Mozambique

Location:

Mozambique is located in southeastern Africa between South Africa and Tanzania. The eastern coast borders the Mozambique Channel. It is located at 18 15 S, 35 00 E.

Geography:

Mozambique is 801,590 sq. km, which is twice the size of California. This country is made up of mostly coastal low lands, mountains in the west, plateaus in the northwest, and uplands in the central regions. Mozambique is separated into 10 provinces. They are Cabo Delgado, Gaza, Inhambane, Manica, Maputo, Cidade de Maputo (city), Nampula, Niassa, Sofala, Tete, and Zambezia.

Climate:

The climate is tropical to subtropical. Mozambique suffers from severe droughts, cyclones, and floods.

History:

Mozambique was first explored by Vasco de Gama in 1498 and colonized by Portugal in 1505. Intense guerilla activity started up in 1963 and became so intense that in 1973 Portugal ordered in 40,000 troops to fight the rebels. After 470 years as a Portuguese colony, on June 25, 1975 Mozambique received their independence. Their first president was Samora Moises Machel. Mozambique fought a 16 year civil war up until the mid 90’s, which significantly hindered their ability to develop as a country. In December 2004, Joaquim Chiassano stepped down after 18 years in office. He played a huge role in the reconstruction of their country since the civil war ended. Armando Emilio Guelbuza is now (2008) the president and plans to continue to develop Mozambique to the best of his ability.
Important Dates:

Important dates in Mozambique are June 25, which is Independence Day and November 30, date of their Constitution.

Population:

Today (2008) the population is 20,905,585. Mozambique has an excess mortality rate due to AIDS. In Mozambique, there are approximately 1.3 million people living with AIDS. There are very high risks of contracting dangerous diseases including AIDS, Hepatitis A, bacterial diarrhea, typhoid fever, malaria, and more. Seventy percent of the population is living below the poverty line. The life expectancy is 41.4 years for males and 40.4 years for women.

Currency:

The currency used in Mozambique is Metical. It is estimated that 26.264 meticais equal one US dollar (2008).

Education:

The literacy rate is 47.8%, 63.5% males to 32.7% women. Mozambique has slowly been rebuilding their education system since the civil war. Between 1980 and 1985, 2,051 schools were destroyed. School is required for 7 years but the majority of students do not finish. Eduardo Mondlane University is located in Maputo, Mozambique’s capital. The government is trying to promote the spread of education for all ages considering 55.5% of the population is still illiterate.

Language:

The languages spoke in Mozambique are 26.1% Emakhuwa, 11.3% Xichangana, 8.8% Portuguese, 7.6% Elome, 6.8% Cisma, 5.8% Echuwabo, and 27% of the population speaks Portuguese as their second language.

Religion:
Religions in Mozambique include: Catholic - 23.8%, Muslim -17.8%, Zionist Christian - 17.5%, other -17.8%, and 23.1% - none.

Agriculture:

In Mozambique, 81% of the population depends on agriculture as their occupation and is the backbone of their economy. This country produces cotton, cashews, sugar cane, tea, tapioca, corn, coconuts, sisal, citrus and tropical fruits, potatoes, sunflowers, beef, and poultry. Mozambique has great agricultural potential. They have 36 million hectares of arable land and only 10% is being used today. Mozambique has the ability to produce a large variety of crops considering the different soil types and climate. The climate and land condition are great for production of livestock as well. Mozambique raises cattle, goats, rabbits, pigs, and poultry but their limited supply does not meet domestic demands.

Trade:

Mozambique exports aluminum, prawns, cashews, cotton, sugar, citrus, timber, and bulk electricity. Their major export partners are The Netherlands, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Mozambique imports machinery and equipment, vehicles, fuel, chemicals, metal products, and textiles. Their major import partners are The Netherlands, South Africa, Portugal, and Malawi. Mozambique’s natural resources are coal, titanium, natural gas, hydropower, tantalum, and graphite.

Food:

Malnutrition is one of Mozambique’s biggest problems. Most of their meals consist of corn and chicken. They depend on fruits, nuts, and goat’s milk to get through the day. Everything is cooked over an open fire.

Landmarks:
There are 3 main sights to see when traveling to Mozambique. First is the Bazaruto Archipelago National Park. This park consists of 4 main islands and is considered a tropical paradise. Luckily, this place has been protected and has avoided the effects of the civil war. The Bazaruto Archipelago is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Mozambique. Second is Maputo. Maputo is the capital of Mozambique and is filled with unique architecture and culture. Third is Inhaca Island. It has beautiful beaches, coral reefs, with museums and a historical lighthouse. There are many wildlife preserves located in the center of the country that were decimated during the civil war but have been under considerable rebuilding since.

Alex Burzynski