



Africa :: Gabon

Introduction :: Gabon

Background:
El Hadj Omar BONGO Ondimba - one of the longest-serving heads of state in the world - dominated the country's political scene for four decades (1967-2009) following independence from France in 1960. President BONGO introduced a nominal multiparty system and a new constitution in the early 1990s. However, allegations of electoral fraud during local elections in 2002-03 and the presidential elections in 2005 exposed the weaknesses of formal political structures in Gabon. Following President BONGO's death in 2009, new elections brought Ali BONGO Ondimba, son of the former president, to power. Despite constrained political conditions, Gabon's small population, abundant natural resources, and considerable foreign support have helped make it one of the more prosperous and stable African countries.

Geography :: Gabon

Location:
Central Africa, bordering the Atlantic Ocean at the Equator, between Republic of the Congo and Equatorial Guinea

Geographic coordinates:
1 00 S, 11 45 E

Map references:
Africa

Area:
total: 267,667 sq km
country comparison to the world: 77
land: 257,667 sq km
water: 10,000 sq km

Area - comparative:
slightly smaller than Colorado

Land boundaries:
total: 2,551 km
border countries: Cameroon 298 km, Republic of the Congo 1,903 km, Equatorial Guinea 350 km

Coastline:
885 km

Maritime claims:
territorial sea: 12 nm
contiguous zone: 24 nm
exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

Climate:
tropical; always hot, humid

Terrain:
narrow coastal plain; hilly interior; savanna in east and south

Elevation extremes:
lowest point: Atlantic Ocean 0 m
highest point: Mont Iboundji 1,575 m

Natural resources:

petroleum, natural gas, diamond, niobium, manganese, uranium, gold, timber, iron ore, hydropower

Land use:

arable land: 1.21%

permanent crops: 0.64%

other: 98.15% (2011)

Irrigated land:

44.5 sq km (2003)

Total renewable water resources:

164 cu km (2011)

Freshwater withdrawal (domestic/industrial/agricultural):

total: 0.14 cu km/yr (61%/10%/29%)

per capita: 97.68 cu m/yr (2005)

Natural hazards:

NA

Environment - current issues:

deforestation; poaching

Environment - international agreements:

party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 83, Tropical Timber 94, Wetlands, Whaling

signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note:

a small population and oil and mineral reserves have helped Gabon become one of Africa's wealthier countries; in general, these circumstances have allowed the country to maintain and conserve its pristine rain forest and rich biodiversity

People and Society :: Gabon

Nationality:

noun: Gabonese (singular and plural)

adjective: Gabonese

Ethnic groups:

Bantu tribes, including four major tribal groupings (Fang, Bapounou, Nzebi, Obamba); other Africans and Europeans, 154,000, including 10,700 French and 11,000 persons of dual nationality

Languages:

French (official), Fang, Myene, Nzebi, Bapounou/Eschira, Bandjabi

Religions:

Christian 55%-75%, animist, Muslim less than 1%

Population:

1,640,286 (July 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 154

note: estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality, higher death rates, lower population growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected

Age structure:

0-14 years: 42.1% (male 347,203/female 344,008)

15-24 years: 20.3% (male 166,328/female 165,843)

25-54 years: 29.7% (male 243,111/female 243,442)

55-64 years: 4.1% (male 32,871/female 34,692)

65 years and over: 3.8% (male 26,627/female 36,161) (2013 est.)

Dependency ratios:

total dependency ratio: 77.4 %

youth dependency ratio: 68.3 %

elderly dependency ratio: 9.2 %

potential support ratio: 10.9 (2013)

Median age:

total: 18.6 years

male: 18.4 years

female: 18.8 years (2013 est.)

Population growth rate:

1.96% (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 55

Birth rate:

34.82 births/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 29

Death rate:

13.11 deaths/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 20

Net migration rate:

-2.11 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 165

Urbanization:

urban population: 86.2% of total population (2011)

rate of urbanization: 2.27% annual rate of change (2010-15 est.)

Major urban areas - population:

LIBREVILLE (capital) 619,000 (2009)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.03 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 1.01 male(s)/female

15-24 years: 1 male(s)/female

25-54 years: 1 male(s)/female

55-64 years: 0.96 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.73 male(s)/female

total population: 0.99 male(s)/female (2013 est.)

Mother's mean age at first birth:

18.7 (2000 est.)

Maternal mortality rate:

230 deaths/100,000 live births (2010)

country comparison to the world: 51

Infant mortality rate:

total: 48.02 deaths/1,000 live births

country comparison to the world: 44

male: 55.49 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 40.32 deaths/1,000 live births (2013 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 52.15 years

country comparison to the world: 214

male: 51.58 years

female: 52.74 years (2013 est.)

Total fertility rate:

4.52 children born/woman (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 29

Contraceptive prevalence rate:

31.1% (2012)

Health expenditures:

3.5% of GDP (2010)

country comparison to the world: 175

Physicians density:

0.29 physicians/1,000 population (2004)

Hospital bed density:

6.3 beds/1,000 population (2010)

Drinking water source:**improved:**

urban: 95% of population

rural: 41% of population

total: 87% of population

unimproved:

urban: 5% of population

rural: 59% of population

total: 13% of population (2010 est.)

Sanitation facility access:

improved:

urban: 33% of population

rural: 30% of population

total: 33% of population

unimproved:

urban: 67% of population

rural: 70% of population

total: 67% of population (2010 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:

5.2% (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 14

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:

46,000 (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 59

HIV/AIDS - deaths:

2,400 (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 52

Major infectious diseases:

degree of risk: very high

food or waterborne diseases: bacterial diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever

vectorborne disease: malaria and dengue fever

water contact disease: schistosomiasis

animal contact disease: rabies (2013)

Obesity - adult prevalence rate:

13.9% (2008)

country comparison to the world: 124

Children under the age of 5 years underweight:

8.8% (2001)

country comparison to the world: 70

Education expenditures:

NA

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 89%

male: 92.3%

female: 85.6% (2011 est.)

School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):

total: 13 years

male: 12 years

female: 12 years (2002)

Government:: Gabon

Country name:

conventional long form: Gabonese Republic

conventional short form: Gabon

local long form: Republique Gabonaise

local short form: Gabon

Government type:

republic; multiparty presidential regime

Capital:

name: Libreville

geographic coordinates: 0 23 N, 9 27 E

time difference: UTC+1 (6 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions:

9 provinces; Estuaire, Haut-Ogooue, Moyen-Ogooue, Ngounie, Nyanga, Ogooue-Ivindo, Ogooue-Lolo, Ogooue-Maritime, Woleu-Ntem

Independence:

17 August 1960 (from France)

National holiday:

Independence Day, 17 August (1960)

Constitution:

adopted 14 March 1991

Legal system:

mixed legal system of French civil 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 Ali BONGO ONDIMBA (since 16 October 2009)

head of government: Prime Minister Raymond NDONG SIMA (since 27 February 2012)

cabinet: Council of Ministers appointed by the prime minister in consultation with the president

(For more information visit the [World Leaders website](#))

elections: president elected by popular vote for a seven-year term (no term limits); election last held on 30 August 2009 (next to be held in 2016); prime minister appointed by the president

election results: President Ali BONGO ONDIMBA elected; percent of vote - Ali BONGO ONDIMBA 41.7%, Andre MBA OBAME 25.9%, Pierre MAMBOUNDOU 25.2%, Zacharie MYBOTO 3.9%, other 3.3%

note: President BONGO died on 8 June 2009 after serving as president for 32 years; in accordance with the constitution he was replaced on an interim basis by the president of the Senate, Rose Francine ROGOMBE on 10 June 2009; new elections were held on 30 August 2009 and the son of the former president, Ali BONGO Ondimba, was elected president

Legislative branch:

bicameral legislature consists of the Senate (102 seats; members elected by members of municipal councils and departmental assemblies to serve six-year terms) and the National Assembly or Assemblée Nationale (120 seats; members are elected by direct, popular vote to serve five-year terms)

elections: Senate - last held on 18 January 2009 (next to be held in January 2015); National Assembly - last held on 17 December 2011 (next to be held in December 2016)

election results: Senate - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - PDG 75, RPG 6, UGDD 3, CLR 2, PGCI 2, PSD 2, UPG 2, ADERE 1, independents 9; National Assembly - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - PDG 114, RPG 3, others 3

Judicial branch:

highest court(s): Supreme Court (organized into Judicial, Administrative, and Accounts chambers and consists of NA judges); Constitutional Court (consists of 9 judges)

judge selection and term of office: Supreme Court judges appointment and tenure NA; Constitutional Court judges appointed - 3 by the national president, 3 by the president of the Senate, and 3 by the president of the National Assembly; judges serve 7-year, single renewable terms

subordinate courts: Courts of Appeal; Court of State Security; county courts; military courts

Political parties and leaders:

Circle of Liberal Reformers or CLR [General Jean Boniface ASSELE]

Congress for Democracy and Justice or CDJ [Jules Aristide Bourdes OGOULIGUENDE]

Democratic and Republican Alliance or ADERE [Divungui-di-Ndinge DIDJOB]

Gabonese Democratic Party or PDG [Omar BONGO]

Gabonese Party for Progress or PGP [Benoit Mouity NZAMBA]

Gabonese Union for Democracy and Development or UGDD [Zacharie MYBOTO]

Independent Center Party of Gabon or PGCI

National Rally of Woodcutters or RNB

National Rally of Woodcutters-Rally for Gabon or RNB-RPG (Bucherons) [Fr. Paul M'BA-ABESSOLE]

Party of Development and Social Solidarity or PDS [Seraphin Ndoat REMBOGO]

Social Democratic Party or PSD [Pierre Claver MAGANGA-MOUSSAVOU]

Union for Democracy and Social Integration or UDIS

Union for the New Republic or UPRN [Louis Gaston MAYILA]

Union of Gabonese Patriots or UPG [Pierre MAMBOUNDOU]

Political pressure groups and leaders:

NA

International organization participation:

ACP, AfDB, AU, BDEAC, CEMAC, EITI (candidate country), FAO, FZ, G-24, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO, ITSO, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), MIGA, NAM, OIC, OIF, OPCW, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Michael MOUSSA-ADAMO

chancery: Suite 200, 2034 20th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009

telephone: [1] (202) 797-1000

FAX: [1] (202) 332-0668

consulate(s): New York

Diplomatic representation from the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Eric D. BENJAMINSON

embassy: Boulevard du Bord de Mer, Libreville

mailing address: Centre Ville, B. P. 4000, Libreville; pouch:2270 Libreville Place, Washington, DC 20521-2270

telephone: [241] 01-45-71-00, after hours - 07380171

FAX: [241] 74 55 07

Flag description:

three equal horizontal bands of green (top), yellow, and blue; green represents the country's forests and natural resources, gold represents the equator (which transects Gabon) as well as the sun, blue represents the sea

National symbol(s):

black panther

National anthem:

name: "La Concorde" (The Concorde)

[▶ PLAY ANTHEM](#)

lyrics/music: Georges Aleka DAMAS

note: adopted 1960

Economy :: Gabon

Economy - overview:

Gabon enjoys a per capita income four times that of most sub-Saharan African nations, but because of high income inequality, a large proportion of the population remains poor. Gabon depended on timber and manganese until oil was discovered offshore in the early 1970s. The economy was reliant on oil for about 50% of its GDP, about 70% of revenues, and 87% of goods exports for 2010, although some fields have passed their peak production. A rebound of oil prices from 1999 to 2008 helped growth, but declining production has hampered Gabon from fully realizing potential gains. Gabon signed a 14-month Stand-By Arrangement with the IMF in May 2007, and later that year issued a \$1 billion sovereign bond to buy back a sizable portion of its Paris Club debt. Gabon continues to face fluctuating prices for its oil, timber, and manganese exports. Despite the abundance of natural wealth, poor fiscal management has stifled the economy. However, President BONGO ONDIMBA has made efforts to increase transparency and is taking steps to make Gabon a more attractive investment destination to diversify the economy. BONGO ONDIMBA has attempted to boost growth by increasing government investment in human resources and infrastructure. GDP grew more than 6% per year over the 2010-12 period.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$25.91 billion (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 121

\$24.4 billion (2011 est.)

\$22.79 billion (2010 est.)

note: data are in 2012 US dollars

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$18.38 billion (2012 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:

6.2% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 45

7.1% (2011 est.)

6.8% (2010 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$16,800 (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 80

\$16,100 (2011 est.)

\$15,200 (2010 est.)

note: data are in 2012 US dollars

Gross national saving:

47.1% of GDP (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 6

44.9% of GDP (2011 est.)

51.9% of GDP (2010 est.)

GDP - composition, by end use:

household consumption: 37.3%

government consumption: 9.8%

investment in fixed capital: 30.3%

investment in inventories: 0%

exports of goods and services: 61.2%

imports of goods and services: -38.7%
(2012 est.)

GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

agriculture: 3.7%
industry: 64.3%
services: 32% (2012 est.)

Agriculture - products:

cocoa, coffee, sugar, palm oil, rubber; cattle; okoume (a tropical softwood); fish

Industries:

petroleum extraction and refining; manganese, gold; chemicals, ship repair, food and beverages, textiles, lumbering and plywood, cement

Industrial production growth rate:

6.5% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 35

Labor force:

616,700 (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 155

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture: 60%

industry: 15%

services: 25% (2000 est.)

Unemployment rate:

21% (2006 est.)

country comparison to the world: 164

Population below poverty line:

NA%

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

lowest 10%: 2.5%

highest 10%: 32.7% (2005)

Budget:

revenues: \$4.987 billion

expenditures: \$4.623 billion (2012 est.)

Taxes and other revenues:

27.1% of GDP (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 111

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):

2% of GDP (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 24

Public debt:

22.2% of GDP (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 124

19.4% of GDP (2011 est.)

Fiscal year:

calendar year

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

2.7% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 73

1.3% (2011 est.)

Central bank discount rate:

3% (31 December 2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 88

4.25% (31 December 2009 est.)

Commercial bank prime lending rate:

15% (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 43

15% (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of narrow money:

\$2.552 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 120

\$2.47 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of broad money:

\$3.918 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 133

\$3.534 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of domestic credit:

\$1.785 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 138

\$1.817 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

Market value of publicly traded shares:

\$NA

Current account balance:

\$3.747 billion (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 31

\$3.514 billion (2011 est.)

Exports:

\$10.2 billion (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 92

\$10.72 billion (2011 est.)

Exports - commodities:

crude oil, timber, manganese, uranium

Exports - partners:

Japan 23.9%, US 16.9%, Australia 11.2%, India 7.3%, China 5.4%, Spain 4.1% (2012)

Imports:

\$3.638 billion (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 139

\$3.319 billion (2011 est.)

Imports - commodities:

machinery and equipment, foodstuffs, chemicals, construction materials

Imports - partners:

France 28.1%, China 12.6%, US 9.4%, Belgium 5.8%, Cameroon 4.7% (2012)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:

\$2.373 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 119

\$2.177 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

Debt - external:

\$3.196 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 135

\$2.879 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

Exchange rates:

Cooperation Financiere en Afrique Centrale francs (XAF) per US dollar -

510.53 (2012 est.)

471.87 (2011 est.)

495.28 (2010 est.)

472.19 (2009)

447.81 (2008)

Energy:: Gabon

Electricity - production:

1.604 billion kWh (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 139

Electricity - consumption:

1.301 billion kWh (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 146

Electricity - exports:

0 kWh (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 198

Electricity - imports:

0 kWh (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 190

Electricity - installed generating capacity:

415,000 kW (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 141

Electricity - from fossil fuels:

59% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 137

Electricity - from nuclear fuels:

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 92

Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:

41% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 54

Electricity - from other renewable sources:

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 128

Crude oil - production:

244,700 bbl/day (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 36

Crude oil - exports:

226,800 bbl/day (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 29

Crude oil - imports:

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 187

Crude oil - proved reserves:

1.309 billion bbl (1 January 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 38

Refined petroleum products - production:

20,700 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 96

Refined petroleum products - consumption:

15,800 bbl/day (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 141

Refined petroleum products - exports:

8,985 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 87

Refined petroleum products - imports:

5,890 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 149

Natural gas - production:

80 million cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 80

Natural gas - consumption:

80 million cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 106

Natural gas - exports:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 102

Natural gas - imports:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 196

Natural gas - proved reserves:

28.32 billion cu m (1 January 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 72

Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:

4.592 million Mt (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 125

Communications:: Gabon

Telephones - main lines in use:

22,500 (2011)

country comparison to the world: 187

Telephones - mobile cellular:

1.8 million (2011)

country comparison to the world: 145

Telephone system:

general assessment: adequate system of cable, microwave radio relay, tropospheric scatter, radiotelephone communication stations, and a domestic satellite system with 12 earth stations

domestic: a growing mobile-cellular network with multiple providers is making telephone service more widely available with mobile-cellular teledensity exceeding 100 per 100 persons

international: country code - 241; landing point for the SAT-3/WASC fiber-optic submarine cable that provides connectivity to Europe and Asia; satellite earth stations - 3 Intelsat (Atlantic Ocean) (2011)

Broadcast media:

state owns and operates 2 TV stations and 2 radio broadcast stations; a few private radio and TV stations; transmissions of at least 2 international broadcasters are accessible; satellite service subscriptions are available (2007)

Internet country code:

.ga

Internet hosts:

127 (2012)

country comparison to the world: 205

Internet users:

98,800 (2009)

country comparison to the world: 160

Transportation:: Gabon

Airports:

44 (2013)

country comparison to the world: 99

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 14

over 3,047 m: 1

2,438 to 3,047 m: 2

1,524 to 2,437 m: 9

914 to 1,523 m: 1

under 914 m: 1 (2013)

Airports - with unpaved runways:

total: 30

1,524 to 2,437 m: 7

914 to 1,523 m: 9

under 914 m:

14 (2013)

Pipelines:

gas 807 km; oil 1,639 km; water 3 km (2013)

Railways:

total: 649 km

country comparison to the world: 105

standard gauge: 649 km 1.435-m gauge (2008)

Roadways:

total: 9,170 km

country comparison to the world: 137

paved: 1,097 km

unpaved: 8,073 km (2007)

Waterways:

1,600 km (310 km on Ogooue River) (2010)

country comparison to the world: 49

Merchant marine:

registered in other countries: 2 (Cambodia 1, Panama 1) (2010)

country comparison to the world: 145

Ports and terminals:

major seaport(s): Libreville, Owendo, Port-Gentil

oil/gas terminal(s): Gamba, Lucina

Military :: Gabon

Military branches:

Gabonese Defense Forces (Forces de Defense Gabonaise): Land Force (Force Terrestre), Gabonese Navy (Marine Gabonaise), Gabonese Air Forces (Forces Aeriennes Gabonaises, FAG) (2012)

Military service age and obligation:

20 years of age for voluntary military service; no conscription (2012)

Manpower available for military service:

males age 16-49: 350,640

females age 16-49: 351,718 (2010 est.)

Manpower fit for military service:

males age 16-49: 202,404

females age 16-49: 195,389 (2010 est.)

Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:

male: 17,638

female: 17,614 (2010 est.)

Military expenditures:

1.8% of GDP (2011)

country comparison to the world: 82

Transnational Issues :: Gabon

Disputes - international:

UN urges Equatorial Guinea and Gabon to resolve the sovereignty dispute over Gabon-occupied Mbane Island and lesser islands and to establish a maritime boundary in hydrocarbon-rich Corisco Bay