethiopia 5%

Imports:

\$665 million f.o.b.

Imports - commodities:

foods, beverages, transport equipment, chemicals, petroleum products

Imports - partners:

Saudi Arabia 21%, Ethiopia 9.9%, India 8.2%, China 7.8%, US 6.1%, France 6%

Currency:

Djiboutian franc (DJF)

Exchange rates:

Djiboutian francs per US dollar - 177.72 (2004), 177.72 (2003), 177.72 (2002), 177.72 (2001), 177.72 (2000)

Railways:

total: 100 km (Djibouti segment of the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway)

narrow gauge: 100 km 1.000-m gauge

note: railway under joint control of Djibouti and Ethiopia

Highways:

total: 2,890 km

paved: 364 km

unpaved: 2,526 km

Ports and harbors:

Djibouti

Merchant marine:

total: 1 ships (1,000 GRT or over) 1,369 GRT/3,030 DWT

by type: cargo 1

Airports: 13