

Guinea-Bissau

KEY FACTS

Official name: República da Guiné-Bissau (Republic of Guinea-Bissau)

Head of State: Transitional president Manuel Serifo Nhamadjo (from 11 May 2012)

Head of government: Transitional Prime Minister Rui Duarte de Barros (from 11 May 2012)

Ruling party: National Transitional Council (NTC), of military officers, deposed the coalition government led by Partido Africano da Independência de Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC) (African Independence Party of Guinea and Cape Verde) on 12 April 2012

Area: 36,125 square km

Population: 1.58 million (2012)*

Capital: Bissau

Official language: Portuguese

Currency: CFA franc (CFAf) = 100 centimes (Communauté Financière Africaine (African Financial Community) franc).

Exchange rate: CFAf495.02 per US\$ (Jul 2013); CFAf655.95 per euro (pegged from Jan 1999)

GDP per capita: US\$551 (2012)*

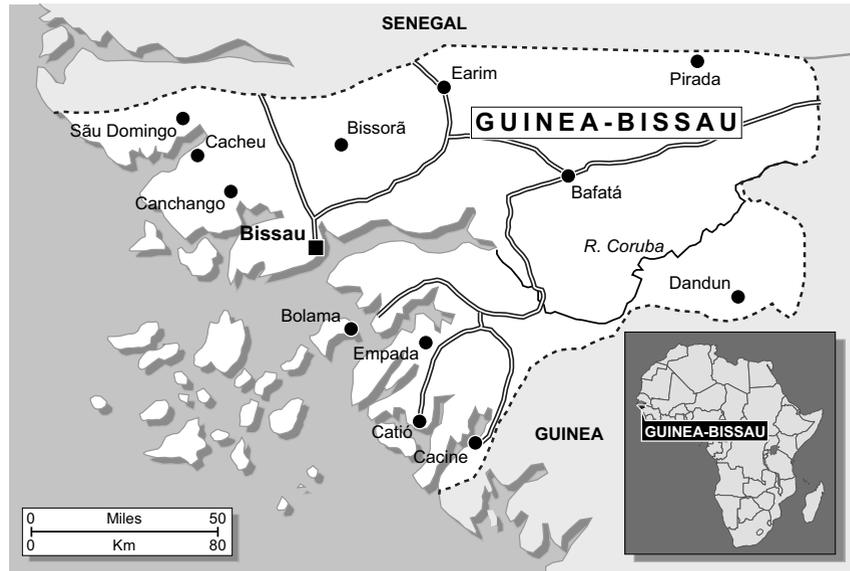
GDP real growth: -1.45% (2012)*

GDP: US\$870.00 million (2012)*

Inflation: 2.22% (2012)*

Balance of trade: -US\$69.97 million (2010)

* estimated figure



Guinea-Bissau's economy is mainly agricultural and dominated by cashew-nut cash crops, its chief source of foreign exchange. The *African Economic Outlook 2013* (AEO), published jointly by the African Development Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, points out it is not very diversified and industrial processing is very basic. There are known deposits of minerals and oil, but their exploitation has been a tale of missed opportunities. Except for quarries and a few small alluvial gold mining operations few deposits have been exploited. Potentially large reserves of bauxite and phosphates were discovered in the 1970s but have never been mined for lack of infrastructure, and because of low world prices and persistent political instability. In recent years, however, mining concessions have been granted for bauxite (2007) and phosphates (1997).

Phosphate reserves were discovered in 1978 by a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) survey, and pre-viability studies seven years later by the firm Sofremines confirmed their presence at Farim, in the north. Exploration in 1997 by a Canadian firm, Champion, showed an estimated 100 million tonnes of

high-grade clay and 400 million tonnes of low-grade limestone, but government efforts since then to sign national or international contracts to mine these reserves have not been very successful due to systematic violation of contracts and social and political unrest since 1998. High-grade mineral extraction could last some 40 years and lower-grade minerals 200 years.

Bauxite was found by the Dutch in the early 1950s and then by the Soviet Union in the late 1970s. Five reserves were discovered at Boé, in the south-west, and surveys showed reserves of 113 million tonnes (44.9 per cent of which of alumina and 3.7 per cent of silica). Little progress was made in mining until 2007, when the government signed a concession with the Angolan firm Bauxite Angola, which announced it would invest US\$321 million in the region, including US\$200 million for roads and ports before it began operations. The mine is owned by Bauxite Angola (70 per cent), the Angolan government (20 per cent) and Guinea-Bissau (10 per cent). After the April 2012 coup, work stopped and the parties are renegotiating how to share the resources.

The opening of these two mining centres (Farim and Boé) could have

significant effects on the country's economy. Even if 86 per cent of the goods and services needed come from abroad, the projects could generate 20,000 direct jobs, in addition to the spinoffs linked to upgrading the related infrastructure, and produce annual tax revenue of US\$40 million, according to the World Bank. The country could count on US\$70–80 million in export earnings (equivalent to 60–70 per cent of current exports) and a GDP volume increase from US\$90 million to US\$170 million (or from 11 per cent to 21 per cent of estimated 2010 GDP).

Oil has been discovered in several places offshore, but no assessment of its commercial viability has been announced. The north and south of the country could also have oil reserves, shared with neighbouring Senegal. Several oil firms, including Italy's Eni, Britain's Sterling Energy and Malaysia's Marmore, have test-bored in the north. Large reserves of oil have been found, but more tests are needed to determine their commercial worth before they are exploited. Several foreign companies have become involved in the oil sector in recent years through joint ventures with the local firm Petroquim. Some industry experts think Guinea-Bissau could produce between 30,000 and 60,000 barrels a day.

Instability and lack of political will mostly account for delays in developing all Guinea-Bissau's mineral resources. Political stability, a strategic vision, strong institutions and viable programmes are needed to develop the sector better and ensure social and economic benefits for the country.

In the late 1980s, the government launched a programme that set up an institutional framework with the directorate of geology and mining (DGGM), provided an inventory of 12 minerals, produced a mining policy and trained local managers. The government also instituted an environmental-impact assessment body the Cellule d'évaluation de l'impact environnemental – initially under the prime minister but then transferred to the environment ministry – to require or conduct impact studies previous to any prospection or mining. Its structure is however flimsy. Neither does civil society play much of a role, though it did demand that the government halt operations at the Saliquinhé (Farim) phosphate mine until measures were taken to protect local inhabitants and offer them resettlement.

A law governing mining, quarrying, oil and oil derivatives was recently passed, and the authorities say they also want to

work with the Extractive Industries for Transparency Initiative (EITI) to improve good practices and management in the sector. Recommendations have also been made to set up a mining fund, boost tax collection from mining companies, continue development of the Boé bauxite reserves jointly with neighbouring Guinea, develop mineral resources for construction (quartzite and dolerite) and continue prospecting for diamonds and gold. Unfortunately, political instability has so far prevented all this.

Economy

Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and live-stock contributed 45.1 per cent of GDP in 2012. The secondary sector, which includes extractive industries, manufacturing and crafts, electricity, gas and water, as well as construction, accounted for 12.4 per cent, and the tertiary sector, mainly commerce, 42.5 per cent.

Agriculture and fisheries, which employ about 72.4 per cent of the working population, are little developed and mainly use rudimentary technology, according to the 2010 Inquérito Ligeiro para Avaliação de Pobreza (ILAP 2) (Light Inquiry Assessment of Poverty). Mining and tourism are promising sectors, but government efforts since 1997 to sign contracts with foreign and local firms to develop them have made little progress due to systematic contract violation by the firms, weak legal institutions and, since 1998, social and political unrest.

Agriculture has great potential because of the climate and soil, mostly with cash crops (cashews, groundnuts and cotton), fruit, vegetables and tubers. The country

also has more than 300,000 hectares of land suitable for rice-growing, but remains dependent on food imports for having insufficiently developed these resources. Rice production in 2010 only met half the country's needs. The economy is not very diversified and relies mainly on cashew nuts, which in 2012 were 87.7 per cent – CFAf74.3 billion (US\$15 million) – of total exports of CFAf84.7 billion (US\$17 million).

The agriculture ministry has reported a good 2012/13 harvest, with, compared to the previous season, 15.3 per cent higher gross cereals output of an estimated 248,781 tonnes (net production is expected to be 161,837 tonnes). Local markets are well stocked with food staples such as rice, sugar, wheat flour and cooking oil, but the very poor have difficult access to food because of low incomes and high prices throughout the country.

The economy shrank an estimated 1.5 per cent in 2012 (after expanding 5.3 per cent in 2011), mainly due to lower production and exports of cashew nuts, which account for some 30 per cent of the primary sector. The average price of cashews fell from US\$1,350 per tonne in 2011 to US\$1,081 in 2012. Suspension of a large part of foreign aid also reduced the level of investment.

Outlook

The social situation is still precarious. Guinea-Bissau has a very low score (0.364) on the worldwide Human Development Index (HDI) and ranks 176 out of 185 countries surveyed in the 2013 report. Per capita GDP was US\$614 in 2010, and more than two-thirds of the population

KEY INDICATORS		Guinea-Bissau				
	Unit	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Population	m	*1.58	*1.61	*1.65	*1.68	*1.58
Gross domestic product (GDP)	US\$bn	0.73	0.83	0.84	0.97	*0.87
GDP per capita	US\$	583	562	551	629	*551
GDP real growth	%	3.2	3.0	3.5	5.3	*-1.5
Inflation	%	10.4	-1.6	1.1	5.4	*2.2
Exports (fob) (goods)	US\$m	128.1	121.6	126.6	–	–
Imports (fob) (goods)	US\$m	198.8	202.3	196.6	–	–
Balance of trade	US\$m	-70.7	-80.7	-70.0	–	–
Current account	US\$m	-41.1	-53.1	-56.0	-61.5	*-53.0
Total reserves minus gold	US\$m	124.4	168.6	156.4	183.0	*164.6
Foreign exchange	US\$m	124.3	149.8	137.2	163.1	*145.5
Exchange rate	per US\$	418.59	472.19	495.28	466.82	*505.65
* estimated figure						

was living on less than US\$2 a day and 33 per cent on less than one dollar a day. The country showed an HDI average annual growth between 2000 and 2010 of 0.9 per cent, compared with 2.1 per cent for sub-Saharan Africa and 1.68 per cent for very low-ranking countries. This bad score was due to widespread poverty, very low incomes because of lack of jobs and a life expectancy of only 48.6 years aggravated by difficult access to good healthcare.

Prospects for 2013 very much depend on the social and political climate, especially on presidential and parliamentary elections to be held during the year. However, as of the end of October 2013 preparations for the 24 November general and presidential elections were minimal and it seemed highly likely that would be postponed, again.

Economic activity should be driven by the primary sector provided that sales of cashews are good, with expected 5 per cent higher production as well as export of stocks remaining from the 2012 harvest. Gradual resumption of public projects funded by the country's development partners should also help and growth is projected at 4.2 per cent in 2013 and 3.5 per cent in 2014.

Risk assessment

Politics	Bad
Economy	Poor
Regional stability	Poor

COUNTRY PROFILE

Historical profile

1400s Until Portuguese traders first came to Guinea-Bissau, the country was part of the Mali Empire. It was administered as part of the Portuguese Cape Verde Islands, the Guinea area was important in the slave-trade.

1879 Guinea became a separate colony.
1951 Guinea declared a province of Portugal.

1915 The Portuguese had colonised only the coastal regions until the nineteenth century but finally gained control of the interior. Unlike its other colonies, Portugal made little attempt to develop the then Portuguese Guinea.

1956 The liberation movement, Partido Africano da Independência de Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC) (African Independence Party of Guinea and Cape Verde), was founded by Amilcar Cabral.

1973 Amilcar Cabral was assassinated. PAIGC, which controlled much of the interior of the country, announced a unilateral declaration of independence. PAIGC dropped the name Portuguese from the

country's name in favour of Guinea-Bissau.

1974 Portugal had long refused to relinquish power, extending Africa's longest war of independence, but it was finally granted after a *coup d'état* deposed the Portuguese prime minister, Marcello Caetano, in Lisbon, Portugal. Luis Cabral, (brother of the PAIGC founder, Amilcar Cabral), became president.

1980 PAIGC was committed to the unification of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, but this aim was dropped when President Cabral was removed and replaced by his prime minister, João Bernardo Vieira (Nino).

1990 Parliament revoked the PAIGC sole legitimate party status.

1994 Vieira was elected president in the first free elections and PAIGC won the parliamentary elections.

1997 Formal entry to the Communauté Financière Africaine when the CFA franc replaced the peso as national currency.

1998 A civil war began. General Ansumane Mane attempted a coup against Vieira following an army uprising, when Vieira had tried to sack the general for smuggling arms into the neighbouring Senegalese province of Casamance. Senegalese and Guinea troops supported the government and after a month of fighting a cease-fire was agreed.

1999 Ecowas forces arrived to keep the peace, but fighting broke out again and President Vieira was ousted. Malam Bacai Sanhá became interim president. The Partido para a Renovação Social (PRS) (Party for Social Renewal) won the parliamentary elections.

2000 Kumba lalá (Yala), leader of the PRS, was elected president.

2003 President Kumba lalá was deposed in a bloodless coup.

2004 The opposition PAIGC won the parliamentary elections and Carlos Domingos Gomes Júnior (Carlos Gomes) was sworn in as prime minister.

2005 Former military leader and deposed president, João Bernardo 'Nino' Vieira, won presidential elections and almost immediately sacked Prime Minister Carlos Gomes; Aristides Gomes (no relation) was named as prime minister.

2006 The World Bank suspended a US\$15 million funding for infrastructure, due to a lack of transparency in contracts.

2007 Prime Minister Aristides Gomes resigned, following a no-confidence vote in the legislature. Martinho Ndafo Kabi took office as prime minister. A law was enacted that guaranteed amnesty to the perpetrators of violence committed between 1980–2004 during the period of political unrest.

2008 The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) declared Guinea-Bissau as the

new hub for drugs from South America for onward distribution into Europe. The president appointed Carlos Correia as prime minister. The ruling PAIGC won 49.8 per cent of the votes (67 seats out of 100) in elections. President Vieira survived an attack by mutinous soldiers on his family compound. He appointed Carlos Gomes as prime minister.

2009 President João Bernardo Vieira was shot dead by soldiers loyal to the Army Chief of Staff, General Tagme Na Waie, who had been killed hours earlier in a bomb blast. Raimundo Pereira was sworn-in as acting president. Former president Luis Cabral died in Portugal; he had been the first post-independence president in 1974. Malam Bacai Sanhá won the runoff presidential election with 63.31 per cent of the vote. EU observers declared the polling as 'calm and orderly'.

2010 The prime minister was detained briefly by soldiers during a failed coup. The EU decided to end its security mission, which had been set up in 2008 to fund defence and security and sector reform (SSR) of the defence and police forces as well as the judiciary. Political instability and the deteriorating standards of law and order were cited as the reasons to end the mission following the appointment of one of the failed coup leaders, General Antonio Indjai, as head of the army. Head of the air force, Ibraima Papa Camara and former naval chief, Jose Americo Bubo Na Tchuto, were named by the US as 'drug kingpins'; their assets in the US were frozen and they were put on a US list of people with whom US citizens may not do business.

2011 In May the Paris Club of international creditors cancelled US\$256 million in debt, as a result of government efforts in tackling poverty and boosting growth. A further US\$27 million of bilateral debt was also waived. Following agreements with donor countries to provide the funds, military pensions will be paid from September. The income is considered important in deterring military coups and uprisings. When President Malam Bacai Sanhá became unwell Raimundo Pereira became interim president between in September.

2012 President Malam Bacai Sanhá died in Paris on 9 January, where he had been receiving treatment. Under the constitution, the leader of the National People's Assembly became interim president when the president is incapacitated. The opposition coalition rejected Pereira's interim presidency; despite this, Pereira remained in office. Prime Minister Júnior resigned on 10 February, to become a presidential candidate; Adiatio Djaló Nandigna became acting prime minister. The first round of the presidential election was

held on 18 March, with nine candidates in contention. Former prime minister Carlos Gomes Júnior (PAIGC) won 48.97 per cent, Kumba Ialá (PRS) 23.36 per cent and Manuel Serifo Nhamadjo 15.74 per cent. A runoff was scheduled for 22 April. On 23 March, former president, Kumba Ialá announced that he would boycott the presidential runoff, due to what he claimed was the unfairness of the first round and that a new voter registration list must be produced before he would participate. Foreign electoral observers had declared that voting in the first round had been largely free and fair. On 12 April, a *coup d'état*, led by General Mamadu Ture Kuruma, deposed interim president Pereira. On 17 April, the African Union suspended Guinea-Bissau's membership. On 16 April the military junta proposed all institutions be dissolved in favour of a National Transitional Council (NTC), until democratic power could be re-established (later determined to be in 2014) and the scheduled presidential run-off was cancelled. While most political parties were invited to participate in the NTC, PAIGC was specifically excluded. Of the 35 political parties that form the opposition, leaders of 22 of them agreed to join the NTC. The junta leaders claimed they had presidential candidates Carlos Gomes and Kumba Yala in custody. On 19 April Manuel Serifo Nhamadjo (who was defeated when he came third in the presidential elections) was named transitional president. On 20 April several organisations, including Ecowas, the World Bank and the African Development Bank, condemned the appointment of Nhamadjo as 'illegal'. They also suspended financial aid, worth millions of US dollars. On 20 April, Manuel Serifo Nhamadjo rejected his appointment as transitional president, saying he had not been consulted before the announcement by coup leaders. Ecowas imposed sanctions on 30 April that specifically targeted the military junta, following the breakdown in talks with the coup leaders. On 3 May, the EU imposed its own sanctions of the junta. On 11 May Manuel Serifo Nhamadjo finally accepted his nomination as transitional president for one year. On 11 May Rui Duarte de Barros took office as transitional prime minister. On 17 May, the first allocation of 70 troops of the AU arrived as part of a planned deployment to help provide stability; another 600 troops were expected to arrive within a few days. On 11 July, the UN warned that since the coup, Guinea-Bissau was open to 'connections between elements of the military and drug traffickers' and a culture of impunity was hindering law enforcement. It also called for a resumption of democratic rule.

2013 A slump in cashew nut prices for the 2012 harvest left nearly half of the population severely short of cash and having to resort to selling livestock in order to survive until the next harvest in September.

Political structure

Constitution

The 1984 constitution has been revised five times. The 1999 amendment reserves the highest posts in the country for 'native Bissau-Guineans'.

Independence date

24 September 1973 (proclaimed unilaterally); 10 September 1974 (de jure from Portugal).

Form of state

Unitary republic

The executive

Executive power rests with the president, who is the head of state and serves a five-year term. The president appoints the prime minister, who presides over the Council of Ministers.

National legislature

The unicameral Assembleia Nacional Popular (National People's Assembly) has 102 members of which 100 are elected by proportional representation by party lists; two seats are reserved for expatriate citizens. All members serve for five-year terms.

Legal system

The legal system is based on the 1984 constitution, revised in 1993.

Last elections

18 March and 22 April 2012 (presidential, first round and runoff); 16 November 2008 (parliament) *A coup d'état on 12 April 2012 deposed the president and elected government.*

Results: Presidential (first round): Carlos Gomes Júnior (PAIGC) won 48.97 per cent of the vote, Kumba Ialá (PRS) 23.36 per cent, Manuel Serifo Nhamadjo 15.74 per cent, Henrique Pereira Rosa 5.4 per cent, Baciro Djá 3.26 per cent; four other candidates each won less than 2 per cent. Turnout was around 55 per cent.

Parliamentary: Partido Africano da Independência de Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC) (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde) won 49.8 per cent of the votes (67 seats out of 100), the Partido para a Renovação Social (PRS) (Party for Social Renewal) 25.3 per cent (28), the Partido Republicano para Independência e Desenvolvimento (Prid) (Republican Party for Independence and Development) 7.5 per cent (3), the Partido da Nova Democracia (PND) (New Democracy Party) 2.3 per cent (1) and the Aliança Democrática (AD) (Democratic Alliance) 1.4 per cent (1); no other party won parliamentary seats. Turnout was about 82 per cent.

Next elections

2012 (parliament) *postponed due to coup*; 2017 (presidential)

Political parties

Ruling party

National Transitional Council (NTC), of military officers, deposed the coalition government led by Partido Africano da Independência de Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC) (African Independence Party of Guinea and Cape Verde) on 12 April 2012

Main opposition party

Partido Unido Social Democrático (PUSD) (United Social Democratic Party)

Population

1.58 million (2012)*

Approximately 44 per cent of the total population is under 15 years.

Last census: December 1991: 983,367

Population density: 31 inhabitants per square km. Urban population 30 per cent (2010 Unicef).

Annual growth rate: 2.0 per cent, 1990–2010 (Unicef).

Ethnic make-up

Balanta (30 per cent), Fula (20 per cent), Manjaca (14 per cent), Mandinga 13 per cent, Papel 7 per cent.

Religions

Some 65 per cent of the population are animist, 30 per cent Muslim and 5 per cent Christian.

Education

Literacy rate: 59 per cent, total; 26.2 per cent female adult rates (World Bank).

Health

Improved water sources are available to 49 per cent of the population.

HIV/Aids

HIV prevalence: 2.8 per cent (UNAIDS estimate 2004)

Life expectancy: 47 years, 2004 (WHO 2006)

Fertility rate/Maternal mortality rate:

5.1 births per woman, 2010 (Unicef); maternal mortality 910 deaths per 100,000 live births (World Bank).

Child (under 5 years) mortality rate

(per 1,000): 129 per 1,000 live births (WHO 2012)

Head of population per physician: 0.12 physicians per 1,000 people, 2004 (WHO 2006)

Main cities

Bissau (capital, estimated population 419,004 in 2012), Gabú (38,998), Bafatá (36,086), Canchungo (17,167), Farim (10,502).

Languages spoken

Crioulo (a hybrid of medieval Portuguese and local words) is the common language. Balanta, Bijago and Fulani are also spoken. French is more widely

spoken than English. All correspondence and documentation should be in Portuguese and French.

Official language/s
Portuguese

Media

Despite the constitution guaranteeing freedom of the press, the government has not always respected this and journalists are known to practice self-censorship. Journalists that have reported on drug trafficking have been subject to harassment.

The small and weak media scene is hampered by the country's financial constraints.

Press

Newspaper and magazines include *No Pintcha*, *Correio de Bissau Fraskera* and *Banobero*.

Broadcasting

The state-owned Radio Televisao de Guinea-Bissau (RTGB) is the public broadcaster.

Radio: RTGB operates the only Radiodifusão Nacional public radio station. International radio is provided by RTP in Portuguese and RFI in French. Private radio stations include Radio Pidjiquiti, Bombolom FM both very popular and Voice of Quelele.

Television: The state-owned RTGB broadcasts locally. RTP Africa (www1.rtp.pt) is funded by Portugal, with donated equipment, but managed locally by Bissau-Guineans.

National news agency: ABMP (Agência Bissau Media e Publicações)

Other news agencies: Bissau Digital: www.bissaudigital.com

Guine-Bissau: www.guine-bissau.com

Economy

Guinea-Bissau is one of the poorest countries in the world with an economy heavily dependent on foreign aid. The main economic activity is farming – crops include cashew nuts, peanuts, rice and palm kernels. Although fishing is another component of the economy, very little is undertaken by domestic fishermen, but rather fishing rights are licensed to foreign trawlers.

GDP growth was 3 per cent in 2009, down from 3.2 per cent in 2008, growing by 3.5 per cent in 2010. Exports of cashew nuts doubled over 2006–10, from around 54,000 tonnes to a some 109,000 tonnes, at the same time as global prices were rising. This was despite the sudden fall in sales in 2009 as the global economic crisis cut trade. However, much of the revenue benefit from increased exports was offset by increased commodity import prices, particularly petroleum and foodstuffs. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) stated in its 2010

report that Guinea-Bissau's very low revenue collection, at 9 per cent of GDP (the lowest of all sub-Saharan countries), was the 'root cause' of its fiscal imbalance and that with a support programme Guinea-Bissau should be able to increase its collections. By 2011 tax revenue was projected to have grown by three percentage points. GDP grew by a projected 5.3 per cent in 2011 as the volume of exports grew by 34.1 per cent and the value of exports grew by 106.6 per cent (year-on-year).

The IMF considered the efforts undertaken by the government to manage the economy, including an economic programme supported by a three-year extended credit facility (ECF), were enough to qualify for debt relief of US\$1.2 billion under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. The Paris Club of creditors also agreed to forgive nearly all of its claims. By the end of 2011, Guinea-Bissau's external debt amounted to US\$173.7 million (17.5 per cent of GDP).

In 2011, the UN Human Development Index (HDI) ranked Guinea-Bissau 176 (out of 187) for national development in health, education and income. Since 2000, Guinea-Bissau has hardly progressed and has not matched the improvement of other sub-Saharan countries. Remittance from migrant workers amounted to US\$49 million (5 per cent of GDP) in 2010 and was estimated to have reached US\$52 million in 2011. The informal economy has been estimated as larger than the formal market, with remittances providing families with vital, focused income that may represent their only tangible means of livelihood. The military conflict of 1998–99, which damaged the infrastructure, still impacts on production, but has been eased through internationally backed projects of repair and expansion. Investment in energy has also aided growth.

External trade

Guinea-Bissau is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas), and is also a member of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) using the common currency, the CFA franc.

Guinea-Bissau has a large trade deficit and heavy dependence on foreign aid and credits.

Imports

Principal imports are fuel and energy, foodstuffs, transport equipment, capital goods.

Main sources: Portugal (typically 17 per cent of total), Senegal (14 per cent), The Netherlands (9 per cent).

Exports

Principal exports are agricultural produce such as cashew nuts, shrimp (prawns), peanuts, palm kernels and sawn timber. Fish is harvested by foreign trawlers, who pay for fishing rights.

Main destinations: India (typically 62 per cent of total), Nigeria (31 per cent), Portugal (2 per cent).

Agriculture

Only 9 per cent of total area is cultivated; inland areas are largely savannah, coastal areas are forest and mangrove swamps. Nevertheless, the agricultural sector (including fishing) is the principal economic activity, accounting for around 60 per cent of GDP and over 70 per cent of total export earnings and employing 70 per cent of the workforce.

There are chronic food shortages, despite the emphasis on food self-sufficiency and co-operative farming.

The main food crop is paddy rice (19 per cent of cultivated land); other food crops include millet, sorghum, plantains, root crops, some maize and groundnuts.

Guinea-Bissau is one of the world's largest producers of cashew nuts. Other cash crops include palm kernels, coconuts, tobacco, sugar.

In mid-2013 aid groups were reporting that a slump in cashew nut prices in 2012 had left nearly half of the population having to sell livestock in order to survive until the 2013 harvest in September.

The fishing sector is important. Exports of fish and shellfish are expected to increase as the country's large marine resources are exploited. The European Development Fund gave US\$35 million in aid to develop the fishing industry, including an ice-making plant. Fish worth between US\$300–600 million are caught in the waters each year, but value added production on-shore is minimal.

More investment is needed to refurbish the main port, damaged during the civil war, to enable fish processing for export to Europe or to neighbouring countries for processing and re-export.

Industry and manufacturing

The industrial sector contributes around 12 per cent to GDP and employs 10 per cent of the workforce. Production is mostly agri-related: processing groundnuts, fish processing, rice dehusking, sugar refining. There is also a large brewery plant, a small Citroën assembly plant, brick making and textile industries. Since the end of the civil war, there has been a drive to modernise transport facilities.

Tourism

The country has two distinct tourist destinations to offer visitors – the archipelago islands of the capital Bissau offering

coastal and marine holidays, and the remainder of the country, on the mainland of Africa, with its typical offerings of wild-life and traditional cultural sites to visit. The government has recognised tourism as a growth industry and has called for capital investment in a dozen proposed enterprises. Among others they include 15 tourist zones throughout the country, national parks and reserves, sport and fishing tourism, conference facilities and hotels, a cruise ship port on Bubaque (one of the Bijagós islands) and a resort project in Saltinho.

To gain fully from the improvement tourism can provide, the level of infrastructure must also improve, with development of local roads, an upgrade of the international airport and development of internet facilities.

Recently news that South American drug cartels have moved into poor West African states to smuggle drugs into Western countries has tarnished Guinea-Bissau's reputation. The government may have to show its determination to deal with this growing problem or see legitimate tourism replaced by illegal drug trafficking as the main source of national income.

Mining

There are some 200 million tonnes of bauxite reserves in the region of Boé, but exploration costs are too high to justify extraction. There are also known deposits of phosphate near Farim, as well as gold and possibly diamonds. The main barrier to investment in the mining sector is the country's poor infrastructure.

Test drilling at the Farim phosphate deposit indicated it was commercially viable with high phosphate recovery rates (84.1 per cent).

Hydrocarbons

There are no known commercially viable oil reserves although exploration is ongoing. Consumption of oil was 3,000 barrels per day in 2008, all of which was imported.

The state-owned PetroGuin (formerly called Petrominas) is the national oil company, which controls downstream facilities.

Neither natural gas nor coal are produced, any imports are commercially negligible.

Energy

Total installed generating capacity was 21MW in 2007, producing 6 billion kilowatt hours. Only 2.6 per cent of the population has access to electricity. Energy particularly in rural areas is mainly derived from charcoal and wood.

In June 2008 the UN reported on the condition of the parastatal utility Electricidade e Águas de Guiné-Bissau

(EAGB) (Electricity and Water Company of Guinea-Bissau), in which it described the energy crisis as acute and reported that the lack of investment in the energy sector had caused a serious bottleneck in socio-economic recovery. EAGB is chronically under-funded and the UN provided emergency assistance to the energy sector by providing three 850KW and two 1.5MW generators for the capital; these replaced existing generators, so no additional energy was created.

The World Bank and the West African Development Bank is supporting the EAGB in restructuring and developing the sector with loans of US\$20 million and US\$5 million respectively. Integration with the West African Power Pool (WAPP), operated by the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas), and the Gambia River Development Organisation project is expected to enhance EAGB's longer term prospects. Further aid from the EU was committed in 2009.

Financial markets

Stock exchange

Afribourse (Bourse Régionale des Valeurs Mobilières) (BRVM)

Banking and insurance

Central bank

Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest

Main financial centre

Bissau

Time

GMT

Geography

Guinea-Bissau lies on the west coast of Africa, with Senegal to the north and Guinea to the east and south. The terrain is mainly low coastal plain with thick forest and mangrove swamps, rising to hills in the east, where savannah prevails; the highest elevation is approximately 300 metres. Guinea-Bissau also includes Bolama island and the Bijagós archipelago of 15 main islands, lying over 40km out in the Atlantic Ocean.

Hemisphere

Northern.

Climate

Tropical with rainy season from mid-May to November and dry season from December–April. Average temperatures range from 20–38 degrees Celsius (C) in April–May, and from 15–33 degrees C in December–January. High humidity from July–September.

Entry requirements

Passports

Required by all, valid for six months.

Visa

Required by all, except nationals of Ecowas countries for stay of one month.

Applications for business visas should include a letter from the visitor's company accepting responsibility for any expenses incurred, and a full itinerary. For further details, contact the nearest embassy.

Currency advice/regulations

Import and export of local currency is prohibited. There is no restriction on the import of foreign currency, but amounts should be declared; export of foreign currency is allowed up to the declared amount.

Health (for visitors)

Medical facilities are limited.

Mandatory precautions

Yellow fever vaccination certificate.

Advisable precautions

Malaria prophylaxes are essential as risk exists throughout the country. Immunisations or booster shots are necessary for diphtheria, tetanus, polio, hepatitis A, typhoid and yellow fever. Vaccinations may be needed for hepatitis B, TB, meningitis and cholera. Rabies is a risk in rural areas.

Use only bottled or boiled water for drinks, washing teeth and making ice. Eat only well cooked meals, preferably served hot; vegetables should be cooked and fruit peeled. Avoid pork, salad and food from street vendors. A full first-aid kit would be useful.

Hotels

Accommodation is very limited and difficult to obtain at short notice. Reservations should be made well in advance, preferably through business contacts. Hotel tariffs are liable to change at short notice, therefore confirmation of booking is recommended.

Credit cards

Credit cards cannot be used.

Public holidays (national)

Fixed dates

1 Jan (New Year's Day), 20 Jan (Death of Amilcar Cabral), 8 Mar (Women's Day), 1 May (Labour Day), 3 Aug (Colonisation Martyrs' Day), 24 Sep (National Day), 14 Nov (Readjustment Movement Day), 25 Dec (Christmas Day).

Variable dates

Eid al Adha, Eid al Fitr

Islamic year 1435 (5 Nov 2013–24 Oct 2014):

The Islamic year contains 354 or 355 days, with the result that Muslim feasts advance by 10–12 days against the Gregorian calendar. Dates of feasts vary according to the sighting of the new moon, so cannot be forecast exactly.

Working hours

Banking

Mon–Fri: 0830–1430.

Business

Mon–Fri: 0830–1430.

Government

Mon–Fri: 0830–1430.

Shops

Mon–Fri: 0730–1230, 1430–1830.

Telecommunications

Telephone/fax

Communications are poor.

Mobile/cell phones

GSM 900 roaming facilities are available.

Getting there

Air

International airport/s: Bissau–Oswaldo Vieira Airport (OXB), 8km from city. Taxis and minibuses are available to take visitors to the city.

Airport tax: None.

Surface

Road: The road from Guinea is mostly paved; however, that which is not, from the border to Labé, gets boggy in the rainy season. Petrol is readily available only in the cities.

A 720-metre bridge over the Mansoa river has improved the traffic flow on the trans-African coastal road between Dakar, Senegal and Bissau.

Water: There are sea links between Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau.

Main port/s: Bissau

Getting about

National transport

Air: There are no mainland internal flights. Flights go between Bissau and Bubaque Island and a small plane flies to Orango Island from Bissau.

Road: Total road network is over 3,250km, of which about a third is all-weather.

Buses: Minibuses operate on the main roads.

Taxis: Long-distance taxis leave from the market square in Bissau.

Water: Boats serve most towns on the coast and up-river. Tickets available from the Guinémar Office.

City transport

Taxis: Taxis are available in Bissau and serve all main towns.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

The addresses listed below are a selection only. While World of Information makes every endeavour to check these addresses, we cannot guarantee that changes have not been made, especially to telephone numbers and area codes. We would welcome any corrections.

Telephone area codes

The international dialling code (IDD) for Guinea-Bissau is + 245 followed by subscriber's number.

Chambers of Commerce

Guini-Bissau Associação Comercial, Industrial e Agrícola, PO Box 88, Bissau (tel: 222-276).

Guini-Bissau Camara do Comercio, Industria e Agricultura, PO Box 361, Bissau (tel: 212-844; fax: 201-602).

Banking

Central bank

Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, Direction Nationale, Avenue Amilcar Cabral 124, PO Box 38, Bissau (tel: 215-548; fax: 201-305).

Stock exchange

Afribourse (Bourse Régionale des Valeurs Mobilières) (BRVM), www.brvm.org

Ministries

Ministry of Economy and Finance, Rua Justino Lopes 74A, Bissau (tel: 203-495; fax: 203-496).

Ministry of Finance, Avenue Domingos Ramos, Caixa Postal 67, Bissau (tel/fax: 201-037).

Ministry of Mines and Energy, Caixa Postal 387, Bissau.

Other useful addresses

Empresa Nacional de Comércio Geral, CP 5, Bissau (tel: 212-925).

Empresa Nacional de Pesquisas e Exploração Petrolíferas e Mineiras (Petrominas), 58 Rua Eduardo Mondlane, Bissau (tel: 212-279).

Guinea-Bissau Embassy (USA), 15929 Yukon Lane, Rockville MD 20855 (tel: (+1-202) 947-3958).

Guinémar Office, 21A Rua Guerra Mendes, Bissau.

Petroguin, Caixa Postal 387 Bissau (tel: 221-155, 222-625; fax: 221-155, 222-625).

Radiodifusão Nacional da República da Guiné-Bissau, CP 191, Bissau.

National news agency: ABMP (Agência Bissau Media e Publicações)

CP1069; Rua Euardo Mondlane 52, Bissau (tel: 206-147; email: agenciabissau@agenciabissau.com; internet: www.agenciabissau.com).

Other news agencies: Bissau Digital: www.bissaudigital.com

Guine-Bissau: www.guine-bissau.com

Internet sites

Africa Business Network: www.ifc.org/abn

AllAfrica.com: <http://allafrica.com>

African Development Bank: www.afdb.org

Africa Online: www.africaonline.com

Mbendi AfroPaedia (information on companies, countries, industries and stock exchanges in Africa): <http://mbendi.co.za>