

Bonaire

Overview:
Bonaire is one of five Caribbean islands (also Curaçao, Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten) comprising the Netherlands Antilles, a part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Bonaire demonstrates a strong cultural identity. It has a willingness to participate in the global economy and has encouraged local economic vitality despite most powers going to the Central government in Curaçao. The imminent break-up of the Netherlands Antilles remains an overarching political issue as the constituent islands are each seeking direct relations with the Netherlands.

Territory:
Land: 298 sq. km. (112 sq. mi.). Second largest of the five Netherlands Antilles islands, 38 km (24 mi.) x 5-11 km (3-7 mi.). Highest elevation 239 m (784 ft).

Location:
50 miles north of Venezuela, 38 miles east of Curaçao, 86 miles east of Aruba.

Latitude and Longitude:
12 5 North Latitude and 68 25 West Longitude

Time Zone:
GMT -4

Total Land Area:
298

EEZ:

Climate:
Yearly average temperature 30Â° C./ 82Â° F. (high), rainfall <22 mm, (low), humidity 76.5% (low), water temperature 28Â° C./80Â° F. (high), wind speed 15-20 mph (high). Lies south of the hurricane belt and rarely threatened.

Natural Resources:
Solar salt, Brazil woods, aloe. Excellent deep-water harbour. Coral reefs. Oil spills in the port area is a public health concern (2001 Census)

ECONOMY:

Total GDP:	
2003	165,100,000.00 USD

Per Capita GDP:	

% of GDP per Sector:			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
2003	3.4%	2.9%	93.7%

% of Population Employed by Sector			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
2001	1.8%	3.8%	94.4%

External Aid/Remittances:

Growth:
3.4% (2003)

Labour Force:	
2004	4,661
2006	5,647
2002	4,334

Unemployment	
Year:	Unemployment Rate (% of pop.)
2002	11.6%
2001	9.1%
2000	5.5%

Industry:

2005	77,400,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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Official Currency:
Netherlands Antillean Guilder

Banking and Insurance:

Number of Banks and Credit Unions:
Number of Agricultural Credit Unions:
Number of Insurance Companies:

Well-developed Netherlands Antilles banking system. European and North American bank branches. Most banks have international ties.

Financial Services:

Locally established insurance companies as subsidiaries or representatives of international insurance companies.

Communications/E-Commerce:

Outward and open. Government and private web sites on economy and tourism extensive. English and/or Dutch.

Public Ownership:

Companies partially or completely owned under a foundation of the local government Executive Council: WEB NV (water & electricity); TELBO NV (telecommunications); SELIBON NV (waste management); TCB NV (tourism promotion); and others.

Land Use:

Freehold – private land, ownership transferable
Long lease land – owned by Government of the Netherlands Antilles
National Park – terrestrial (6,500 hectares) 22% of island
Construction Regulations, Permits, Height restrictions
Use of South Florida standards where no regulation

Agriculture/Forestry:

No self-sufficiency in food production. Imports from USA, Europe. Daily food market - small boat vendors from Venezuela

Marine Activity:

Fishing:

Marine Life:

Maritime claims: 12 nautical miles.
Exclusive fishing zone: 12 nautical miles.
Bonaire National Marine Park (6,000 hectares), Ramsar sites Underwater parks patrolled by staff with enforcement authority.
Field research station.

Critical Issues:

Sustainability of marine and land environment.
Damage to the environment in the surrounding ocean from uncontrolled tanker flushing is a continuing danger. The footprint of damage to dive sites is becoming measurable.
Critical needs: Stable population base, skilled workforce

JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES

Capital:

Kralendijk

Political System:

Parliamentary democracy. Netherlands Antilles has two levels of government, Island and Central.

Netherlands Antilles (Central Government)

The Central Government situated in Curaçao has jurisdiction over state affairs and includes justice, police, customs, immigration, communications, public health, education, money, banking and foreign currency. Elections are held every four years or when a Government falls.

The executive branch of government, the Executive Council, is derived from the island Councils. At least two members of the Executive Council must come from the Bonaire Island Council. Executive Council members are called Commissioners. They are the heads of government departments like Public Works, Finance, Education, Sanitation, Public Utilities and the Environment.

The Charter: The administrative relationship between the Netherlands and the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba is governed by the 1954 Charter for the Kingdom of Netherlands, the highest constitutional instrument (taking precedence over the Constitution). Each country partner runs its own affairs except as relates to "Kingdom affairs".

NA is also an Ultra-Peripheral Region of the European Union. Kingdom of the Netherlands (Kingdom Affairs)

The Kingdom of the Netherlands:

A monarchy headquartered in The Hague. Responsible for Kingdom affairs: defense of the Kingdom and the maintenance of its independence, foreign relations, human rights and fundamental freedoms, legal certainty, the quality of public administration, and oversight of the rules on citizenship, extradition, and the admission or expulsion of foreign nationals. These matters are regulated by Kingdom-wide legislation, applying to all three partner countries.

Each Island Governor is not elected but appointed by the Dutch Crown with the advice of the island government. The Governor is the non-voting President of the Island Council and the voting Chairman of the Executive Council. The Council of Ministers for the Kingdom consists of the Dutch cabinet and ministers plenipotentiary for the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba. Kingdom-wide legislation is proposed by the government of the Kingdom (consisting of the Monarch and the Council of Ministers for the Kingdom) and passed by the Dutch parliament (the States General).

Treaties: Concluded on behalf of the Kingdom as a whole, but may not necessarily apply to all partner countries (Netherlands, Aruba and Netherlands Antilles). Partner countries are only involved in the conclusion of treaties that affect them. It is up to them to decide whether this is the case.

Supreme Court: Supreme Court of the Kingdom to which all civil and criminal cases can ultimately be appealed. The Supreme Court does not have the power to repeal an Act of Parliament on the grounds of incompatibility with the Constitution but it may refuse to apply an Act of Parliament on the grounds that it conflicts with an international agreement.

Political Parties:

Island government elections are always held every four years for nine seats on Council. The Island Council members, called Deputies, vote to form a government.

A political party gains one seat for each 1/9 of the total numbers of votes cast for members of its party. Voters select only one candidate from the list. The members elected to the Council serve "at large". Political party candidates can be any Dutch citizen >18 years if the party has at least one seat in the Island Council. If the party has no seats, then 25 signatures recommending the candidate are needed. In Bonaire's 2003 election, 17 candidates from five political parties vied for nine Council seats.

Important Legislation:

[Bonaire's authority is limited - can be advisory to Central government]

Marine Environment Ordinance:

Responsibility for the environment is now being devolved. Bonaire passed the Marine Environment Ordinance in 1985 which incorporates existing marine legislation and provides for comprehensive management regulation with regard to fisheries, coral reefs and the vulnerable Lac Lagoon. This Ordinance was amended during 1992 to include user fees, licensing of tour operators and total ban on marine turtle catching.

Island Council has approved the draft Environmental Policy Plan 2002-2006 and Nature Policy Plan

Principal Taxes:

Associated Power:

Netherlands Antilles/Kingdom of Netherlands (EU)

Citizenship:

Dutch Antillean, EU passport.

Paradiplomacy:

HUMAN RESOURCES

Population: 11,513. Males: 5607; Females: 5906.

Area: 288 sq. km.;

Population density per sq. km. Dec. 2004: 40.

2007			
Island	Area (km sq.)	Population	% of Total Population
Bonaire	298	11,537	6%
Bonaire	288	11,537	100%

89% - 98% of household dwellings use water from desalination plants. Wastewater goes to inground septic tanks (2001 Census)

Population:	
Year	Resident Population

Age of Population:	0-14	15-24	25-49	50-64	65 and up
2007	30398	18,229	48,340	24,410	15,717
2007	2829	1,388	4,324	1,958	1,014

Migration:

Immigration 2007: 885. Emmigration 2007: 553.

Crude Birth Rate:

Life Expedtancy:

Birth Rate: 65.2 per 1000 females 15-44

Death Rate: 6.7 per 1000 population

Males: 70.6 yrs.

Females: 79 yrs.

Crude Death Rate:	
2004	6.7%

Ethnicity:

African descent (95%), Carib Indian, European

Class Division:

On Saba and Bonaire, the 20% of households with the highest income levels had an income six times higher than that found among the poorest 20% of households.

Languages:

Dutch (official), Papiamentu (predominant), English (widely spoken), Spanish



Religion:
Roman Catholic (82%), Protestant, Jewish

Literacy:
96% (Netherlands Antilles)

Education System:

Total Pre-schools:(2007)	4
Total Primary Schools	
First Level:	7
Second Level:	2
Third Level:	1
Total Secondary Schools:	1
Total Professional Schools	
Universities:	

Number of Schools per Island:										
	Pre-school		Elementary			High-school		Prof.	University	
	Pub	Priv	1	2	3	Pub	Priv		Pub	Priv
Bonaire	4		7		1	1		1		
Bonaire	4		6	1		3				

Students Enrolled:					
Year:	Pre-School	Elementary	High-school	Prof.	University
2007	355	2,534	132	42	0
2003	355	1,932	421	0	0

Teachers							
Year	Pre-School	Elementary			High-School	Prof.	University
		1	2	3			

New system (2002); basic education to age 15
 Kindergarten (Papiamentu) for 2 years: (3 Catholic, 1 state school)
 Elementary (Dutch) at age 6: (4 Catholic, 1 state school) Special education school (1)
 Secondary education (1 combined junior, senior and pre-vocational)
 Higher education in Curaçao or Netherlands. CBSNA collects data for public schools only.

Medical Services:

5 general practitioner clinics, one per district, 2 private clinics
 8 government general practitioners; visiting specialists from Curaçao Mariadal foundation provides funding for medical services basic healthcare (hospital, nursing home, ambulance, air ambulance, home care, parent and childcare);
 1 decompression chamber, 3 pharmacies

HISTORY AND CULTURE

History:

Inhabited by Arawaks, discovered by Spaniards in 1499. Spain found difficult to colonize due to little agricultural or commercial value but imported convicts from other Spanish colonies.

Dutch claimed in 1634 for military stronghold. Dutch West Indies Company developed salt production, imported African slaves.

British occupied briefly during 1800's. Dutch regained control in 1816 and established government plantations for Brazil woods, aloes, and salt. After slavery was abolished in 1863, economic recession lasted for next 90 years with much emigration, with return in 1950's when oil industry became automated. International tourism industry began with building a pier in its excellent deep-water harbour which attracted cruise ships. New airport 1943, first hotel 1951. The solar salt pans became the most successful in the world, producing 400,000 tons of large crystal industrial salt annually.

After Dutch military and diplomatic defeats, and nationalism that resulted in establishment of the Republic of Indonesia in 1949, along with international pressure for decolonization, the Netherlands used constitutional means to release its Caribbean colonies. The Charter of the Kingdom was adopted in 1954 granting autonomy and making the Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles, and Surinam equal parts of the Kingdom. Surinam gained independence in 1975 and Aruba gained a separate statute (status aparte) as part of the Kingdom in 1986.

Since the formation of the Netherlands Antilles in 1948, Bonaire received outside resources and embraced the international economy. In 1964, Trans World Radio, a 500,000 watt Protestant missionary station began broadcasting to the entire Western Hemisphere, the Middle East, North Africa and Eastern Europe. In 1969, the Dutch World Broadcasting Company began short wave transmissions from Bonaire. In 1975 Bonaire Petroleum Corporation (BOPEC) built a terminal to transfer oil from large to small tankers.

Referenda:

Federation between the former Dutch colonies is a source of continuing conflict over organization of administration and centralization by the Central government over these geographically separate, economically different and historically distinct islands.

September 2004 – a majority of Bonaireans chose direct constitutional relations with the Netherlands rather than status quo or independence.

Recent Significant Events:

The Netherlands Antilles is to be disbanded by December 15, 2008.

Music, Dance, Handicraft and Patrimony:

Sources:

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Statistical Information - Netherlands Antilles <http://www.cbs.an> 27th March 2008

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