

Curacao

Overview:

Curacao and Bonaire are grouped with the Leeward Islands located off the north coast of Venezuela in the Caribbean Sea. They, and the Windward islands: Sint Maarten, Saba, and St. Eustatius which lie east of the US Virgin Islands, form the Netherlands Antilles a jurisdiction of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Fifteen miles off the coast of Curaçao, to the southeast, lies the small, uninhabited island of Klein Curaçao ("Little Curaçao").

Territory:

Land: 444 square kilometres (171 square miles). The largest of the Netherlands Antilles islands. Length 62 km x Width 14 km; 4 km at the narrowest point. Lowest elevation: Caribbean Sea 0 m Highest elevation: Mount Scenery 862 m.

Location:

40 mi. off the north coast of Venezuela, 38 mi. west of Bonair, 42 mi. east of Aruba.

Latitude and Longitude:

12 06 N, 68 56 W

Time Zone:

GMT -4

Total Land Area:

444

EEZ:

12

Climate:

Located in the tropics, just 12° north of the Equator, the average temperature is about 27°C. Trade winds blow constantly from the east ameliorating the weather. Curaçao is outside the hurricane belt. The rainy season: October to February.

Natural Resources:

Phosphate deposits. The flora of Curaçao differs from the typical tropical island vegetation. Xeric scrublands are common, with various forms of cacti, thorny shrubs, evergreens, and the island's symbolic divi-divi. Curaçao Christoffelpark, a reserved wildlife park, lies in the island's northwest area.

ECONOMY:

Total GDP:

Per Capita GDP:

% of GDP per Sector:			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary

% of Population Employed by Sector			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary

External Aid/Remittances:

In a joint statement issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the June 2007 Conference on the Caribbean, key issues confronting policy makers in the 21st century are: regional cooperation on immigration, national security, trafficking in persons, reintegration of deportees, disaster preparedness, the spread of HIV/AIDS, and individual rights.

Growth:

High debt led the Government of the Netherlands Antilles to seek assistance from the IMF and the Dutch Government, through the IMF's Structural Adjustment Program. The current administration seeks to lessen dependency on the IMF. These government decisions reflect heavily on the Island of Curacao.

Labour Force:	
2006	53,797
2005	51,342
2004	51,474

Unemployment	
Year:	Unemployment Rate (% of pop.)
2006	12%

Industry:

Tourism, petroleum refining, petroleum transshipment facilities, and light manufacturing. Shipping and other activities related to the port of Willemstad also makes a considerable contribution to the economy.

Niche Industry:

Tourism: Diving and Snorkeling.

Tourism:

One of the main driving forces of the economy.



Imports and Exports:	
Free Zone - Imports by Commodity (Excluding oil products). SITC-Section 1.	
0 Food and live animals 432,000 NAf.	
1 Beverages and tobacco 39,361,000 NAf	
2 Crude materials, inedible, except fuels 161,000 NAf.	
5 Chemicals and related products n.e.s. 56,082,000.	
6 Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material 26,947,000 NAf.	
7 Machinery and transport equipment 149,544,000 NAf.	
8 Miscellaneous and other articles 505,011,000 NAf.	
9 Commodities and transactions not classified elsewhere in the SITC 39,000 NAf.	
Total Imports Free Zone: 777,577,000 NAf.	
Tot. Value of Imports	2.00 NAf (2005)
From Eu:	
Import Partners (EU:)	
Partners Outside EU:	Venezuela
Import Partners:	
Tot. Value of Exports	984 NAf (2005)
To Eu:	Bahamas
Export Partners:	
Partners Outside EU::	U.S. Panama, Mexico, Haiti, Singapore
Export Partners:	
Main Imports:	Imports by Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), excluding oil products: SITC Section 0 Food and live animals 299,000,000. SITC Section 1 Crude materials, inedible, except fuels 18,000,000. SITC Section 4 Animal and vegetable oils, fats, waxes 7,000,000. SITC Section 5 Chemicals and related products, n.e.s. 193,000,000. SITC Section 6 Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material 198,000.000. SITC Section 8/9 Miscellaneous 280,000,000. Total IMPORTS by SITC Section 1,504,000,000 NAf (2005).
Main Exports:	Exports by SITC Section (excluding oil products) NAf 2005: 145,000,000. Exports Free Zone - exports by Commodity (except oil products) SITC-Section 1. Total: 984,549,000.

TRANSPORTATION/ACCESS**External:****Number of Airports: 1**

Total Commercial landings (2004) 15,669 Total Non-Commercial landings (2003) 2836. Wilenstaad/Hato International Airport (CUR), paved customs runway 11,100 ft. long.

Number of Main Ports:**Internal:****Air****Road:****Sea:****Other Forms of Transportation:****Economic Zones:**

Legislated in 2001, Curaçao Industrial and International Trade Development Co. N.V.(CURINDE) is the government owned company managing the two economic free zones on the island: Harbour e-zone:53 acres; and Airport e-zone: 5,500 sq meters.

Energy Policy:

Cable: ARCO, a multi-national corporation, connects Curco to the US and 14 other Caribbean countries and jurisdictions.

Total electricity and water production increased over the same period in 2003. Electricity demand 2004 increased: 1)an expansion in the commercial sector due to an increase in small businesses and 2) the drop in air-conditioning prices which led to an increase in purchases as well as electricity usage.

Year	Total Energy Production (Mwh)	Type			Total Energy Consumption (Mwh)	Sector				
		Thermic (Mwh)	Geothermic (Mwh)	Other (Mwh)		Domestic (Mwh)	Commercial (Mwh)	Public Service (Mwh)	Industry (Mwh)	Public Lighting (Mwh)
2005	848,500,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Official Currency:

Netherlands Antillean Guilder

Banking and Insurance:

Number of Banks and Credit Unions: 12

Number of Agricultural Credit Unions:

Number of Insurance Companies: 16

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:

Open and outward; encouraged by Government (CURINDE) and extensive private web sites on economy and tourism . English and/or Dutch.

Public Ownership:

The public transport network of buses covers the whole island.

Land Use:**Agriculture/Forestry:**

Agricultural products: aloes, sorghum, peanuts, vegetables, tropical fruit. Poor soils and inadequate water supplies hamper the development of agriculture.

Marine Activity:**Fishing:**

Territorial sea: 12nm Exclusive fishing zone: 12nm

Marine Life:

Sea Turtles, coral reefs, tropical fish.

Critical Issues:

Sea Turtles are on the endangered list.

The coral reefs surrounding Curacao are endangered due to global warming and improper dredging to deepen ports. Oil spills in the port areas are a public health concern.

Porto Marie beach (Reef Care Curacao) is experimenting with artificial coral reefs in order to improve the reef's condition.

JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES**Capital:**

Willemstad: Island and Netherlands Antillies capital

Political System:

Parliamentary.

Netherlands Antilles has two levels of government, Island and Central. Curaçao gained limited self-government on January 1, 1954 as an island territory of the Overseas Territory of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

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 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.

Legislative branch: unicameral States or Staten (22 seats - Curacao 14, Bonaire 3, St. Maarten 3, St. Eustatius 1, Saba 1; members are elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms).

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".

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

Political Parties:

On the Island: Democratic Party of Curacao or DP; Pro Curacao Party or PPK;

Important Legislation:

In the referendum held on April 8, 2005 on Curacao, the citizens of the island expressed themselves in favor of an autonomous position for Curaçao in the Dutch Kingdom.

A week after, on April 15, 2005 the Island Council of the Island Territory of Curaçao formally ratified the results of the referendum and pointed out that the realization of the position of Curaçao as an autonomous country has to be at least the same as the status apart of Aruba. In a 2005 nonbinding referendum, 68% of voters in Curacao chose status aparte--independence from the federation within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. However, on 28 November 2006, the Island Council rejected a clarificatory memorandum on the process, thereby postponing it.

Principal Taxes:

E-Zone companies taxed at 2% (surtax inc.)/though no applicable on profits on sales/ser. to N.A. clients. No import or turnover tax on goods/ser. in e-zone or outside N.A. Wage tax can be calculated on net salary if employees lived outside N.A. for more than 5 years or have ex-patriate status.

Associated Power:

Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Citizenship:

Dutch Antillean. EU passport.

Paradiplomacy:

Although Curacao has no affiliations with other nations except through governing body The Netherlands Antilles, it can make local governmental decisions. The N.A. belongs to: Caricom (observer), ILO, IMF, Interpol, IOC, UNESCO (associate), UNWTO (associate), UPU, WCL, WCO, WMO.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Population: 137,094. Males: 62,734; Females: 74,360. Area: 444 sq. km. Population per sq. km.: 309 (Dec. 2004).

2004			
Island	Area (km sq.)	Population	% of Total Population
Curacao	444	137,094	71.5%

Almost all consumer and capital goods are imported, the US and Mexico being the major suppliers. 89%- 98% of household dwellings use water from desalination plants. Waterwater is treated in treatments plants(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

Migration:

Immigration: (2004) 5,918; Emigration: (2004) 3952.

Crude Birth Rate:

Life Expedtancy:

total population: 76.24 years male: 73.96 years female: 78.65 years (2007 est.) crude mortality: 7.5 deaths per 1000

Crude Death Rate:	
2007	6.39%

Ethnicity:

mixed black 85%, other 15% (includes Carib Amerindian, white, East Asian)

Class Division:

The highest income inequality,coupled with the lowest median household income,was found on Curaçao,where the 20% of households with the highest income had an income 14 times higher than that found among the poorest 20% of households.

Languages:

Papiamentu 65.4% (a Spanish-Portuguese-Dutch-English dialect), English 15.9% (widely spoken), Dutch 7.3% (official), Spanish 6.1%, Creole 1.6%, other 1.9%, unspecified 1.8% (2001 census)

Religion:

Roman Catholic 72%, Pentecostal 4.9%, Protestant 3.5%, Seventh-Day Adventist 3.1%, Methodist 2.9%, Jehovah's Witnesses 1.7%, other Christian 4.2%, Jewish 1.3%, other or unspecified 1.2%, none 5.2% (2001 census)

Literacy:

age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 96.7%
male: 96.7%
female: 96.8% (2003 est.)

Education System:

Dutch educational system.



Total Pre-schools:(2007)	48
Total Primary Schools	
First Level:	70
Second Level:	29
Third Level:	22
Total Secondary Schools:	3
Total Professional Schools	7
Universities:	2

Number of Schools per Island:										
	Pre-school		Elementary			High-school		Prof.	University	
	Pub	Priv	1	2	3	Pub	Priv		Pub	Priv
Curacao	48		98		22	3		7	1	

Students Enrolled:					
Year:	Pre-School	Elementary	High-school	Prof.	University
2007	4,382	22,218	1,891	243	2,132

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

Bilingual primary education in Papiamentu and Dutch. The University of Netherlands Antilles has a few courses in Papiamentu. The University of Dutch Caribbean holds classes in Dutch and English. The CBSNA only collects data for public schools.

Medical Services:

Curaçao provides the tertiary care for all the islands in the Netherlands Antilles. There are hospital facilities located in Wilhelmstad. Budgetary problems hamper reform of the health and pension systems of an aging population. Curacao has 88% of N.A. medical beds: 1,343 (2001).

HISTORY AND CULTURE

History:

The original inhabitants of Curaçao, the Arawak Amerindians, were decimated by the Spanish. The island was next occupied by the Dutch in 1634. The Dutch West India Company founded the capital of Willemstad and made Curaçao a center for slave trade until its abolishment in 1863. Its prosperity was restored in the early 20th century with the construction of oil refineries to service the newly discovered Venezuelan oil fields.

Referenda:

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

Recent Significant Events:

Curaçao features architecture that blends various Dutch and Spanish colonial styles. The wide range of other historic buildings in and around Willemstad earned the capital a place on UNESCO's world heritage list.

Music, Dance, Handicraft and Patrimony:

February 2007 is the 10th Anniversary of the "Kaya-9 Music Festival" a celebration of local Caribbean music. The first published work in Papiamentu was a poem by Joesph Sickman Corsen entitled Atardi, published in the La Cruz newspaper in 1905. Throughout Curaçaoan literature, narrative techniques and metaphors best characterized as magic realism tend to predominate.

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