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Namibia¹



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Background:

Namibia gained its independence in 1990 from South Africa. The first president of the country was Dr Sam Nujoma who ruled the country for the first 14 years. He was replaced by President Hifikepunye POHAMBHA who was elected in November 2004 in a landslide victory replacing as the new president of Namibia. President POHAMBHA was reelected to rule for another term in November 2009.

Location:

Southern Africa, bordering the South Atlantic Ocean, between Angola and South Africa

Geographic coordinates:

22 00 S, 17 00 E

¹ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/wa.html>

Area:

total: 824,292 sq km

country comparison to the world: [34](#)

land: 823,290 sq km

water: 1,002 sq km

Area - comparative:

slightly more than half the size of Alaska

Land boundaries:

total: 3,936 km

border countries: Angola 1,376 km, Botswana 1,360 km, South Africa 967 km, Zambia 233 km

Coastline:

1,572 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm

contiguous zone: 24 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

Climate:

desert; hot, dry; rainfall sparse and erratic

Terrain:

mostly high plateau; Namib Desert along coast; Kalahari Desert in east

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Atlantic Ocean 0 m

highest point: Konigstein 2,606 m

Natural resources:

diamonds, copper, uranium, gold, silver, lead, tin, lithium, cadmium, tungsten, zinc, salt, hydropower, fish

note: suspected deposits of oil, coal, and iron ore

Land use:

arable land: 0.99%

permanent crops: 0.01%

other: 99% (2005)

Irrigated land:

80 sq km (2008)

Total renewable water resources:

45.5 cu km (1991)

Freshwater withdrawal (domestic/industrial/agricultural):

total: 0.3 cu km/yr (24%/5%/71%)

per capita: 148 cu m/yr (2000)

Natural hazards:

prolonged periods of drought

Environment - current issues:

limited natural freshwater resources; desertification; wildlife poaching; land degradation has led to few conservation areas

Environment - international agreements:

party to: Antarctic-Marine Living Resources, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Ozone Layer Protection, Wetlands

signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note:

first country in the world to incorporate the protection of the environment into its constitution; some 14% of the land is protected, including virtually the entire Namib Desert coastal strip

Languages:

English (official) 7%, Afrikaans (common language of most of the population and about 60% of the white population), German 32%, indigenous languages (includes Oshivambo, Herero, Nama) 1%

Religions:

Christian 80% to 90% (at least 50% Lutheran), indigenous beliefs 10% to 20%

Population:

2,165,828 (July 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: [143](#)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 34.2% (male 371,078/female 364,232)

15-64 years: 61.7% (male 671,853/female 652,414)

65 years and over: 4.1% (male 38,851/female 49,157) (2011 est.)

Median age:

total: 21.7 years

male: 21.7 years

female: 21.8 years (2011 est.)

Population growth rate:

0.817% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: [133](#)

[Birth rate:](#)

21.11 births/1,000 population (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: [80](#)

[Death rate:](#)

13.09 deaths/1,000 population (July 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: [19](#)

[Net migration rate:](#)

0.15 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: [70](#)

[Urbanization:](#)

urban population: 38% of total population (2010)

rate of urbanization: 3.3% annual rate of change (2010-15 est.)

[Major cities - population:](#)

WINDHOEK (capital) 342,000 (2009)

[Sex ratio:](#)

at birth: 1.03 male(s)/female

under 15 years: 1.02 male(s)/female

15-64 years: 1.03 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.78 male(s)/female

total population: 1.02 male(s)/female (2012 est.)

[Maternal mortality rate:](#)

180 deaths/100,000 live births (2008)

country comparison to the world: [61](#)

[Infant mortality rate:](#)

total: 45.61 deaths/1,000 live births

country comparison to the world: [51](#)

male: 48.76 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 42.36 deaths/1,000 live births (2012 est.)

[Life expectancy at birth:](#)

total population: 52.17 years

country comparison to the world: [210](#)

male: 52.47 years

female: 51.86 years (2012 est.)

[Total fertility rate:](#)

2.41 children born/woman (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: [86](#)

[Health expenditures:](#)

5.9% of GDP (2009)

country comparison to the world: [109](#)

[Physicians density:](#)

0.374 physicians/1,000 population (2007)

country comparison to the world: [132](#)

[Hospital bed density:](#)

2.67 beds/1,000 population (2009)

country comparison to the world: [84](#)

[Drinking water source:](#)

improved:

urban: 99% of population

rural: 88% of population

total: 92% of population

unimproved:

urban: 1% of population

rural: 12% of population

total: 8% of population (2008)

Sanitation facility access:

improved:

urban: 60% of population

rural: 17% of population

total: 33% of population

unimproved:

urban: 40% of population

rural: 83% of population

total: 67% of population (2008)

Education expenditures:

6.4% of GDP (2008)

country comparison to the world: [23](#)

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 85%

male: 86.8%

female: 83.5% (2001 census)

Unemployment, youth ages 15-24:

total: 41.7%

country comparison to the world: [7](#)

male: 36.7%

female: 47.1% (2004)

Country name:

conventional long form: Republic of Namibia

conventional short form: Namibia

local long form: Republic of Namibia

local short form: Namibia

former: German South-West Africa (Sued-West Afrika), South-West Africa

Government type:

republic

Capital:

name: Windhoek

geographic coordinates: 22 34 S, 17 05 E

Administrative divisions:

13 regions; Caprivi, Erongo, Hardap, Karas, Khomas, Kunene, Ohangwena, Okavango, Omaheke, Omusati, Oshana, Oshikoto, Otjozondjupa

Independence:

21 March 1990 (from South African mandate)

National holiday:

Independence Day, 21 March (1990)

Constitution:

ratified 9 February 1990, effective 12 March 1990

Legal system:

mixed legal system of uncodified civil law based on Roman-Dutch law and customary law

International law organization participation:

has not submitted an ICJ jurisdiction declaration; accepts ICCt jurisdiction

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: President Hifikepunye POHAMBHA (since 21 March 2005) note - the president is both the chief of state and head of government

head of government: President Hifikepunye POHAMBHA (since 21 March 2005); Prime Minister Nahas ANGULA (since 21 March 2005)

Cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the president from among the members of the National Assembly

Elections: president elected by popular vote for a five-year term (eligible for a second term); if no single candidate receives a majority of the vote in the first round of voting, a run-off election is scheduled between the two candidates with the greatest vote count; election last held on 27-28 November 2009 (next to be held in 2014)

Legislative branch:

bicameral legislature consists of the National Council, primarily an advisory body (26 seats; two members chosen from each regional council to serve six-year terms), and the National Assembly

(72 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms, an additional six nonvoting members are appointed by the president)

elections: National Council - elections for regional councils to determine members of the National Council held on 26-27 November 2010 (next to be held in 2016); National Assembly - last held on 26-27 November 2009 (next to be held in November 2014)

election results: National Council - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - SWAPO 24, UDF 1, DTA 1; National Assembly - percent of vote by party - SWAPO 75.3%, RDP 11.3%, DTA 3.1%, NUDO 3.0%, UDF 2.4%, APP 1.4%, RP 0.8%, COD 0.7%, SWANU 0.6%, other 1.3%; seats by party - SWAPO 54, RDP 8, DTA 2, NUDO 2, UDF 2, APP 1, COD 1, RP 1, SWANU 1

Judicial branch:

Supreme Court (judges appointed by the president on the recommendation of the Judicial Service Commission)

Economy - overview:

The economy is heavily dependent on the extraction and processing of minerals for export. Mining accounts for 8% of GDP, but provides more than 50% of foreign exchange earnings. Rich alluvial diamond deposits make Namibia a primary source for gem-quality diamonds. Namibia is the world's fourth-largest producer of uranium. It also produces large quantities of zinc and is a small producer of gold and other minerals. The mining sector employs only about 3% of the population. Namibia normally imports about 50% of its cereal requirements; in drought years food shortages are a major problem in rural areas. A high per capita GDP, relative to the region, hides one of the world's most unequal income distributions, as shown by Namibia's 70.7 GINI coefficient. The Namibian economy is closely linked to South Africa with the Namibian dollar pegged one-to-one to the South African rand. Until 2010, Namibia drew 40% of its budget revenues from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU). Increased payments from SACU put Namibia's budget into surplus in 2007 for the first time since independence. SACU allotments to Namibia increased in 2009, but dropped in 2010 and 2011 because of the global recession, reducing Namibia's overall SACU income. Increased fish production and mining of zinc, copper, and uranium spurred growth in 2003-08, but growth in recent years was undercut by poor fish catches, a dramatic decline in demand for diamonds, higher costs of producing metals, and the global recession. A rebound in diamond and uranium prices in 2010 and the reopening of copper mines in 2011 provided a significant boost to Namibia's mining sector.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$15.5 billion (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [137](#)

\$14.99 billion (2010 est.)

\$14.28 billion (2009 est.)

note: data are in 2011 US dollars

[GDP \(official exchange rate\):](#)

\$13 billion (2011 est.)

[GDP - real growth rate:](#)

3.6% (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [112](#)

4.8% (2010 est.)

-0.7% (2009 est.)

[GDP - per capita \(PPP\):](#)

\$7,300 (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [129](#)

\$7,100 (2010 est.)

\$6,800 (2009 est.)

note: data are in 2011 US dollars

[GDP - composition by sector:](#)

agriculture: 7.1%

industry: 34.4%

services: 58.5% (2011 est.)

[Labor force:](#)

803,700 (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [146](#)

[Labor force - by occupation:](#)

agriculture: 16.3%

industry: 22.4%

services: 61.3%

note: statistics are for the formal sector only; about half of Namibia's people are unemployed while about two-thirds live in rural areas; roughly two-thirds of rural dwellers rely on subsistence agriculture (2008 est.)

[Unemployment rate:](#)

51.2% (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: [192](#)

36.7% (2004 est.)

[Population below poverty line:](#)

55.8%

note: the UNDP's 2005 Human Development Report indicated that 34.9% of the population live on \$1 per day and 55.8% live on \$2 per day (2005 est.)

[Household income or consumption by percentage share:](#)

lowest 10%: 1.1%

highest 10%: 53% (2008)

[Distribution of family income - Gini index:](#)

70.7 (2003)

country comparison to the world: [1](#)

[Investment \(gross fixed\):](#)

20.8% of GDP (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [107](#)

Budget:

revenues: \$3.959 billion

expenditures: \$5.217 billion (2011 est.)

Taxes and other revenues:

30.5% of GDP (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [86](#)

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):

-9.7% of GDP (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [195](#)

Public debt:

27.4% of GDP (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [100](#)

20.1% of GDP (2010 est.)

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

5.3% (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [124](#)

4.5% (2010 est.)

Central bank discount rate:

12% (31 December 2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: [47](#)

7% (31 December 2009 est.)

Commercial bank prime lending rate:

10.2% (31 December 2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [104](#)

9.72% (31 December 2010 est.)

[Stock of narrow money:](#)

\$3.767 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [107](#)

\$3.653 billion (31 December 2010 est.)

[Stock of broad money:](#)

\$7.86 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [110](#)

\$8.078 billion (31 December 2010 est.)

[Stock of domestic credit:](#)

\$5.846 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [111](#)

\$6.553 billion (31 December 2010 est.)

[Market value of publicly traded shares:](#)

\$1.176 billion (31 December 2010)

country comparison to the world: [105](#)

\$846.3 million (31 December 2009)

\$618.7 million (31 December 2008)

[Agriculture - products:](#)

millet, sorghum, peanuts, grapes; livestock; fish

[Industries:](#)

meatpacking, fish processing, dairy products; mining (diamonds, lead, zinc, tin, silver, tungsten, uranium, copper)

[Industrial production growth rate:](#)

6.5% (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: [49](#)

[Electricity - production:](#)

2.197 billion kWh (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: [132](#)

[Electricity - consumption:](#)

3.928 billion kWh (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: [120](#)

[Electricity - exports:](#)

47 million kWh (2008 est.)

[Electricity - imports:](#)

2.1 billion kWh (2008 est.)

[Oil - production:](#)

0 bbl/day (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: [142](#)

[Oil - consumption:](#)

24,000 bbl/day (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: [122](#)

[Oil - exports:](#)

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: [141](#)

[Oil - imports:](#)

19,890 bbl/day (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: [112](#)

[Natural gas - production:](#)

0 cu m (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: [141](#)

[Natural gas - consumption:](#)

0 cu m (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: [141](#)

[Natural gas - exports:](#)

0 cu m (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: [204](#)

[Natural gas - imports:](#)

0 cu m (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: [144](#)

[Natural gas - proved reserves:](#)

62.29 billion cu m (1 January 2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [62](#)

[Current account balance:](#)

\$108.7 million (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [57](#)

\$125.2 million (2010 est.)

Exports:

\$4.568 billion (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [117](#)

\$4.115 billion (2010 est.)

Exports - commodities:

diamonds, copper, gold, zinc, lead, uranium; cattle, processed fish, karakul skins

Imports:

\$5.345 billion (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [121](#)

\$4.904 billion (2010 est.)

Imports - commodities:

foodstuffs; petroleum products and fuel, machinery and equipment, chemicals

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:

\$1.542 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [127](#)

\$1.495 billion (31 December 2010 est.)

Debt - external:

\$3.405 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [130](#)

\$3.101 billion (31 December 2010 est.)

Stock of direct foreign investment - at home:

\$NA

[Stock of direct foreign investment - abroad:](#)

\$NA

[Exchange rates:](#)

Namibian dollars (NAD) per US dollar -

7.076 (2011 est.)

7.32 (2010 est.)

8.42 (2009)

7.75 (2008)

7.18 (2007)

[Telephones - main lines in use:](#)

152,000 (2010)

country comparison to the world: [134](#)

[Telephones - mobile cellular:](#)

1.535 million (2010)

country comparison to the world: [144](#)

[Telephone system:](#)

general assessment: good system; core fiber-optic network links most centers and connections are now digital

domestic: multiple mobile-cellular providers with a combined subscribership of more than 70 telephones per 100 persons; combined fixed-line and mobile-cellular teledensity about 80 per 100 persons

international: country code - 264; fiber-optic cable to South Africa, microwave radio relay link to Botswana, direct links to other neighboring countries; connected to the South African Far East (SAFE) submarine cable through South Africa; satellite earth stations - 4 Intelsat (2008)

[Broadcast media:](#)

1 private and 1 state-run television station; satellite and cable TV service is available; state-run

radio service broadcasts in multiple languages; about a dozen private radio stations operating; transmissions of multiple international broadcasters are available (2007)

[Internet country code:](#)

.na

[Internet hosts:](#)

76,020 (2010)

country comparison to the world: [80](#)

[Internet users:](#)

127,500 (2009)

country comparison to the world: [151](#)

[Airports:](#)

129 (2010)

country comparison to the world: [46](#)

[Airports - with paved runways:](#)

total: 21

over 3,047 m: 3

2,438 to 3,047 m: 2

1,524 to 2,437 m: 13

914 to 1,523 m: 3 (2010)

[Airports - with unpaved runways:](#)

total: 108

2,438 to 3,047 m: 1

1,524 to 2,437 m: 25

914 to 1,523 m: 71

under 914 m: 11 (2010)

Railways:

total: 2,626 km

country comparison to the world: [62](#)

narrow gauge: 2,626 km 1.067-m gauge (2010)

Roadways:

total: 64,189 km

country comparison to the world: [71](#)

paved: 5,477 km

unpaved: 58,712 km (2010)

Merchant marine:

total: 1

country comparison to the world: [158](#)

by type: cargo 1 (2010)

Ports and terminals:

Luderitz, Walvis Bay

Disputes - international:

concerns from international experts and local populations over the Okavango Delta ecology in Botswana and human displacement scuttled Namibian plans to construct a hydroelectric dam on Popa Falls along the Angola-Namibia border; managed dispute with South Africa over the location of the boundary in the Orange River; Namibia has supported, and in 2004 Zimbabwe dropped objections to, plans between Botswana and Zambia to build a bridge over the Zambezi River, thereby de facto recognizing a short, but not clearly delimited, Botswana-Zambia boundary in the river

Refugees and internally displaced persons:

refugees (country of origin): 4,700 (Angola) (2007)