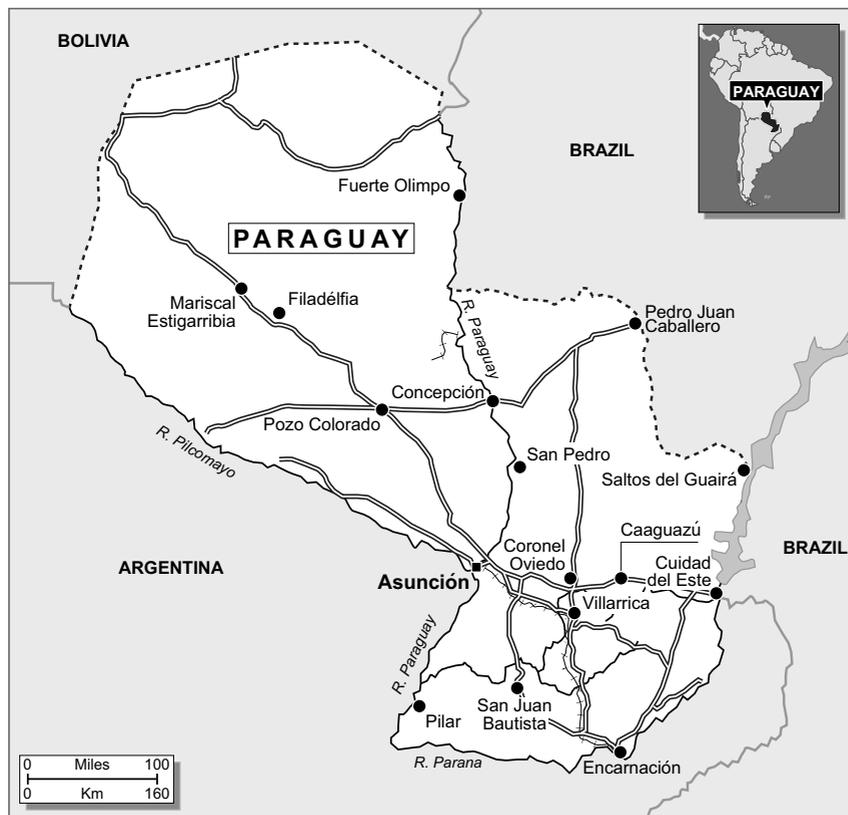


Paraguay



In the once traditional manner of Paraguayan politics, in April 2013 it was the 'turn' of the centre right Asociación Nacional Republicana-Partido Colorado (National Republican Association-Colorado Party) (Colorado Party) to win the presidential elections. Multi-millionaire businessman Horacio Cartes, the victorious Colorado Party candidate, was sworn in as president of Paraguay in a ceremony in the capital, Asunción, on 15 August, four months after winning the election.

Colorado Cartes

Predictably, in his inaugural speech Mr Cartes promised to wage war on poverty, a fairly safe objective in that Paraguay continues to be one of the poorest countries in South America. The most refreshing aspect of the new President was that he is a political newcomer, who, reportedly, had not even voted before 2008. The election was a

relatively close run, with Mr Cartes emerging the winner with 48.45 per cent of the ballots in April. He defeated his closest rival, Efraín Alegre, of the Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico (PLRA) (Authentic Radical Liberal Party), by nine percentage points (39.08 per cent). Equally refreshing for many Paraguayans was that in another departure from previous practice Mr Cartes chose a cabinet of technocrats and business people rather than selecting a band of the party faithful. The Colorado Party certainly knows something about governing Paraguay – for better or for worse – having been in power for some 60 years (until 2008) most of which (from 1954 to 1989) had seen the military rule of discredited President Alfredo Stroessner.

Lugo comes... and goes

In 2008, the Colorado Party had been beaten by a left-wing coalition (the

KEY FACTS

Official name: República del Paraguay (Republic of Paraguay)

Head of State: President Horacio Cartes (from 15 Aug 2013)

Head of government: President Horacio Cartes (from 15 Aug 2013)

Ruling party: Alianza Patriótica por el Cambio (APC) (Patriotic Alliance for Change) political alliance of eight parties led by the Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico (PLRA) (Authentic Radical Liberal Party) (from 15 Aug 2008)

Area: 406,752 square km

Population: 6.66 million (2012)*

Capital: Asunción

Official language: Spanish and Guaraní

Currency: Guaraní (G) = 100 pesos

Exchange rate: G4,425.00 per US\$ (Jul 2013)

GDP per capita: US\$3,903 (2012)*

GDP real growth: -1.20% (2012)*

GDP: US\$26.00 billion (2012)*

Unemployment: 5.80% (2012)*

Inflation: 3.79% (2012)*

Balance of trade: US\$847.70 million (2012)*

Annual FDI: US\$411.97 million (2011)

* estimated figure

Alianza Patriótica por el Cambio (APC) (Patriotic Alliance for Change)) headed by cleric Fernando Lugo and his Partido Demócrata Cristiano (PDC) (Christian Democratic Party of Paraguay). Mid-term, Mr Lugo was controversially impeached by Congress over his handling of a land eviction. The impeachment process was orchestrated by Paraguay's opposition in which the Colorado Party played an overwhelming role. In a landslide vote, the opposition had accused Mr Lugo of encouraging land seizures and failing to maintain social harmony in Paraguay. The whole impeachment process took less than 48 hours and was deemed unfair by many of Paraguay's neighbours and led to the country's exclusion from the Mercosur trading bloc.

The vice president of the PLRA, Federico Franco was sworn in as Paraguay's new President. Mr Franco had once been a close ally of the deposed President. The impeachment motion in question accused ex-President Lugo of mishandling a land eviction operation. In this case, the 'mishandling' resulted in the deaths of seven police officers and nine peasant farmers who were killed in a shootout. The farmers were part of a group occupying land owned by a politician from the opposition right-wing Colorado Party who claimed that the peasant 'squatters' had been armed and trained by left-wing guerrilla groups supported by the President. On assuming power in 2008, President Lugo had promised to end corruption and give land to some 87,000 landless families in a country where 80 per cent of land is owned by a tiny fraction

of the population. On the Transparency International 2012 *Corruption Perceptions Index* Paraguay ranked 150 out of the 174 countries surveyed; in South America, only Venezuela ranked lower.

Boosted by support from other Latin American leaders, as well as from Paraguay's landless and marginalised, the ex-President formed an 'alternative government', promising to send a representative to the Mercosur trade bloc summit in Argentina. Sr Lugo had also been boosted by an outcry among leaders across South America who condemned his dismissal and suspended Paraguay from Mercosur for the summit.

The economy

According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Paraguay's gross domestic product (GDP) contracted by 1.8 per cent in 2012 as the key sector of its economy – agriculture – dropped sharply due to the severe drought that hit the country in late 2011 and early 2012. Counter-cyclical policies implemented by the government and the Banco Central del Paraguay (central bank) prevented further contraction of the economy in 2012 by boosting economic activity in the non-agricultural sector. Although a marked decline in meat exports was expected following the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease detected in September 2011, the livestock sector contracted only slightly. The government's counter-cyclical fiscal policy was reflected in a considerable rise in public spending that took the fiscal deficit to 2.8 per cent of GDP. To October

2012, the year-on-year variation in the consumer price index was 3.4 per cent, lower than the 5.6 per cent posted in 2011. However, this figure was expected to increase slightly by year-end, owing to the upturn in economic activity and a rise in food prices, especially the price of beef on the local market. In the external sector, the current account deficit was expected to rise due to a wider trade deficit. Economic activity was expected to pick up in 2013, particularly in the agricultural and external sectors, with an estimated growth rate of close to 8.5 per cent.

On the legislative front, the personal income tax bill was approved after being shelved for the past four years. The new law entered into force in August 2012. However, it would not increase public revenue by much over the short run because during the first few years it would only apply to a limited number of taxpayers. It would have an indirect impact on value added tax (VAT) revenue since it encouraged the formalisation of certain transactions. As for financial regulations, measures were adopted to increase the capital held by financial institutions in the face of financial market-related risks. Similarly, changes to reserve requirements on foreign currency deposits and, to a lesser extent, local currency deposits were implemented to minimise the financial system's exposure to deposits and liabilities stemming from currency mismatches.

ECLAC noted that there was a fiscal deficit of 2.8 per cent of GDP in 2012 – the first public account deficit since 2003. Flagging economic activity in the agricultural sector caused by the drought prompted the government to implement an expansionary fiscal policy with a significant increase in current expenditure. Much of the spending was on a 30 per cent pay rise for public employees. Total central government spending therefore rose by 33 per cent compared with 2011. Public revenue collections grew by 11 per cent owing to a considerable rise in non-tax revenues. Tax revenues recorded a more moderate increase during the period, mainly due to a slight fall in taxes on foreign trade. The decline in the agricultural sector did not have a marked impact on public revenue because it accounts for a very small share of the government tax take. In view of the economic contraction and lower inflationary pressures in 2012, the Executive Committee for Open Market Operations and Reserves (CEOMA) of the central bank took an expansionary monetary policy stance. The weighted

KEY INDICATORS

Paraguay

	Unit	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Population	m	*6.15	*6.30	*6.45	*6.53	*6.66
Gross domestic product (GDP)	US\$bn	16.90	14.70	18.50	21.20	*26.00
GDP per capita	US\$	2,747	2,337	2,886	3,252	*3,903
GDP real growth	%	5.8	-3.8	15.0	3.8	*-1.2
Inflation	%	10.2	2.6	4.7	6.6	*3.8
Unemployment	%	5.7	6.4	5.7	5.6	*5.8
Exports (fob) (goods)	US\$m	7,768.8	5,783.8	8,312.2	10,620.8	*11,903.9
Imports (fob) (goods)	US\$m	8,809.0	6,917.3	9,839.3	12,014.2	*11,056.1
Balance of trade	US\$m	-1,040.2	-1,133.5	-1,527.1	-1,393.3	*847.7
Current account	US\$m	-412.0	-149.1	-596.2	-270.2	*-511.0
Total reserves minust gold	US\$m	2,844.6	3,838.6	4,136.8	4,943.1	*45,566.1
Foreign exchange	US\$m	2,767.3	3,632.0	3,933.7	4,732.1	*4,353.6
Exchange rate	per US\$	4,363.20	4,965.40	4,735.50	4,152.85	4,377.10
* estimated figure						

average interest rate on monetary regulation instruments thus declined from 6.6 per cent in January 2012 to 5.5 per cent in August, where it remained. The nominal exchange rate of the guaraní against the United States dollar posted a year-on-year depreciation of 6.6 per cent to October 2012. With regard to the real effective exchange rate, the guaraní depreciated against the dollar (by 6.8 per cent), the euro (1.0 per cent) and the Argentine peso (3.3 per cent) and appreciated against the Brazilian real (3.1 per cent). The depreciation of the guaraní was due primarily to the widening current account deficit in 2012. ECLAC also noted that after growing at a moderate 4.3 per cent in 2011, GDP dropped by 1.8 per cent in 2012 due to the decline in the key sector of Paraguay's economy – agriculture, which represented 20 per cent of GDP in 2011. This was the result of the severe drought which affected the country between December 2011 and February 2012. According to ministry of agriculture and livestock estimates, production of soybeans (Paraguay's main export) dropped by 48 per cent and total agricultural output fell by 28 per cent. However, moderate growth in the non-agricultural sector meant that the fall in GDP was relatively small considering the sharp decline in the agricultural sector and the importance of this sector in the economy. On the spending front, the sharp jump in public expenditure, especially current expenditure, shored up domestic demand in 2012 and helped boost non-agricultural sector growth. According to the findings of the continuous employment survey, unemployment stood at 6.9 per cent (7.1 per cent for men and 6.7 per cent for women) in the third quarter of 2012, close to the rate for the same period in 2011. The central bank's wage and salary index showed a year-on-year variation of 4.9 per cent to June 2012. Estimated 2012 year-on-year inflation stood at 3.4 per cent, below the mid-point of the target range set by the central bank (5 per cent plus or minus 2.5 percentage points). The inflation rate declined in 2012 due to the slowing economy and falling livestock sector product prices as a consequence of restrictions on meat exports to certain markets in response to the foot-and-mouth outbreak detected in 2011. Year-on-year core inflation, which excluded the most volatile items in the basket (fruits and vegetables), stood at 3.3 per cent to October 2012.

Paraguay's external sector performed particularly poorly in 2012. Agricultural export value and volume declined owing

to the drought, pushing exports down by around 11 per cent. Despite the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease that was detected in late 2011 and led to the suspension of Paraguay's status as a foot-and-mouth-free country where vaccination is practised, meat exports were up slightly in 2012 as they were redirected to new international markets throughout the year. Imports contracted by 8 per cent, which was less than the decline in exports, due to a sharp drop in imports of capital goods. The current account was expected to post a deficit of 2.1 per cent of GDP at year-end 2012, compared with 1.2 per cent in 2011. Paraguay's GDP was expected to grow by 8.5 per cent in 2013, fuelled mainly by an upturn in the agricultural sector. Exports (especially soybean exports) are expected to pick up, which should narrow the current account deficit. On the public spending front, despite the counter-cyclical fiscal policy implemented in 2012, government outlays were not expected to slow significantly in 2013. This was due to several factors: the 30 per cent public wage hike implemented in 2012, which was a rigid expenditure and therefore involved a permanent change to the central government's spending structure; ministry of finance plans to widen capital spending significantly; and the effect of the 2013 presidential elections.

Risk assessment

Politics	Fair
Economy	Fair
Regional stability	Good

COUNTRY PROFILE

Historical profile

1537 The Spanish began colonising the plains of Paraguay.
 1811 Paraguay gained independence from Spain.
 1864–70 A disastrous war against Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay was lost. It halved Paraguay's population and stripped it of 155,400 square km of land.
 1870 Occupation forces set up a provisional government with a liberal-democratic constitution, although the constitution was never put into practice.
 1874 The Partido Colorado (PC) (Colorado Party) (also known as the Red Party), representing the land-owning elite, was formed.
 1887 The Liberal party, who advocated a minimal state and representative government, was formed.
 1883 A Colorado government began driving peasants off the land and selling it to foreign investors.

1904 After a revolution the Liberal party seized power and introduced political and economic changes.

1932–35 The Chaco War with Bolivia over disputed territory.

1936 The army, which held the government responsible for losing the Chaco War, overthrew the government of President Eusebio Ayala (Liberal) in February and installed war hero Rafael Franco as president, an act that virtually destroyed the Liberals as a political force. The Partido Revolucionario Febrerista (PRF) (*Febrerista* Revolutionary Party) government was a mix of political ideologies, including Communists and Fascists. It implemented land re-distribution and workers rights. Franco's government had popular support but its policies were hastily devised and led to protests when Decree Law 152, promising a 'totalitarian transformation', was announced. The divergent political opinions within the government finally pulled it apart, although Franco continued to hold power with a new party, the Unión Nacional Revolucionaria (Revolutionary National Union). He was unable to provide more land to his peasant supporters and was undermined by Liberal party supporters in the army.

1937 Franco lost support of the army when he withdrew troops from the territories won in Chaco in 1935. The army revolted and returned the Liberal party to power.

1938 A treaty was signed between Bolivia and Paraguay following an international peace conference. It returned most of the disputed land to Bolivia.

1940 The military regime installed Higinio Morínigo, a follower of Nazi Germany's Adolf Hitler, as president.

1946 Following the defeat of Germany and Japan, Paraguay's chief trading partners, Morínigo legalised liberal, communist and *Febrerista* parties.

1947 Paraguay descended into civil war, following the emergence of political divisions within the army.

1948 The PC deposed Morínigo, leading to a series of coups and short-lived regimes.

1949 Federico Chaves became president.

1954 General Alfredo Stroessner led a *coup d'état* that deposed Chaves.

Stroessner was re-elected seven times under the constitutional 'state-of-siege' provision. His dictatorship was ruthless against all opposition.

1967 A new constitution endorsed Stroessner's dictatorship. Paraguay was isolated within the world community.

1989 Stroessner was deposed in a bloodless coup by General Antonio Rodríguez who later won the presidential election. However the military-backed National

Republican Association-PC won the parliamentary elections.

1993 Juan Carlos Wasmosy was elected president and the PC won a majority of parliamentary seats in the first free presidential and multi-party elections.

1998 Raúl Cubas Grau (PC) won the presidential election, despite allegations of fraud.

1999 Cubas resigned, following the assassination of his vice president, Luis Argaña. Luis González Macchi was appointed as interim president.

2000 Supporters of dissident Colorado leader, General Lino Oviedo, staged an unsuccessful coup. Oviedo fled and was found by Brazilian police at a Brazilian border hideout.

2001 Paraguay asked for, but was denied, Oviedo's extradition.

2002 President Macchi was accused of corruption. Violent street protestors demanded his resignation. He was impeached by congress.

2003 President Macchi survived his impeachment trial; the Senate voted 25–18 against him, short of the two-thirds majority (30 votes) necessary to remove him from power. Nicanor Duarte Frutos won presidential elections. Macchi was again charged with corruption and put on trial. 2004 Former military commander, General Oviedo, was arrested after returning from exile in Brazil. An estimated 464 shoppers were killed in a fire in a three storey supermarket, it was the worst fire in Latin American history. The daughter of former president, Raúl Cubas, was kidnapped.

2005 The body of Cecilia Cubas was found in a shallow grave. President Nicanor ordered a crackdown on organised crime, blamed for widespread kidnapping and murder. Paraguay hosted the world's first conference of landlocked nations, which was attended by 30 states. 2006 A new socialist movement, Tekojojja (Equality), was launched to contest the 2008 presidential elections with the former Bishop Fernando Lugo as candidate. 2008 In presidential elections, Fernando Armino Lugo Méndez (Partido Demócrata Cristiano) (PDC) (Christian Democratic Party) won 41 per cent of the vote, ending the rule (since 1948) of the PC, whose candidate Blanca Ovelar won 31 per cent, Lino Oviedo (Unión Nacional de Ciudadanos Éticos) (National Union of Ethical Citizens) (Unace) won 22 per cent. In elections for the Chamber of Deputies the ruling Colorado Party won 29 seats and the opposition Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico (PLRA) (Authentic Radical Liberal Party) won 26 seats, the Unión Nacional de Ciudadanos Éticos (UNCE) (National Union of Ethical

Citizens) won 16 seats; all other political parties won less than five seats.

2009 An agreement was signed by the presidents of Bolivia and Paraguay settling a border dispute, which had led to the Chaco Wars in the 1930s. The accord leads the way to more development of oil and gas fields in the Chaco region. Brazil agreed to triple its payment to Paraguay for the operation of the Itaipú hydroelectric power station on their shared border. Paraguay also gained permission to sell excess electricity to a third-party from 2023.

2010 Security forces mounted a large operation against left-wing insurgents in the north, blamed for a series of violent incidents.

2011 An experimental titanium oxide extraction plant was opened in August in Minga Pora, east of Asunción. According to the operators of the plant the titanium deposits could be the largest in the world. A referendum was held in October, in which 80 per cent voted in favour of giving voting rights to expatriate nationals.

2012 The congress enacted the extension of voting rights for expatriate nationals, who will be able to vote in the next presidential elections. On 15 June around 150 farmers in the province of Canindeyu clashed with 300 police officers when eviction notices were served on the farmers for occupying land they had previously been evicted from during the 1954–89 Stroessner dictatorship and given to his allies. At least nine farmers and seven police officers were killed, some by firearms. Nine farmers were later arrested on murder charges. On 20 June President Lugo announced he would open an investigation into the circumstances of the conflict. On 21 June the opposition-led lower house of parliament voted to impeach the president over his handling of the evictions (for the motion 73, against one). The impeachment trial was held on 22 June in the Senate, which, following a vote (for the motion 39, against four), removed Lugo from the presidency. Federico Franco was sworn in as the new president. On 23 June Fernando Lugo accepted the decision and stepped down from the presidency but the next day he denounced his dismissal as a 'parliamentary coup' and called for a 'peaceful strike'. Mercosur suspended Paraguay from its trade organisation due to the impeachment of former president Lugo. No sanctions were imposed and membership will be reviewed following the scheduled presidential elections in 2013. On 21 August, the electoral court announced that the next presidential and parliamentary elections will be held on 12 April 2013. On 2 December, Vidal Vega, the leader of the landless peasant movement was shot

dead. Vega had been negotiating with an official inquiry into the killing of evicted farmers, before his planned appearance at the inquiry.

2013 The 21 April presidential election was won by Horacio Cartés with 48.38 per cent, ahead of Efraín Alegre with 39.05 per cent. No other candidate won over 10 per cent. The Senate election was won by the Colorado Party with 19 seats, ahead of the ARLP with 13 seats. the Chamber of Deputies was also won by the Colorado Party with 44 seats to the ARLP's 27 seats. The new President moved quickly to secure extra powers after attacks in the north of the country, attributed to the Ejército del Pueblo Paraguayo (EPP) (Paraguayan People's Army) nationalist guerrilla movement. The powers allow the president to deploy the military to tackle unrest in the country, without first declaring a state of emergency.

Political structure

Constitution

Paraguay became an independent republic in 1811. Under the dictatorship of Alfredo Stroessner (1954–89) a new constitution was introduced in 1967 which granted strong powers to the executive, entrenching political control in the hands of the ruling Partido Colorado (PC) (Colorado Party). In 1992, a new constitution was enacted.

There are 19 departments and 213 municipalities each with their own directly elected administration. In 1990, a new electoral law was passed. Among its provisions were the introduction of proportional representation, provision for a second round in the event that no candidate secures an absolute majority in presidential elections, the prohibition of compulsory deductions from salaries of public-sector workers for political parties, the selection of party authorities by the direct vote of all members, a ban on party affiliation by members of the armed forces and the police and the lifting of a previous ban on electoral alliances by political parties.

Form of state

Presidential democratic republic

The executive

Under the constitution executive power is exercised by the president of the republic, who must be a Roman Catholic. The president is elected directly by popular vote for five years and formulates and enacts legislation. Executive power rests with the president who appoints a council of 11 ministers. The president has powers to rule by decree when congress is in recess. The president cannot be re-elected.

National legislature

The bicameral Congreso Nacional (National Congress), consists of the Cámara

de Diputados (Chamber of Deputies) (lower house) with 80 members and the Cámara de Senadores (Chamber of Senators) (upper house) with 45 members. Members of both houses are elected by proportional representation to serve for five-year terms.

Legal system

At the apex of the judiciary is the Supreme Court which has the power to declare legislation unconstitutional. The five members of the Supreme Court are appointed by the president and their tenure of office coincides with that of the presidency. There are appeal courts and lower level criminal and civil courts.

Last elections

21 April 2013 (parliamentary and presidential)

Results: Presidential: Horacio Cartes (Colorado Party) won 48.45 per cent, Efraín Alegre (PC) won 39.08 per cent, Mario Ferreiro won (Avanza País (Forward Country)) 6.22 per cent.

Parliament (Chamber of Deputies): the Asociación Nacional Republicana-Partido Colorado (National Republican Association-Colorado Party) (Colorado Party) won 44 seats (out of 80), the Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico (PLRA) (Authentic Radical Liberal Party) won 27 seats, the Unión Nacional de Ciudadanos Éticos (UNCE) (National Union of Ethical Citizens) won 2 seats; all other political parties won less than five seats.

(Senate) the Colorado Party won 19 seats (out of 45), the PLRA won 13 seats, the Frente Guasú (Guasú Front) won 5 seats, Partido Democrático Progresista (Democratic Progressive Party) 3 seats, the Avanza País (Forward Country) 2 seats and the UNCE 2 seats.

Impeachment (chamber of deputies): for the motion 73, against one. Senate: for the motion 39, against four.

Next elections

2018 (parliamentary and presidential)

Political parties

Ruling party

Alianza Patriótica por el Cambio (APC) (Patriotic Alliance for Change) political alliance of eight parties led by the Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico (PLRA) (Authentic Radical Liberal Party) (from 15 Aug 2008)

Main opposition party

Asociación Nacional Republicana-Partido Colorado (National Republican Association-Colorado Party) (Colorado Party)

Population

6.66 million (2012)*

About 22 per cent of the urban population live in Asunción.

Last census: August 2002: 5,163,198

Population density: 12 inhabitants per square km. Urban population 61 per cent (2010 Unicef).

Annual growth rate: 2.1 per cent, 1990–2010 (Unicef).

Ethnic make-up

Over 95 per cent of the population is of Spanish-Guaraní origin. There are approximately 40,000 indigenous people in the country, most of whom live in the Chaco region.

In addition, there are large Korean, German and Japanese immigrant communities, along with small Italian and Polish communities, and some communities of people originating from Lebanon, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Religions

Roman Catholicism is the state religion and is practised by 90 per cent of the population, the remainder are mostly Protestants.

Education

There are just over 4,300 primary schools and an estimated 92 per cent of the relevant age group attends primary school. Secondary education begins aged 13 years and comprises two cycles of three years each.

Paraguay has two universities – the National and the Catholic. The state-run Universidad Nacional de Asunción has a student enrolment of around 20,000. It comprises 11 faculties, law and social sciences, medicine, economics, chemistry, dentistry, philosophy, agriculture, veterinary science, fine arts, architecture and engineering. It also has six Institutes and six Higher Schools.

Literacy rate: 92 per cent adult rate; 96 per cent youth rate (15–24) (Unesco 2005).

Compulsory years: Seven to 13

Enrolment rate: 111 per cent gross primary enrolment of relevant age group (including repeaters); 47 per cent gross secondary enrolment (World Bank).

Pupils per teacher: 21 in primary schools

Health

HIV/Aids

HIV prevalence: 0.5 per cent aged 15–49 in 2003 (World Bank)

Life expectancy: 72 years, 2004 (WHO 2006)

Fertility rate/Maternal mortality rate: 3.0 births per woman, 2010 (Unicef); maternal mortality 190 per 100,000 live births (World Bank).

Child (under 5 years) mortality rate (per 1,000): 22 per 1,000 live births (WHO 2012)

Head of population per physician: 1.11 physicians per 1,000 people, 2002 (WHO 2006)

Welfare

The Social Security Institute was formed by Decree Law 17071 in 1948, and is

regulated by Decree Law 1860 of 1950. The laws refer to health, medical care and sickness benefits. Workers, their wives and children up to 16 have the right to receive medical, surgical and dental attention, medicine and hospitalisation, as well as cash subsidies for temporary illnesses, maternity and death. Old age pensions are paid to those who have made the necessary contributions. The social security system is in disarray and in 2001 the IMF urged the government to stop lending money to the system.

Women must not work for three weeks before or six weeks after childbirth. During these periods a woman receives a cash subsidy from the Social Security Institute. The worker has the right to receive an allowance equal to 5 per cent of the legal minimum wage for each child under 17 for whose maintenance and education he is responsible. This allowance is wholly the employer's expense and is discontinued once the worker's wage reaches 200 per cent more than the legal minimum.

Main cities

Asunción (capital, estimated population 544,309 in 2012), Ciudad del Este (396,091) (on the Brazilian border), Capiatá (366,998), Luque (361,662), San Lorenzo (320,878), Limpio (201,245), Némby (192,224), Lambaré (151,484), Itaiguá (148,721), Fernando de la Mora (143,524).

Languages spoken

Guaraní, the aboriginal Indian tongue is widely spoken. In some rural districts, the less educated speak little or no Spanish.

Official language/s

Spanish and Guaraní

Media

Press

Dailies: In Spanish, the main national dailies and Sunday newspapers are ABC Color (www.abc.com.py), *Diario Popular* (www.diariopopular.com.py), *Ultima Hora* (www.ultimahora.com), *La Nacion* (www.lanacion.com.py), and *Viva Paraguay* (www.vivaparaguay.com).

Weeklies: In Spanish, *Paraguay Ahora* (www.paraquayahora.com), *La Síntesis Económica* (<http://kaavo.pol.com.py>).

Periodicals: Itacom (www.itacom.com.py), Neike (www.neike.com.py), PPN (Portal Paraguayo de Noticias) (www.ppn.com.py), Paraguay Aldia (www.paraquayaldia.com), Paraguay News (www.paraquaynews.com.py), Zeta Revista (www.revistazeta.com.py), regional publications, International Action (www.accion.org), UnMundo Améruca Latina (www.un-mundo.org, in English: <http://amlat.oneworld.net>).

Broadcasting

Radio: The government-owned Radio Nacional del Paraguay (www.rmpy.com), broadcasts on AM and FM; there are several private radio stations. Radio Cardinal (www.cardinal.com.py), Radio Nanduti (www.nanduti.com.py), Radio Venus (www.venus.com.py), Radio Venus (www.fmradiocity.com), Radio Canal 100 (www.canal100.com.py).

Television: There are several television channels, all privately owned with broadcasts in Spanish – Sistema Nacional de Televisión (SNT, Canal 9) (www.snt.com.py), RED Guarani (Canal 2) (www.redguarani.com.py), Telefuturo (Canal 4) (www.telefuturo.com.py), Red Privada de Televisión (El Trece, Canal 13) (www.rpc.com.py), Paravision (Canal 5) (www.canal5paravision.com). These broadcasters syndicate their programmes around the country and on cable TV. None are based in Paraguay but Mercopress (www.mercopress.com) specialises in news from Latin America countries within Mercosur and the Falkland Islands.

Economy

Paraguay has evolved into a modern service sector driven economy, with services constituting 57.3 per cent of GDP in 2010. Agriculture is still important, comprising 22.3 of GDP, with industry at 20.4 per cent, of which manufacturing was 12.2 per cent. Agricultural products account for the majority of export items, especially soya beans, cotton, cattle, timber and sugar. International trade is an important aspect of the economy with goods purchased from Japan and the US and re-exported (around 50 per cent of all imported goods are re-exported at a profit with little or no changes made to them). Although there are few mineral resources and little heavy industry, Paraguay operates the world's largest, single, hydroelectric power station, Itaipú on the River Paraná, which generates up to US\$360 million per year from the sale of electricity to Brazil.

GDP growth in 2008 was 5.8 per cent but it fell into recession in 2009 at -3.8 per cent, due to the global economic crisis that cut trade – in the case of Paraguay this meant especially the export of meat and soya beans. On top of this a drought in the latter part of 2008 reduced harvests. However, when world trade picked up in 2010 GDP growth surged back to 15 per cent before slowing down to an estimated 3.8 per cent in 2011. Inflation peaked at a high of 10.2 per cent in 2008 due to record fuel and food prices, before dropping to 2.6 per cent in 2009 when domestic spending slumped; it rose again in 2010 to 4.7 per cent before

climbing to an estimated 6.6 per cent in 2011.

In 2011, the UN Human Development Index (HDI) ranked Paraguay 107 (out of 187) for development in health, education and income. In 2010, 48.5 per cent of the population experienced deprivation in at least one indicator of poverty and 5.1 per cent of the population were living on the equivalent of US\$1.25 per day. Paraguay is subject to a widespread informal economy with smuggling to and from neighbouring countries a problem for government revenue collection. Remittances in 2009 had grown to US\$619 million, increasing to US\$664 million in 2010 (3.5 per cent of GDP) and was estimated to have grown to US\$774 million in 2011. Fifty per cent of all remittances come from workers in Europe.

External trade

As a member of Mercosur, the world's fourth largest free-trade zone, Paraguay (along with Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay), has access to a market of over 200 million consumers. Paraguay is also an associate member of the Andean Community (AC), since Mercosur negotiated a free trade area with AC.

Paraguay's economy is predominately agricultural which constitutes over 25 per cent of GDP and exports represent a large portion of this. The world's largest single hydroelectric generating facility at the Itaipú Dam, is jointly owned and operated by Paraguay and Brazil; US\$360 million per year of electricity is exported to Brazil.

Imports

Main imports include road vehicles, consumer goods, tobacco, petroleum products and electrical machinery.

Main sources: China (27.6 per cent of total in 2012), Brazil (23.5 per cent), Argentina (16.4 per cent).

Exports

Main exports include cattle, cotton, grains, soya beans, sugar and timber, animal feed, cotton, meat, edible oils, leather and electricity.

Main destinations: Brazil (39.2 per cent of total in 2012), Russia (9.7 per cent), Argentina (8.3 per cent).

Re-exports

The country re-exports significant amounts of US products to regional neighbours. Around 50 per cent of all imported goods are re-exported at a profit with little or no changes made to them. There is evidence of trade through informal channels such as smuggling.

Aggriculture

The agricultural sector remains important to the country's economy. The sector employs approximately 40 per cent of the

labour force and contributes 29 per cent to total GDP.

Agricultural products account for more than 90 per cent of exports, of which cotton and soya beans together account for more than two-thirds of export earnings. Sawn timber, meat products and, to a lesser extent, fruit, vegetables and hides are also exported. Sugar cane, wheat, tobacco and various new specialist crops for industrial use are expanding as more land comes under cultivation. Paraguay has nearly achieved self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs (rice, maize, wheat, beans). Approximately 5 per cent of total land area is arable land or under permanent crops, pasture constitutes 35 per cent of the land and 50 per cent is woodland/forest. While the fertile eastern region is ideal for arable farming and cattle grazing the rich soil has been subject to erosion since the 1970s. There are extensive forests with a variety of timbers. The potential of the Chaco region to the west is still to be realised, dependent as it is upon the exploitation of its known groundwater resources for irrigated farming.

Agricultural production fluctuates from year to year owing to climatic conditions (both flooding and drought) and widespread smuggling (particularly livestock and soya beans).

Despite its landlocked geographical status, Paraguay's annual fish catch amounts to approximately 10,000 tonnes. The illegal trade of fishery products remains a problem despite attempts by the authorities to bring it under control.

Paraguay has a significant area of forested land, accounting for approximately 30 per cent of the country's total landmass. The majority of the forested areas are to the east of the Paraguay river. Historically, deforestation has been a problem in Paraguay. The country lost, on average 0.51 per cent of forest cover each year during the 1990-2000 period. This amounted to a decrease of 123,000 hectares year on year.

Local forest resources produce moderate volumes of sawn timber and panels, most of which is usually exported. Domestic demand for paper is usually met by imports. Consumption of wood fuel is significant.

Industry and manufacturing

In a typical year for the economy of Paraguay the industrial sector accounts for approximately a quarter of total GDP. Although Paraguay is South America's least industrialised country, the sector does account for just under 20 per cent of the total workforce.

Manufacturing is small-scale and geared to the processing of primary products with agro-industry representing about 70 per cent of total industrial production.

Construction contributes approximately 6 per cent of GDP. Manufacturing is centred on the processing of agricultural products, particularly textiles, cotton yarn, wood products, beef products, and industrial and edible oils. The country is self-sufficient in cement and there is an oil refinery (capacity 10,000 barrels per day (bpd)) and steel works (150,000 tonnes per year).

Contrasting with other Latin American countries, which have undergone a process of industrialisation based on import-substitution, development strategy in Paraguay has emphasised export-led growth. This involved minimal protection for domestic industry, whose growth problems have been compounded by the small size of the home market, high freight costs for imported products and the effects of extensive smuggling of a wide range of consumer goods from neighbouring countries.

Tourism

Tourist amenities are modest in general, so Paraguay has made a virtue out of its character and offers urban visitors the chance to experience its rural charms. It offers activity holidays on *estancias* (ranches) in its eastern region, as well as some ecotourism in its western region. National parks provide unspoiled habitats for a range of Latin American animals and vegetation.

Travel and tourism contributes around 4 per cent of GDP and accounts for around 4 per cent of employment (around 110,000 jobs). The number of visitors grew from 416,000 in 2007 to 465,000 in 2010.

Environment

In 2004, USAID reported that indiscriminate exploitation threatened the country's natural resources. In the eastern border region, which had been largely uncultivated until the 1970s, the rich topsoil was severely eroded and unmanaged use of land was jeopardising the largest underground water aquifer on the continent.

Mining

Paraguay's mining sector is negligible, contributing just 0.5 per cent to GDP in a typical year. The national government has attempted to introduce a programme of financial incentives in order to promote exploration for petroleum, lead and uranium. It has also encouraged mineral prospecting by granting tax concessions. However, few commercial reserves have been discovered and the sector employs just 0.3 per cent of the country's total workforce.

Studies commissioned by the Dirección General de Recursos Minerales (DGRM), with the support of the United Nations

Development Programme (UNDP), have revealed that opportunities exist for the commercial extraction of marble, pyrophyllite, granite, slate, talc, gypsum and lignite.

Paraguay has limited proven mineral reserves and at present mining is concentrated on the extraction of salt, gypsum, limestone, kaolin and other clays. Prospecting has revealed the existence of uranium and bauxite, manganese, iron ore and copper. From the 1990s, none have been found in large enough quantities to overcome the high extraction costs involved.

According to CIC Resources mining company, the deposits at an experimental titanium oxide extraction plant that it operates in Minga Pora, east of Asunción, could be the largest in the world. The plant opened on 5 August 2011.

Hydrocarbons

There are no proven oil reserves in Paraguay; consumption of imported oil (refined oil, lubricants and aviation fuel) was 30,000 barrels per day (bpd) in 2008. Oil exploration continues but has failed to find reserves of commercial value. Oil deposits in the border regions of Formosa (Argentina) and Chaco (Bolivia) exist and the prospects of finding oil in Paraguay are thought to be promising. The state-owned Petropar refinery near Asunción can produce 7,500bpd of refined oil.

There are no reserves of natural gas and consumption is negligible, although were there to be discoveries of commercially viable natural gas in the north-western Chaco region, it is anticipated that gas use would grow. There are discussions about constructing an 850km pipeline to the capital Asunción from southern Bolivia, which would also mean demand for natural gas in Paraguay would increase, along with the country becoming an important transit centre for Bolivian natural gas.

Coal is neither produced nor imported.

Energy

Total installed generating capacity was 10.1 gigawatts (GW) in 2008, producing around 92 billion kilowatt hours (kWh). Paraguay's electricity needs are almost entirely met by hydropower and it is a net exporter of electricity, mostly to Brazil and Argentina.

The bulk of electricity supplies come mainly from the world's largest hydroelectric plant, Itaipú on the River Paraná, which produces 13.3GW and is jointly run by Brazil and Paraguay. Brazil financed the Itaipú construction using Paraguay's resources; all excess electricity produced by Itaipú is sold to Brazil. In May 2009 a review of the contractual

agreement was discussed at ministerial level as Paraguay maintained that the price paid by Brazil for its electricity had not increased since Itaipú became operational in 1973; Brazil considered Paraguay must take into account the investment Brazil originally made. Other hydroelectric plants include the 3.1GW Yacyretá plant and 2.8GW Corpus Christi on the Paraná, co-owned with Argentina, and the wholly owned Acaray of 210MW. The government has plans to increase the use of biofuels and the production of ethanol from sugar cane. Although rural communities still use wood fuel, solar energy sources are being introduced.

Financial markets

Stock exchange

Bolsa de Valores y Productos de Asunción (BVPASA) (Asunción Stock Exchange)

Banking and insurance

Paraguay's banking and financial services sector has suffered from numerous crises and bad loans. The sector has undergone slow reform and the government has persisted in its policy of propping up ailing banking houses over recent years.

A new Bank of the South, with a headquarters in Venezuela, will be launched in 2008 to provide an alternative source of development funding for the participating countries. Assets of US\$7 billion will underpin its operations.

Central bank

Banco Central del Paraguay.

Time

GMT minus four hours (daylight saving, October–March, GMT minus three hours)

Geography

Paraguay is a landlocked country in central South America. Bolivia lies to the north, Brazil to the east, and Argentina to the south and west. The River Paraguay effectively splits the country in two, with an area known as the Chaco to the west, which comprises 61 per cent (246,950 square km) of the country's land area, but only 3 per cent of the national population. In contrast, the eastern region is a much richer area in which most of the population is concentrated. This region is divided into two by a high ridge of hills. East of the hills lies the Paraná Plateau which is 300–600 metres high, and in the west lies a fertile, treeless pampas that floods once a year and stretches to the River Paraguay.

The Chaco is scrub forest used mostly for cattle. Much of the area is a national park, with jaguars, tapirs, puma and wild hog found here.

Hemisphere

Southern

Climate

The climate is subtropical with an average annual temperature of 23 degrees Celsius (C). The hot season is October–March and the average temperature rises to 32 degrees C. The temperate season is from April to September when the average temperature is 15 degrees C. The heaviest rains take place during this period, and the average annual rainfall is 1,500mm. In spring and autumn the arrival of cold fronts from the south can cause temperatures to fall suddenly by 10–20 degrees C within a few hours.

Dress codes

In the cities, businessmen wear European-style clothing; shorts are normally worn only for recreation.

Entry requirements

Passports

Required by all, except tourists from the Mercado Común del Sur (Mercosur) (Common Market of the South).

Visa

Required by all except citizens, visiting as tourists, from countries included on the list found at

www.paraguayembassy.co.uk/exemptlist.htm. All visits must commence within 90 days of visa issue. Business travellers should either contact the nearest consular section to request an application form. An invitation from a local company or organisation, provision of adequate funds for stay and proof of return/onward passage are necessary.

Currency advice/regulations

There are no restrictions on the import and export of foreign or local currency. Travellers cheques have limited acceptance.

Health (for visitors)

Mandatory precautions

Yellow fever vaccination certificates are required if arriving from an infected area.

Advisable precautions

Inoculations and booster should be current for tetanus, hepatitis A and typhoid. There may be a need for vaccinations for tuberculosis, diphtheria, yellow fever and hepatitis B. The use of malaria prophylaxis (including mosquito repellents, nets and clothing that cover the body after dark) will also provide protection for hepatitis B and yellow fever. There is a risk of rabies. Mains water is usually safe to drink in Asunción and other major towns. Elsewhere precautions should be taken. Bottled water is advisable for the first few weeks of any stay. Milk is unpasteurised and should be boiled. Dairy products likely to have been made from local milk should be avoided, and meat and fish should be well cooked.

Medical insurance is essential, including emergency evacuation; an adequate supply of personal medicines is necessary.

Credit cards

International credit cards are widely accepted. ATMs are found in most towns.

Public holidays (national)

Fixed dates

1 Jan (New Year's Day), 1 Mar (Heroes' Day), 1 May (Labour Day), 15 May (Independence Day), 12 Jun (Peace of Chaco), 15 Aug (Foundation of Asunción), 29 Sep (Battle of Boquerón), 8 Dec (Immaculate Conception), 25 Dec (Christmas Day).

Variable dates

Maundy Thursday, Good Friday.

Working hours

Banking

Mon–Fri: 0845–1500.

Business

Mon–Fri: 0800–1200 and 1430–1900; Sat: 0800–1200.

Government

Mon–Fri: 0700–1300.

Shops

Mon–Sat: 0900–2100. Some shops open 0730–2000.

Telecommunications

Mobile/cell phones

There are limited 850/1900 GSM services located in the capital and towns close by.

Electricity supply

220V AC, 50 cycles

Social customs/useful tips

Business people are punctual and expect appointments to be kept. Business cards are exchanged on visits and it is usual to shake hands when arriving or leaving an office or home. The best time to visit is between May and September. While most businessmen may speak English, it is advantageous to have some knowledge of Spanish. It is important to use the correct mode of address in writing or in speech.

Most businessmen do not wear a jacket and tie during office hours, but visitors, including businesswomen, are advised to wear lightweight business suits.

A 10–15 per cent tip is usually included on hotel and bar bills.

Security

Normal precautions apply. The level of street crime is much lower than other countries in Latin America.

Getting there

Air

National airline: Transportes Aéreo del Mercosur (TAM Mercosur).

International airport/s: Asunción-Silvio Pettirossi International Airport (ASU), 16km from city; *bureau de change*,

duty-free shops, restaurants and car hire. Travel time to city centre by taxi or bus is 20 minutes.

Airport tax: International departures US\$25; 24-hour transit passengers exempt.

Domestic departures from Asunción Pettirossi International Airport (ASU) US\$4.

Surface

Road: There are paved roads from Brazil (Rio de Janeiro-Asunción; length 1,700km) and from Argentina (Buenos Aires-Asunción, length 1,450km) which are considered good, less so the access from Bolivia.

Rail: A regular service by means of a train-ferry runs from Concepción to Posadas (Argentina), where a connection can be made to Buenos Aires. Services are slow.

Water: There are ferry links with Argentina, Bolivia and Brazil. For journeys to Buenos Aires check the route chosen is the most direct. From Brazil, boats connect Corumba with Asunción.

Main port/s: Asunción (on River Paraguay) is approximately 1,500km from the sea; Concepción, in suitable conditions, is accessible by ocean-going ships.

Getting about

National transport

Air: There are six carriers operating scheduled services to most parts of the country. Planes can be chartered and seats booked on air taxis for many destinations. Flights are frequently affected by weather.

Road: Around 10 per cent of the total network is surfaced, those serving main centres are in good condition. The main route is triangular, linking Asunción, Encarnación and Ciudad del Este. The Trans-Chaco Highway runs to the Bolivian border, but is paved for only half the distance. Some unsurfaced roads are closed in bad weather; service stations etc may be widely spaced.

Buses: There are frequent express services linking major towns; for longer distances it is advisable to make advance bookings (eg Asunción-Encarnación; Asunción-Ciudad del Este).

Rail: The main route is Asunción-Villarrica-Encarnación but the service is slow.

Water: The river Paraná is a major access route from the Atlantic coast. Asunción-Concepción service is not frequent and takes 24 hours, Asunción-Pilar 20 hours, and Asunción-Encarnación nine hours.

City transport

Taxis: In Asunción metered taxis operate with a minimum fare system; they can be

hired on a time basis; a 10 per cent tip is optional.

Buses, trams & metro: Private companies operate bus and minibus services in the capital. Two tram routes also operate.

Car hire

Foreign or international licences are acceptable. Chauffeur and self-drive cars are available at reasonable rates.

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 direct dialling (IDD) code for Paraguay is +595, followed by area code:

Asunción	21	Encarnación	71
Ciudad Del Este	61	Pilar	86
Concepción	31	Villarrica	541
Coronel Oviedo	521		

Chambers of Commerce

American-Paraguayan Chamber of Commerce, General Diaz 521, Edificio El Faro Internacional, Piso 4, Asunción (tel: 442-136; fax: 442-135; e-mail: pamchamb@conexion.com.py).

British-Paraguayan Chamber of Commerce, Gral Diaz 521, Edificio Internacional Faro, Piso 2, Asunción (tel/fax: 498-274; e-mail: britcham@infonet.com.py).

Paraguay Cámara Nacional de Comercio y Servicios, Estrella 540-550, Asunción (tel: 493-321; fax: 440-817; e-mail: info@ccparaguay.com.py).

Banking

Private Banking Association (ABP), Juan O'Leary y Estrella, 30 Piso Asunción (tel: 491-450; fax: 491-450).

Banco Alemán Paraguayo, Estrella No 505 y 14 de mayo, Zona Postal 1428, Asunción (tel: 490-166/9, 444-714/6; fax: 447-645).

Banco Comercial Paraguayo, Av Mariscal López 780, Zona Postal 2350, Asunción (tel: 207-251/7, 440-504; fax: 207-259).

Banco Continental, Estrella No 621, Apartado postal 2260, Asunción (tel: 446-915/18; fax: 442-001, 441-377).

Banco de Asunción, Palma Esquina 14 de mayo, Asunción Central (tel: 493-191/8; fax: 493-190).

Banco de Inversiones del Paraguay, Palma No 202, Esquina Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, Apartado postal 702,

Asunción (tel: 449-550, 498-593/94; fax: 443-749).

Banco de la Nación Argentina, Chile y Palma, Apartado postal 064, Asunción (tel: 447-433, 449-463; fax: 444-365).

Banco del Paraná, Yegros y 25 de mayo, Apartado postal 2298, Asunción (tel: 446-827, 446-691/5; fax: 498-909).

Banco do Brasil, Oliva y Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, Apartado postal 667, Asunción (tel: 90-121, 90-126; fax: 448-761).

Banco do Estado de São Paulo, Ind Nacional, Esquina Fulgencio R Moreno, Apartado postal 2211, Asunción (tel: 494-981/3; fax: 494-985).

Banco Exterior, Yegros y 25 de mayo, Apartado postal 824, Asunción (tel: 492-072/9; fax: 448-103).

Banco Finamerica, Chile y Oliva, Apartado postal 824, Asunción (tel: 491-021/025; fax: 445-159, 445-604).

Banco General, Chile y Haedo, Apartado postal 3202, Asunción (tel: 496-815/9; fax: 496-822).

Banco Holandés Unido, E V Haedo 103, Esquina Independencia Nacional, Apartado postal 1180, Asunción (tel: 490-001; fax: 491-734).

Banco Nacional de Fomento, Independencia Nacional y Cerro Cora, Asunción (tel: 444-440/1/2/3; fax: 446-053).

Banco Paraguayo Oriental de Inversión y Fomento, Azara 197 Esquina Yegros, Apartado postal 1496, Asunción (tel: 444-212 al 16; fax: 446-820).

Banco Real del Paraguay, Calle Estrella y Alberdi, Apartado postal 1442, Asunción (tel: 493-171/80; fax: 443-664).

Banco Sudameris Paraguayo, Independencia Nacional y Cerro Cora, Apartado postal 1433, Asunción (tel: 494-542/8, 444-172/3).

Citibank, Chile, Esquina Estrella, Apartado postal 1174, Asunción (tel: 494-951/9; fax: 444-820).

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Edif. Aurora 1-3 pisos, Caballero esq Eligio Ayala, Casilla 1209, Asunción (tel: 492-061; fax: 446-537).

Interbanco, 14 de mayo 339, Apartado postal 392, Asunción (tel: 494-992/5; fax: 448-587).

ING Bank (Internationale Nederlanden Bank), Av España y San Rafael, Apartado postal, 10007 Asunción (tel: 606-423; fax: 606-437).

Lloyds Bank, Palma Esq Juan E O'Leary, Casilla Postal 696, Asunción (tel: 443-580; fax: 443-569).

Central bank

Banco Central del Paraguay, Federación Rusa y Sargento Marecos, Asunción (tel: 619-2061; fax: 610-088; e-mail: ccs@bcp.gov.py).

Stock exchange

Bolsa de Valores y Productos de Asunción (BVPASA) (Asunción Stock Exchange), www.bvpasa.com.py

Travel information

Dirección Nacional de Turismo, Palma 468, Alberdi/Oliva, Asunción (tel: 441-530; fax: 491-230).

Transportes Aéreo Marilia (TAM), Oliva 467, Asunción (tel: 91-041; fax: 96-484).

National tourist organisation offices

Secretaría Nacional de Turismo, Palma 468, Casi 14 de Mayo, Edificio Central, Asunción (tel: 494-110; internet: www.senatur.gov.py).

Ministries

Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Presidente Franco 479, Asunción (tel: 443-791, 449-614; fax: 441-036).

Ministry of Defence, Avenids Mcal López y Vice Pte Sánchez, Asunción (tel: 204-771; fax: 211-583).

Ministry of Education and Culture, Chile 898 c/ Humaitá, Asunción (tel: 443-078; fax: 443-919).

Ministry of Exterior Relations, Presidente Franco c/ O'Leary, Asunción (tel: 493-872; fax: 493-910).

Ministry of Finance, Chile 128 esq Palmas, Asunción (tel: 440-010; fax: 448-283).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Juan E O'Leary y Pte, Franco, Asunción (tel: 494-593, 493-872; fax: 493-910).

Ministry of Health and Public Welfare, Av Petirrossi y Brasil, Asunción (tel: 207-328; fax: 206-700).

Ministry of Housing, Chile 128 c/ Palma, Asunción (tel: 440-010; fax: 448-283).

Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Avenida España 323, Asunción (tel: 204-638; fax: 213-529; internet site: www.mic.gov.py).

Ministry of the Interior, Chile c/ Manduvirá, Asunción (tel: 493-661; fax: 448-446).

Ministry of Justice and Labour, Avda Dr Gaspar Rodriguez de Francia c/ EE UU, Asunción (tel: 447-196, 491-555; fax: 440-066).

Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, Av Petirrossi c/Brasil, Asunción (tel: 207-328; fax: 206-700).

Nations of the World: A Political, Economic and Business Handbook

Ministry of Public Works and Communications, Olivia c/ Alberdi, Asunción (tel: 444-411, 496-666; fax: 443-625).

Other useful addresses

Administración Nacional de Electricidad (ANDE) (National Electricity Board), España el Padre Caroloto 360, Asunción (tel: 22-713/719).

Administración Nacional de Telecom (Antelco – Telecommunications Authority), Alberdi, esq General Diaz, Asunción (tel: 44-001).

Agencia Publicitaria Visión, 25 de Mayo, 966, Asunción (tel: 24-796).

Asociación Paraguaya de Cias de Seguros, 15 de Agosto esq Lugano, Casilla 1435, Asunción (tel: 446-474; fax: 444-343).

British Airways, Azara 192, Asunción (tel: 490-020).

British Embassy, Av. Boggiani 5848, C/R16 Boquerón, Casilla 404, Asunción (tel: 595-21 612 611; fax: 595-21 605 007).

Association of Cotton Ginners, CADELPA, Av Boggiani 4744, Asunción (tel: 595 21 609-272; fax: 595 21 600-739).

Customs Office, Colón c/ Plaza Isabel La Católica, Asunción (tel: 492-202, 495-086; fax: 445-085).

Dirección General de Estadísticas y Censos (National Statistics Office), Dr Miguel Torres, Asunción (tel: 610-331, 663-489).

Federation of Agroindustrial Exporters (FEDEXA), Brasilia 840 c/Sgto Gauto, Asunción (tel: 208-855, 205-749; fax: 213-971).

Federation of Industrial and Commercial Production (FEPRINCO), Palma 751 c/ Ayolas, Edif Unión Club, Piso 3, Asunción (tel: 444-963; fax: 446-638).

Importers Association (Centro de Importadores), Montevideo 671, Montevideo 671 c/ E V Haedo, Asunción (tel: 441-295, 490-291; fax: 441-295).

Industrial Union of Paraguay (UIP), Cerro Corá 1038 Casilla 782, Asunción (tel: 212-556; fax: 312-260).

Municipality of Asunción, Mariscal López y Cap. Villamayor Bloque A, 1er Piso Asunción (tel: 610-576, 610-577; fax: 610-578).

Paraguayan Embassy (USA), 2400 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington DC 20008 (tel: (+1-202) 483-6960; fax: (+1-202) 234-4508; e-mail: embapar@erols.com).

Petróleos Paraguayos (Petropar), Oliva 299, 4er Piso, Casilla 571, Asunción (tel: 95-117).

Planning Office, Pdte Franco c/ Ayolas, Edif Ayfra, Piso 3, Asunción (tel: 491-159, 448-366; fax: 496-510).

Private Construction Association (CAPACO), Victor Hugo casi Cervantes, Asunción (tel: 295-424).

Pro Paraguay (Promotion of Exporters and Importers), Padre Cardozo 469 c/ España, Asunción (tel: 208-276, 208-641; fax: 200-425).

Rural Association of Paraguay (ARP), Ruta Transchaco Km 14, Mariano Roque Alonso (tel: 291-036, 291-061; fax: 291-061).

Siderurgia Paraguaya (Sidepar), Azara 197, 6er Piso, esq Yegros, Casilla 2441, Asunción (tel: 95-963).

Soybean Exporters Association (CAPECO), Av Brasilia 840, Asunción (tel: 208-855; fax: 595 21 213 971).

US Embassy, Avenida Mcal Lopez 1776, Casilla 402, Asunción (tel: 213-715; fax: 213-728).

Water Authority (Corporación de Obras Sanitarias Corposana), José Berges: e/Brasil y San José, Asunción (tel: 25-001/003).

Internet sites

ABC Color (newspaper):
www.diarioabc.com.py

Noticias (newspaper):
www.diarionoticias.com.py

Office of the President:
www.presidencia.gov.py

The Congress of Paraguay:
www.camdip.gov.py