

Turkmenistan

2016 Country Review

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Chapter 1

Country Overview

Country Overview

TURKMENISTAN

Turkmenistan is located in central Asia. It was part of the Persian Empire in ancient times. Arabs invaded the region in the eighth century, bringing Islam. Turkic tribes conquered Turkmenistan in the tenth century, followed by the Mongols and the Uzbeks. The area was incorporated into Russian Turkestan in 1881. In 1925 Turkmenistan became a republic within the Soviet Union. It achieved independence upon the dissolution of the USSR in 1991. After independence, the country was led by the late president Saparmyrat Niyazov until his death in December 2006. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov became president in early 2007 through a public election. Richly endowed with gas and oil resources, the economy of Turkmenistan is based on export of natural gas, oil and oil products, as well as cotton.

Key Data

Key Data	
Region:	Commonwealth of Independent States
Population:	5231422
Climate:	Subtropical desert.
Languages:	Turkmen Russian Uzbek
Currency:	Manat
Holiday:	Independence Day is 27 October (1991), Remembrance Day is 6 October
Area Total:	488100
Area Land:	488100
Coast Line:	1768

Turkmenistan

Country Map



Commonwealth of Independent States

Regional Map



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Chapter 2

Political Overview

History

The Orguz Turks, antecedents of the Turkmen, migrated into the territory of present-day Turkmenistan at the end of the 10th century and beginning of the 11th century.

Composed of many tribes, they had begun their migration from eastern Asia in the seventh century and moved slowly toward the Middle East and Central Asia. By the 12th century, they had become the dominant group in present-day Turkmenistan, assimilating the original Persian population as well other invaders who had preceded them into the area.

By the end of the 14th century, the Orguz tribes had developed a common language and traditions, and by the next century were recognizable as a single people. Although they often became subjects of a neighboring state, their military skills and pastoral culture enabled them to enjoy a relatively independent existence.

Forced into cooperative and defensive alliances, first by the Mongol invasion and then by the Uzbek conquest, the Turkmen nevertheless retained their own strong tribal divisions. However, they failed to establish a lasting state of their own.

The Turkmen opposed Russian expansion into Central Asia more vigorously than other nationalities. They defeated a Russian force in 1717, when Peter the Great first attempted the conquest of Central Asia. In the 19th century, when the Russians resumed their expansion into the area, Turkmen cavalry posed determined and prolonged opposition.

The Russian conquest of Turkmenia (also known as Turkestan) was not completed until 1885, and the territorial boundary of Russian Turkmenia was not set until a decade later by an Anglo-Russian border treaty. That treaty separated the Turkmen of Russia from the roughly equal number of Turkmen in present-day Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq and Turkey.

Turkmenia became part of Russian Turkestan and was treated by the czarist government as a colonial territory, where Russians and other Slavs were encouraged to settle. A railroad was built, and other features of modernity were introduced. The people of Turkmenia resented losing their grazing land, and in 1916, they joined a Muslim uprising throughout Russia's Central Asian

territory.

After the February Revolution of 1917, several political forces competed for power in Turkmenia. The Turkmen were divided between Islamic traditionalists and the more progressive nationalist intelligentsia. At this time, both Bolshevik and White armies sought the loyalty of Turkmenia's ethnic Russian population. A provisional government, established by Turkmen nationalists with the support of the White forces and limited British assistance, was able to maintain itself against the Bolsheviks until mid-1919.

Thereafter, Turkmen resistance against the Bolsheviks was part of the general Basmachi Rebellion, which reemerged sporadically until 1931. By 1920, however, the Red Army controlled the territory, and in 1924, the Turkmen Republic was established in accordance with the national delimitation process in Central Asia.

The Soviet policy of forced collectivization in the late 1920s and early 1930s was particularly abhorrent to the nomadic Turkmen. It provided the impetus for enhanced national self-awareness and an opposition movement, which in 1928 burst into an open rebellion that lasted until 1932. In response, Soviet authorities arrested scores of native communist leaders and broad segments of the Turkmen intelligentsia. Most perished in the Great Terror of the 1930s.

Russians dominated the administration of the republic throughout the 20th century. Efforts to include Turkmen in the government were continually stymied.

The Turkmen Republic was a supplier of both cotton and natural gas to the other, more industrialized republics. It was also located in a very remote part of the Soviet Union and was, therefore, somewhat separate from the happenings of the U.S.S.R. and the other republics. Tribal identity was more easily maintained than any kind of national identity, and this prevented any kind of mass movement for autonomy. Unfortunately, this made the Turkmen more prone to manipulation as a whole.

A nationalist movement, called "Agzybirlik," created to preserve the Turkmen language and culture, was formed in late 1989 and was subsequently banned in January 1990. The organization remained cohesive, and the movement did succeed in establishing the Turkmen language as the state language. The Turkmen people, however, were highly supportive of the preservation of the Soviet Union, and some protested the coup d'etat in August 1991.

Under the rule of Saparmurat Niyazov, Turkmenistan became an independent republic on Oct. 27, 1991. Turkmenistan joined the Commonwealth of Independent States in December 1991.

Note on History: In certain entries, open source content from the State Department Background

Notes and Country Guides have been used. A full listing of sources is available in the Bibliography.

Political Conditions

Introduction

After independence in 1991, the Communist Party of Turkmenistan changed its name to the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan (DPT) but remained the sole party in government. The DPT has been the country's only legal party and all of the seats in parliament are occupied by DPT members. Turkmenistan remains a one-party state, dominated by the president and the president's closest advisors within the cabinet of ministers.

Also following the attainment of independence, Saparmurat Niyazov was elected president of the new country in a direct election on June 21, 1992. Niyazov had been head of the Communist Party of Turkmenistan since 1985, and president since October 1990 when the post was created. Running unchallenged, he was elected with a reported 99.5 percent of the vote.

In a Jan. 15, 1994 referendum, a reported 99.99 percent of the electorate voted to extend Niyazov's term in office, which had been set to expire in 1997, until the year 2002. This measure was undertaken in response to a motion by the leaders of the DPT that he be appointed "president for life."

Political Climate in Turkmenistan

President Niyazov has controlled both the government and the media, and his authority has depended greatly on the establishment of a "cult of personality." Niyazov's name is emblazoned on streets and buildings throughout Turkmenistan. He has also had several grand palaces constructed as well as an arch and revolving golden statue of himself in Ashgabat. In addition, he has adopted the honorific surname "Turkmenbashi" ("head of the Turkmen"). The Turkmen president also has apparently had a meteorite named after himself.

The Committee on National Security (KNB), which assumed the powers of the Soviet Committee for State Security (KGB), ensures that the regime remains in power through tight control of society

and discouragement of dissent. The Ministry of Internal Affairs directs the criminal police, which works closely with the KNB on matters of national security. Both forces have been reported to have committed serious human rights abuses.

Turkmenistan's constitution provides for the right to hold personal convictions and to express them freely; however, in practice, the government severely restricts freedom of speech and does not permit freedom of the press. Criticism of the government can lead to personal hardship, including loss of opportunities for employment and advancement. The government completely controls radio and television, and funds almost all print media.

The constitution provides for freedom of religion and does not establish a state religion; however, the government imposes restrictions on some religious groups. Citizens are overwhelmingly Muslim, but Islam does not play a dominant role in society, in part due to 70 years of Soviet rule. The government pays the salaries of Muslim clerics. A modest revival of Islam has occurred since independence. The government has incorporated some aspects of Muslim tradition into its efforts to define a Turkmen identity, and it gives some financial and other support to the Council on Religious Affairs. The council plays an intermediary role between the government bureaucracy and religious organizations, rather than actively promoting interfaith dialogue.

While it affirms a number of important religious freedoms, the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations, which was amended in 1995 and again in 1996, also provides for significant government control of religion. Religious congregations are required to register with the government and must have at least 500 Turkmen citizens over the age of 18 as adherents to be registered. This requirement has prevented all but Sunni Muslims and Russian Orthodox Christians from setting up legal religious organizations. Moreover, the government applies this 500-member standard on a local and regional basis.

The government also imposes some restrictions on freedom of movement. The government generally does not restrict movement within the country, although travel to southern border zones is controlled tightly. Citizens still carry internal passports. These documents are used primarily as a form of identification, rather than as a means of controlling movement. Residence permits are not required, although the place of residence is registered and noted in passports.

The government uses its power to issue passports and exit visas as a general means of restricting international travel. The government does not allow its citizens to travel outside the country without official permission. Any citizen who wishes to visit a foreign country must obtain an exit visa, which can take up to five weeks to process. Although not new, this policy became more onerous in June 1999 when the country withdrew from the visa agreement of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Most decisions are made at the presidential level despite government efforts promoting the

appearance of decision making by consensus and a constitution establishing Turkmenistan as a secular democracy based on separation of powers between the various branches of government. In fact, the 1992 constitution vests a disproportionate share of power in the presidency.

In his address to the "Halk Maslahaty" (People's Council) in July 1998, President Niyazov called for local councils and village leaders to have greater power and authority to deal with local issues. Yet in reality, these local leaders are selected and dismissed by the president. The degree of control the president has over the People's Council was illustrated by the fact that it was this very institutional body which proposed the law (later approved by the "Mejlis" or parliament) making an exception to the constitutionally mandated maximum of two five-year terms for the president. This law, in effect, affirmed Niyazov as president for life.

For its part, the "Mejlis" routinely supports presidential decrees, and as yet has no genuine independence, although it has taken several measures to become a more professional body. For example, it discusses and amends draft legislation, including key bills such as civil and criminal codes.

In the country's parliamentary elections, no opposition participation has been permitted, rendering moot government claims of nearly universal voter participation in previous elections (99.8 percent of all eligible voters in 1994, 98.9 percent in 1999). The 1994 "Mejlis" candidates, each personally approved by President Niyazov, all ran unopposed. As the parliamentary elections scheduled for December 1999 approached, the president promised they would be "free and fair" and conducted on a "wide democratic basis." Although there were at least two candidates for each "Mejlis" seat, the government selected every candidate, and there was virtually no open discussion of the issues.

There are no legal restrictions on the participation of women or minorities in the political process; however, they are underrepresented in government and politics. A little more than one in five members of the "Mejlis" are women. No women, however, serve as provincial governors. Minorities are represented in the government, although preference is given to ethnic Turkmen. The "Mejlis" predominantly consists of ethnic Turkmen, with no more than a few ethnic Russians and Uzbeks.

Political opposition in such a climate is hardly allowed to exist undeterred. In July 1999, the government arrested former parliamentarian and democracy advocate Piringuli Tanrykuliev on charges of embezzlement after he discussed forming a new political party with Western diplomats. On August 14, the government convicted him, sentenced him to eight years in prison, and stripped him of his medical credentials. Shortly before his arrest, his daughter lost her government job and his youngest son was removed from the list of those accepted into the state-run university.

The government's social umbrella covers the welfare needs of children. In September 1999, the government cut the number of years of basic education from 10 to nine years; however, children in

their eighth, ninth, or tenth year of education were unaffected. There is little difference in the education provided to girls and boys. The government has not taken effective steps to address environmental and health problems that have resulted in a high rate of infant and maternal mortality.

The constitution provides for equal rights and freedoms for all citizens. Turkmen comprise approximately 77 percent of the population of about 5.5 million; Uzbeks, nine percent; Russians, seven percent; and Kazakhs, five percent. There are smaller numbers of Armenians, Azeris and many other ethnic groups. Since independence, the country has not experienced ethnic turmoil.

As part of its nation-building efforts, the government has attempted to foster Turkmen national pride, in part through its language policy. The constitution designates Turkmen as the official language, and it is a mandatory subject in school, although it is not necessarily the language of instruction.

The constitution also provides for the rights of speakers of other languages to use them. Russian remains in common usage in government and commerce. However, the president has criticized the widespread use of Russian. In accordance with his wishes, Russian language usage in newspapers has been cut back sharply. The originally trilingual daily paper "Ashgabat" dropped its English and Russian sections and now is printed in Turkmen only. The government also ended the publication of "Golos Turkmenbashi," the Russian-language daily in the city of Turkmenbashi -- the city with the highest concentration of ethnic Russians in the country. The government also reduced daily Russian news broadcasts on state-run television to 30 minutes while the state radio entirely ceased its daily 15-minute Russian language news broadcast.

In many senses, language has become a mechanism for exclusion in recent years. Non-ethnic Turkmen employees at government ministries reportedly were given until December 1999 to learn Turkmen. Non-Turkmen feared that the designation of Turkmen as the official language would place their children at a disadvantage educationally and economically. They complained that some avenues for promotion and job advancement were no longer open to them. Only a handful of non-Turkmen occupy high-echelon jobs in the ministries, and there have been reports that managerial positions are closed to non-Turkmen.

Turkmenistan has inherited the Soviet system of government-controlled trade unions. There are no legal guarantees entitling workers to form or join unions. The Colleagues Union, claiming a membership of 1.3 million, is the only legal central trade union federation permitted. Its member unions are divided along both sectoral and regional lines. Unions may not form or join other federations. While no law specifically prohibits the establishment of independent unions, there are no such unions, and no attempts have been made to register independent trade unions.

Political Developments from 2000-2006

On Feb. 19, 2000, Turkmenistan's government released 1,553 prisoners as part of an amnesty honoring President Niyazov's 60th birthday and the national Flag Day. However, the amnesty failed to include political prisoners Mukhammet Aimuradov, Piringuli Tanrykuliev, and prisoner of conscience Shageldy Atakov, despite international appeals for their release. The United States expressed its concern about the fate of Nurberdy Nurmamedov, arrested in January but not yet brought to trial. Members of a United States government delegation to Ashgabat raised the plight of these prisoners in discussions in February with Turkmen officials.

President Saparmurat Niyazov announced on Feb. 16, 2001, his intention to hold presidential elections in 2010, although he was named Turkmenistan's president for life a few years prior. Niyazov, who holds the official title of "Turkmenbashi" as noted above, said the country would adopt a special presidential election law in 2008. He said he had no intention of retaining control over Turkmenistan by choosing his own successor or using any kind of hereditary mechanism. (Note: Niyazov also holds the posts of prime minister, commander-in-chief and head of the ruling Democratic Party.)

Throughout 2002 President Niyazov was dogged by opposition elements that were critical of his administration. In February 2002, former Foreign Minister Boris Shikhmuradov, now living in Russia, noted that the government was arresting people suspected of being sympathetic to the People's Democratic Movement of Turkmenistan, Shikhmuradov's opposition party. Shikhmuradov was fired from his position as Foreign Minister in the summer of 2000 and was subsequently named Ambassador to China. In November 2001 Turkmenistan's prosecutor general issued an arrest warrant for Shikhmuradov and the government accused him of theft of government property. The government has asked for Shikhmuradov's extradition from both Russia and the United States.

In the foreign policy arena, United States Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld visited Turkmenistan in April 2002 and thanked President Niyazov for his assistance in providing an aid corridor for humanitarian aid shipments to Afghanistan, in the wake of "Operation Enduring Freedom."

One of the major economic and foreign policy issues facing Turkmenistan is the export of natural gas produced from the significant gas reserves of the country, such as from the Caspian Sea. In April 2002 the first summit of all five states bordering the Caspian Sea was held in Ashgabat to further discussions on dividing up the energy resources of the region. In June, President Niyazov reported in a cabinet meeting that Turkmenistan would pursue a southern route for a natural gas pipeline through Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Petroleum Ministry reported that the Asian Development Bank was interested in participating in the financing of such a line.

In May 2002, the Prosecutor General announced that criminal charges were being brought against the ex-chairman of the KNB (the National Security Committee) and 21 of his subordinates for a number of crimes during their tenures, including murder, torture, and illegal searches. These charges, as well as actions taken against the chairman of Turkmenistan's National Bank, were the result of an official government anti-corruption campaign.

In August 2002, President Niyazov opened up the People's Council meeting in Ashgabat by declaring to the 2000 delegates attending the meeting that the overall situation in Turkmenistan was going well. Economic growth was up significantly and there had been a record wheat harvest. The opposition elements in exile took issue with Niyazov's statements, in what they charge looks to be a recurring dialogue.

Later in 2002, President Niyazov decided to remake the calendar. The bizarre change involved the renaming of the months of the year after himself, his mother, and his spiritual -- not religious -- guidebook, called the Ruhnama. The days of the week were also renamed. Two years prior, the president wrote the book, which was then established as compulsory reading in school and university curricula. The book discusses history, philosophy and mythology; it is supposedly intended to foster a sense of national Turkmen identity. Whatever individual Turkmen actually think of the book is unknown. In public, the Ruhnama is touted as a spiritual and cultural guidebook for the Turkmen people. Likewise, the private views of people regarding the change in the calendar remains unknown.

Also in 2002, the president then restructured the life cycle effectively extending childhood and adolescence, and officially postponing old age until 85. According to the new aging life cycle, President Niyazov, at age 62, is currently in his "inspirational" age. Regarded as the redefinition of youth and age, the decree was another in a series of idiosyncratic measures undertaken by the president.

In November 2002, President Niyazov escaped unscathed when his motorcade came under machine-gun fire as it drove through the country's capital city. "Mercenaries" functioning on behalf of exiled opposition leaders were accused of launching the attack. For their part, many of the opposition leaders accused President Niyazov of orchestrating the scenario in order to justify tightening of political restrictions.

Opposition activist and former foreign minister Boris Shikhmuradov (mentioned above) was eventually accused of being behind the attempted attack. He was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment. Several scores of opposition activists were also arrested, convicted and imprisoned.

In early 2003, travel restrictions were lifted, thus precipitating a mass exodus of Turkmen desperate to escape the poor economy and difficult living conditions that have plagued the economically isolated country.

In April 2003, on a visit to Moscow, the Turkmen president signed a deal with the Russian company Gazprom for the annual purchase of gas from Turkmenistan. Although this agreement was regarded as a positive bilateral development, tensions rose when President Niyazov cancelled a dual citizenship agreement with Russia. Dual passport holders were given two months to decide which passport to hold and which one would be relinquished. Russia accused Turkmenistan of compelling tens of thousands of people with dual citizenship to leave one country or the other. Indeed, the decision resulted in a mass exodus of ethnic Russians from Turkmenistan, presumably as a result of the heightened nationalism in recent years.

In July 2003, the government of Turkmenistan pledged to respect the rights of ethnic Russians in the wake of the decision a few months prior to cancel its dual citizenship agreement with Russia.

The year 2003 also involved some of the idiosyncratic directives that have increasingly marked President Niyazov's regime. At the start of the year in January 2003, the president's interest in defining temporal order prevailed when he declared that 2003 would be "the year of the mother" in honor of his late mother, Gurbansoltan Niyazov.

In August 2003, the president's interest shifted to focus on the benefits of a fruit called the muskmelon (a relative of the basic watermelon.) On Turkmen television, President Niyazov encouraged Turkmen to celebrate "Muskmelon Day" saying "This godsend has a glorious history that goes back centuries," and it was " a product of Turkmenistan's blazing sun, mild weather, productive land and tasty water, as well as peasants' kindness."

In February 2004, President Niyazov was focused on the domestic agenda of law and order when he instructed the government to step up its efforts in video surveillance across the Central Asian state. Video cameras had already been installed on major intersections in the capital city of Ashgabat following an attempted coup d'etat in 2002 where the military is often posted. The new imperatives involved the installation of closed circuit television cameras at industrial facilities, such as energy enterprises, financial institutions and public transport stations. The president stated that with the new surveillance measures in place, "We should know if a fly quietly buzzes past." He went on to note that the increased surveillance was not due to a lack of trust but in the interests of avoiding disorder. In this regard, President Niyazov said, "As is practised in all developed countries, we must take measures aimed at maintaining order on Turkmen soil and ensuring our citizens' peace."

Then, in April 2004, the president offered a dental directive by telling citizens they should avoid having gold capped teeth noting that natural teeth were preferable. Only two months earlier, the president ordered that men should not wear long hair and beards. No reason for this particular directive was given although some observers hypothesized it might be geared toward avoiding the presentation style preferred in Islamic practice. Other observers surmised it had nothing to do with

religion and was simply one more measure of authoritarianism by the Turkmen leader.

In August 2004, President Niyazov called for the construction of massive ice palace to be located in the Turkmen desert.

The catalogue of rather eccentric measures undertaken by the leader of Turkmenistan, while amusing in some regard, has given rise to concern. Turkmenistan's location in Central Asia positions it amid a hotbed of geopolitical struggle, most ostensibly illustrated by its proximity to Afghanistan. At the same time, the country is home to rich oil and gas reserves. Still, the potential oil and gas wealth is yet to be fully realized. Nevertheless, the strategic importance of Turkmenistan cannot be over-emphasized and as such, questions about its political stewardship by the president creates a general climate of anxiety, especially as Niyazov has increasingly demonstrated unpredictable behavior. On the other hand, Turkmeistan without Niyazov at the helm could give rise to a dangerous power vacuum.

By the close of 2004, parliamentary elections were held. Although the government hailed the event as a demonstration of the country's democratic system, only 76 percent of the electorate participated. While the number may seem high in comparison to the voting percentage in many Western democracies, Turkmenistan had previously boasted elections with close to universal participation of the electorate. As such, the smaller turnout may well be a sign that the public was becoming disengaged from the political scene. Indeed, the public may well see little point to support a parliament without power to mitigate against the autocratic executive branch. As well, many may have become increasingly weary of the country's isolation. Some critics suggested that the lower turnout levels were due to the fact that the public saw no reason to participate a process with a predetermined outcome. However, this election was not unlike previous elections in which there were no opposition candidates. Nevertheless, even as international observer groups characterized the election as a sham, the government celebrated the voting exercise while state-run television showed voters dancing and folk bands playing in the streets.

In May 2005, a senior member of the country's government was fired. Deputy Prime Minister Elly Kurbanmuradov, who was also the person in charge of the country's energy sector, was relieved of his duties. He was later detained and jailed for 25 years on a number of charges, including corruption. A few months later in July 2005, another key member of the government was sacked. This time, Rejep Saparov was relieved of his duties as head of the presidential administration. Like Kurbanmuradov, he was charged and jailed on charges of corruption. His prison sentence was slightly smaller at a total of ro years.

At the start of 2006, in a move he said was intended to "bring order" to the system, President Niyazov ordered significant decreased in state pensions. There was speculation that the move may have been associated with the country's finances.

In April 2006, Turkmenistan and China signed an agreement to build a pipeline, which would transport Turkmen gas to China. Energy demand in China may have spurred the deal with Turkmenistan, which was home to significant natural gas reserves. Details of the deal were not made available.

Natural gas remained on the agenda a few months later when Turkmenistan threatened to withhold gas supplies to Russia, unless Gazprom, Russia's state-owned gas company, increased its purchase price. Turkmenistan was demanding that Gazprom pay \$100 per 10,000 cubic meters of gas -- a notable increase from the existing rate of \$65. The scenario suggested possible challenges regionally as the Turkmen gas sold to Gazprom is then sold to other countries, such as Ukraine, which was at the center of a gas crisis at the start of 2006 when Russia raised gas prices and then cut off supplies to countries who refused to pay at the new rate. With Turkmen gas likely to increase in price to Gazprom, it was likely that there would be an effect further along to end user countries. There was, however, no immediate effect as Russia was still ruminating about the matter in mid-2006 and had no response to the demand by Turkmenistan at that time.

Meanwhile, in June 2006, Turkmenistan accused a French diplomat of being involved in clandestine activities against Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan's Security Minister, Geldymukhamed Ashirmukhamedov, accused a French diplomat, Henri Tomasini, of providing a Turkmen dissident, Annakurban Amanklychev, with a specialized video camera, allegedly for the purpose of filming protests, prisons and military bases. Ashirmukhamedov said on television that Tomasini wanted Amanklychev to videotape "material of slanderous and provocative nature intended for foreign special services and subversive centres." In response, the French government denied the accusations and said that the video camera was standard fare used for making videotaped reports.

It was the latest such incident involving Turkmenistan's claims of a supposed spying plot against the government. Indeed, the Turkmen authorities also arrested two human rights activists and a journalist who was working for Radio Free Europe. As has been noted elsewhere in this review, Turkmenistan has neither an organized opposition nor a free and independent media.

The End of an Era

In the third week of December 2006, state television in Turkmenistan announced that President Saparmurat Niyazov, who had ruled the Central Asian country for more than two decades, had died. Reports noted that Niyazov, who had earlier acknowledged suffering from heart disease, had died of a heart attack. His funeral took place on December 24th 2006, in the Turkmen capital city of Ashgabat.

Niyazov had ruled Turkmenistan with the proverbial iron fist. He also gained notoriety for his penchant for honoring both himself and his peculiar penchants. Indeed, his idiosyncratic "cult of

personality" included the naming of landmarks and even the calendar after himself and his family members. His indelible mark on Turkmenistan's political spectrum and its modern society meant that in the wake of his death, there was no clear sense of who would fill the power chasm. Indeed, Niyazov had left no named successor.

Turkmen law specifies that the president must be succeeded by the head of the People's Assembly. Since Niyazov had effectively held this post as the head of the legislative body -- in addition to his role as the executive head of government -- the result was no clearly designated successor to lead the country. Emergency meetings by the country's representative bodies on December 26, 2006 to determine the next course of action. There was some expectation that the chairman of parliament, Ovezgeldy Atayev, would become the interim leader. However, Deputy Prime Minister Kurbanguly Berdymukhamedov quickly convened a National Security Council, sacked Atayev saying that he was at the heart of a criminal probe, and was himself named the acting head of state.

Its strategic location in increasingly fractious Central Asia, as well as its rich assets in the form of gas reserves, meant that Turkmenistan's fate was of significance for the surrounding region, and the global community at large. The international community was watching the situation in Turkmenistan cautiously. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov called for the power transition in Turkmenistan to take place "in the framework of the law" to ensure stability in the region. But as the country moved quickly toward electing a successor, the international community's anxieties shifted and were, instead, focused on the question as to whether or not the death of President Niyazov, which brought an end to his personalist authoritarian regime, would move the country in a new direction.

In early 2007, Kurbanguly Berdymukhamedov won an overwhelming victory in the presidential election to choose a successor to President Saparmurat Niyazov. Indeed, he won 89 percent of the votes cast, according to the Central Election Commission.

Soon after winning a clear mandate, Berdymukhamedov was inaugurated into office as the new president. In his speech to the People's Assembly, Berdymukhamedov promised to continue Niyazov's policies and to maintain the country's neutral orientation. He said, "I will draw support from the people and unswervingly observe the constitution and follow the path laid by the first president." He added, "Turkmenistan will honor its international commitments and continue exporting energy to other countries."

Berdymukhamedov's election platform had included plans to build a gas line to China, to complete the AmuDarya railroad bridge in Lebap province, and to create special border trade zones in southern Balkan province - a hint that the new post-Niyazov government might work toward the creation of a friendlier foreign investment environment.

Later in the year, concurrence was reached with Russia and Kazakhstan to construct a pipeline north of the Caspian Sea, for the purpose of facilitating Russian access to Turkmen gas.

Regional ties were strained in early 2008 when Turkmenistan decided to cut gas supplies to Iran. At issue was Turkmenistan's claim that Iran did not pay for gas supplies. But Iran said that the price was double the norm.

Also during the year 2008, President Berdymukhamedov took symbolic -- and arguably significant -- measures to show that the Niyazov era was effectively over. Notably, he reversed some of the more eccentric measures of his predecessor, the late President Niyazov, including a return to the former calendar using Turkic and Russian names, rather than the bizarre system of naming of the months of the year and week after Niyazov, his mother, and his spiritual guidebook, called the Ruhnama. President Berdymukhamedov also ordered that the rotating gold statue of Niyazov in Ashgabat be removed. Clearly, the "cult of personality" that marked the later Niyazov years was now over.

Movement Toward Democratization

In September 2008, the country's People's Council approved a new constitution, which provided for a larger, directly-elected parliament and set the foundation for a multi-party system of government in the future.

To that end, December 2008 saw the people of Turkmenistan vote in high numbers in the country's first parliamentary election. Indeed, the country's Central Election Commission said that turnout was almost 90 percent and included Turkmen living abroad. The election was also observed by monitors from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

As intimated above, the election occurred as a result of the adoption of a new constitution, under the leadership of President Kurbanguly Berdymukhamedov. Previously, under the leadership of the late President Saparmurat Niyazov, Turkmenistan's legislative body was composed of a People's Council whose members had to be sanctioned by the president. The new president, Kurbanguly Berdymukhamedov, who came to power after Niyazov's death in 2006, has advocated moving Turkmenistan more into the international purview, and to that end, he was attempting to push the country in a more politically progressive direction.

While the parliamentary election was regarded as a critical democratizing measure, there were nonetheless questions about the electoral process. At issue was the fact that the vast majority of candidates contesting the 125 seats at stake in parliament were from the Democratic Party -- Turkmenistan's only political party -- or other organizations aligned with the state government. As well, Uzbeks and other ethnic minorities were not allowed to nominate their own candidates.

In April 2009, regional relations took center stage as Turkmenistan became embroiled in a dispute with Russia. Specifically, Turkmenistan accused Russia of being behind a pipeline explosion that ultimately affected energy imports. For its part, Russia denied the charge. At the close of 2009, Turkmenistan was making it clear that it wanted more autonomy over energy supplies as it opened a new pipeline for gas exports to China. At the start of 2010, a second gas pipeline to Iran was opened.

The year 2010 was also marked by another symbolic gesture oriented to show that the late President Niyazov's "cult of personality" era was over. In this case, a large archway with a gold-plated statue of Niyazov was removed from Ashkhabad.

A presidential election was set to be held in Turkmenistan on Feb. 12, 2012. The last presidential election was held in February 2007 and was won by Kurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, when he was elected to a five-year term by universal suffrage. The incumbent president was seeking re-election. Other candidates registered for the election contest were: Deputy Energy and Industry Minister Yarmukhammet Orazgulyev; Water Economy Minister Annageldy Yazmyradov; Rejep Bazarov, the deputy leader of Dasoguz Province; Kakageldy Abdullayev, the governor of Türkmenbasy District; Esenguli Gaiypov, the head of the Lebaprurlushyk production association; Saparmyrat Batyrov, the director of the Geotepe textile mill; Gurbanmamed Mallanyyzov, the manager of Türkmennebit). All of the candidates were members of Turkmenistan's only political party -- the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan.

On Feb. 9, 2012 -- days head of the election -- the border between Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan was closed on the basis of security concerns.

A day after the election was held, there was no official result available. That said, there were reports that the presidential election in Turkmenistan may have been rigged in favor of the incumbent President Berdimuhamedov. According to a report by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Ashirkuly Bayriev -- an independent Turkmen journalist -- claimed that he observed irregularities at the voting booth. Bayriev was cited as saying, "I saw a person carrying several passports. I figured that, based on all those passports, he was planning to get ballots to vote on behalf of all of his family members." The claim appeared to intimate ballot stuffing or vote fraud of some sort. That being said, election monitors from the Commonwealth of Independent States reported no significant irregularities at the polls. It should also be noted that regardless of the supposed irregularities, the election contest was not a competitive event for the incumbent president. In fact, as a result of those conditions, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe declined to send observers.

By mid-February 2012, the election results were finalized and, as expected, incumbent President Berdimuhamedov was re-elected to power with a resounding 97 percent of the vote in an election contest virtually devoid of serious competition. Berdimukhamedov was soon inaugurated into

power and speaking from a golden throne, he promised to continue to serve the Turkmen people. Berdymukhamedov -- also known as "Arkadag," or "The Patron," by his subjects, declared: "I pledge faithfully and honestly to serve the people of Turkmenistan ... and to protect the independence and neutrality of Turkmenistan." His inauguration ceremony was witnessed by representatives of international energy companies seeking a share of the country's extensive natural gas reserves.

Update:

In late 2013, elections were expected to be held for the unicameral parliament known as the National Assembly.

To that latter end, parliamentary elections were held in Turkmenistan in December 2013. At stake was the composition of the Unicameral parliament known as the National Assembly (Mejlis). In the National Assembly, the 125 members are elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms. The last elections were held in December 2008 and were won by the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan.

Of course, the political landscape is dominated by the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan and its pseudo-civil society parent organization, the Revival Movement, both of which are approved by the president. In 2012, there was some opening in the political field when a new law on political parties was adopted. The Party of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan was established as a result of this change.

Still, the political landscape in Turkmenistan remained less than open in a country known for repressive leadership. After gaining independence in 1991, the central Asian country of Turkmenistan was led by the late president Saparmyrat Niyazov until his death in December 2006. Niyazov held sway over a bizarre personalist regime. Quite apart from his authoritarian governing style, which included massive video surveillance across the Central Asian state for the purpose of knowing "if a fly quietly buzzes past," Niyazov also renamed the months of the year after himself, ordered citizens not to have their teeth capped in gold, and wrote a book on Turkmen culture and identity, which he mandated all citizens to read.

Niyazov's death in 2006 brought to power Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and augured speculation as to if Turkemistan would set upon a less authoritarian path. While, there was some shift at the party politics level (as noted above), the presidential contest in 2012 made it clear that Turkmenistan's legacy of strongman leadership would prevail. Berdimuhamedov was re-elected to power with a resounding 97 percent of the vote in an election contest virtually devoid of serious competition. Meanwhile, whereas Niyazov became infamous for his idiosyncratic tendencies, Berdymukhamedov -- also known as "Arkadag," or "The Patron" -- was garnering a reputation of

a brutal autocrat. Human Rights Watch characterized Turkmenistan as “virtually closed to independent scrutiny,” and warned that “human rights defenders and other activists face the constant threat of government reprisal.”

Nevertheless, President Berdymukhamedov was believed to be trying to highlight progress on the road towards democratization by touting this election as the first multi-party poll in modern times. It was to be seen if the parliamentary contest would signal some shift on the political scene, but the fact remained that the lion's share of political power in Turkmenistan remained in the hands of the president.

Voter turnout on election day was reported to be high -- in excess of 90 percent overall and the election observer mission from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) said the elections were "free" and adhered to "democratic principles." The main issue, as discussed here, was the fact that despite the opening up of elections to other parties, there remained a lack of competition in the parliamentary elections, reminiscent of the situation for the last presidential contest.

With the ballots cast and counted, as before, the ruling Democratic Party won the plurality of seats -- 47 of the 125 seats at stake -- but lost its parliamentary majority for the first time since independence. The Organization of Trade Unions took second place with 33 seats. The Women's Union of Turkmenistan garnered 16 seats. The newly-established opposition entity, Party of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan, secured a respectable finish with 14 seats. The rest of the seats were won by other parties.

Commission drafts new constitution extending presidential terms in Turkmenistan

In February 2016, a presidential commission drafted a new constitution; key provisions within the draft included an extension of the presidential term from five years to seven years and the removal of the upper age limit of 70 years for presidential candidates. The measures would essentially ensure a lock on power for President Kurbanguly Berdymukhamedov.

While the constitution would have to be ratified by parliament, legislators in that body were expected to easily approve it. Indeed, the governing entities in Turkmenistan have typically sanctioned the autocratic moves of presidents. Prior to Berdymukhamedov, the previous regime of the late President Saparmurat Niyazov was marked by an outrageous and eccentric cult of personality. Among his many strange measures was the late leader's decision to rename the months of the year after himself, his mother, and his spiritual -- not religious -- guidebook, called the Ruhnama. The days of the week were also renamed. The president also restructured the life cycle effectively extending childhood and adolescence, and officially postponing old age until 85.

While Berdymukhamedov has tried to reverse some of the more bizarre measures, he has

nonetheless enacted with his own initiatives aimed at shoring up his own legacy. These initiatives included erecting a gilded statue of himself and self-declaring himself to be "Arkadag" or protector.

Note:

Note that the next presidential election in Turkmenistan was scheduled to be held in 2017; the next parliamentary elections were set to be held in 2018.

-- March 2016

Written by Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, CountryWatch.com. See Bibliography for list of research sources.

Political Risk Index

Political Risk Index

The **Political Risk Index** is a proprietary index measuring the level of risk posed to governments, corporations, and investors, based on a myriad of political and economic factors. The [Political Risk Index](#) is calculated using an established methodology by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on varied criteria* including the following consideration: political stability, political representation, democratic accountability, freedom of expression, security and crime, risk of conflict, human development, jurisprudence and regulatory transparency, economic risk, foreign investment considerations, possibility of sovereign default, and corruption. Scores are assigned from 0-10 using the aforementioned criteria. A score of 0 marks the highest political risk, while a score of 10 marks the lowest political risk. Stated differently, countries with the lowest scores pose the greatest political risk. A score of 0 marks the most dire level of political risk and an ultimate nadir, while a score of 10 marks the lowest possible level of political risk, according to this proprietary index. Rarely will there be scores of 0 or 10 due to the reality that countries contain complex landscapes; as such, the index offers a range of possibilities ranging from lesser to greater risk.

Country	Assessment
Afghanistan	2
Albania	4
Algeria	6
Andorra	9
Angola	4
Antigua	8
Argentina	4
Armenia	4-5
Australia	9.5
Austria	9.5
Azerbaijan	4
Bahamas	8.5
Bahrain	6
Bangladesh	3.5

Barbados	8.5-9
Belarus	3
Belgium	9
Belize	8
Benin	5
Bhutan	5
Bolivia	5
Bosnia-Herzegovina	4
Botswana	7
Brazil	7
Brunei	7
Bulgaria	6
Burkina Faso	4
Burma (Myanmar)	4.5
Burundi	3
Cambodia	4
Cameroon	5
Canada	9.5

Cape Verde	6
Central African Republic	3
Chad	4
Chile	9
China	7
China: Hong Kong	8
China: Taiwan	8
Colombia	7
Comoros	5
Congo DRC	3
Congo RC	4
Costa Rica	8
Cote d'Ivoire	4.5
Croatia	7
Cuba	4-4.5
Cyprus	5
Czech Republic	8
Denmark	9.5

Djibouti	4.5
Dominica	7
Dominican Republic	6
East Timor	5
Ecuador	6
Egypt	5
El Salvador	7
Equatorial Guinea	4
Eritrea	3
Estonia	8
Ethiopia	4
Fiji	5
Finland	9
Fr.YugoslavRep.Macedonia	5
France	9
Gabon	5
Gambia	4
Georgia	5

Germany	9.5
Ghana	6
Greece	4.5-5
Grenada	8
Guatemala	6
Guinea	3.5
Guinea-Bissau	3.5
Guyana	4.5
Haiti	3.5
Holy See (Vatican)	9
Honduras	4.5-5
Hungary	7
Iceland	8.5-9
India	7.5-8
Indonesia	6
Iran	3.5-4
Iraq	2.5-3
Ireland	8-8.5

Israel	8
Italy	7.5
Jamaica	6.5-7
Japan	9
Jordan	6.5
Kazakhstan	6
Kenya	5
Kiribati	7
Korea, North	1
Korea, South	8
Kosovo	4
Kuwait	7
Kyrgyzstan	4.5
Laos	4.5
Latvia	7
Lebanon	5.5
Lesotho	6
Liberia	3.5

Libya	2
Liechtenstein	9
Lithuania	7.5
Luxembourg	9
Madagascar	4
Malawi	4
Malaysia	8
Maldives	4.5
Mali	4
Malta	8
Marshall Islands	6
Mauritania	4.5-5
Mauritius	7
Mexico	6.5
Micronesia	7
Moldova	5
Monaco	9
Mongolia	5

Montenegro	6
Morocco	6.5
Mozambique	4.5-5
Namibia	6.5-7
Nauru	6
Nepal	4
Netherlands	9.5
New Zealand	9.5
Nicaragua	5
Niger	4
Nigeria	4.5
Norway	9.5
Oman	7
Pakistan	3.5
Palau	7
Panama	7.5
Papua New Guinea	5
Paraguay	6.5-7

Peru	7
Philippines	6
Poland	8
Portugal	7.5
Qatar	7.5
Romania	5.5
Russia	5.5
Rwanda	5
Saint Kitts and Nevis	8
Saint Lucia	8
Saint Vincent and Grenadines	8
Samoa	7
San Marino	9
Sao Tome and Principe	5.5
Saudi Arabia	6
Senegal	6
Serbia	5
Seychelles	7

Sierra Leone	4.5
Singapore	9
Slovak Republic (Slovakia)	8
Slovenia	8
Solomon Islands	6
Somalia	2
South Africa	7
Spain	7.5
Sri Lanka	5
Sudan	3.5
Suriname	5
Swaziland	5
Sweden	9.5
Switzerland	9.5
Syria	2
Tajikistan	4.5
Tanzania	6
Thailand	6.5

Togo	4.5
Tonga	7
Trinidad and Tobago	8
Tunisia	6
Turkey	7
Turkmenistan	4.5
Tuvalu	7
Uganda	6
Ukraine	3.5-4
United Arab Emirates	7
United Kingdom	9
United States	9.5
Uruguay	8
Uzbekistan	4
Vanuatu	7
Venezuela	4
Vietnam	5
Yemen	3

Zambia	4.5
Zimbabwe	3

*Methodology

The [Political Risk Index](#) is calculated by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on the combined scoring of varied criteria as follows --

1. political stability (record of peaceful transitions of power, ability of government to stay in office and carry out policies as a result of productive executive-legislative relationship, perhaps with popular support vis a vis risk of government collapse)
2. political representation (right of suffrage, free and fair elections, multi-party participation, and influence of foreign powers)
3. democratic accountability (record of respect for political rights, human rights, and civil liberties, backed by constitutional protections)
4. freedom of expression (media freedom and freedom of expression, right to dissent or express political opposition, backed by constitutional protections)
5. security and crime (the degree to which a country has security mechanisms that ensures safety of citizens and ensures law and order, without resorting to extra-judicial measures)
6. risk of conflict (the presence of conflict; record of coups or civil disturbances; threat of war; threats posed by internal or external tensions; threat or record of terrorism or insurgencies)
7. human development (quality of life; access to education; socio-economic conditions; systemic concern for the status of women and children)
8. jurisprudence and regulatory transparency (the impartiality of the legal system, the degree of transparency within the regulatory system of a country and the durability of that structure)
9. economic conditions (economic stability, investment climate, degree of nationalization of industries, property rights, labor force development)
10. corruption (the degree of corruption in a country and/or efforts by the government to address graft and other irregularities)

Editor's Note:

As of 2015, the current climate of upheaval internationally -- both politically and economically -- has affected the ratings for several countries across the world.

North Korea, [Afghanistan](#), [Somalia](#), and [Zimbabwe](#) -- retain their low rankings.

Several Middle Eastern and North African countries, such as [Tunisia](#), [Egypt](#), [Libya](#), [Syria](#), [Iraq](#) and [Yemen](#) were downgraded in recent years due to political instability occurring in the "season of unrest" sweeping the region since 2011 and continuing today. The worst downgrades affected [Syria](#) where civil war is at play, along with the rampage of terror being carried out by Islamist terrorists who have also seized control over part of Syrian territory. [Iraq](#) has been further downgraded due to the rampage of Islamist terrorists and their takeover of wide swaths of Iraqi territory. [Libya](#) has also been downgraded further due to its slippage into failed state status; at issue in [Libya](#) have been an ongoing power struggle between rival militias. [Yemen](#) continues to hold steady with a poor ranking due to continued unrest at the hands of Houthi rebels, secessionists, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, and Islamic State. Its landscape has been further complicated by the fact that it is now the site of a proxy war between [Iran](#) and [Saudi Arabia](#). Conversely, [Tunisia](#) and [Egypt](#) have seen slight upgrades as these countries stabilize.

In Africa, [Zimbabwe](#) continues to be one of the bleak spots of the world with the Mugabe regime effectively destroying the country's once vibrant economy, and miring [Zimbabwe](#) with an exceedingly high rate of inflation, debilitating unemployment, devolving public services, and critical food shortages; rampant crime and political oppression round out the landscape. [Somalia](#) also sports a poor ranking due to the continuing influence of the terror group, al-Shabab, which was not operating across the border in [Kenya](#). On the upside, [Nigeria](#), which was ineffectively dealing with the threat posed by the terror group, Boko Haram, was making some strides on the national security front with its new president at the helm. [Mali](#) was slightly upgraded due to its efforts to return to constitutional order following the 2012 coup and to neutralize the threat of separatists and Islamists. But the [Central African Republic](#) was downgraded due to the takeover of the government by Muslim Seleka rebels and a continued state of lawlessness in that country. South [Sudan](#) -- the world's newest nation state -- has not been officially included in this assessment; however, it can be unofficially assessed to be in the vicinity of "3" due to its manifold political and economic challenges. [Burkina Faso](#), [Burundi](#) and [Guinea](#) have been downgraded due to political unrest, with [Guinea](#) also having to deal with the burgeoning Ebola crisis.

In Europe, [Ukraine](#) was downgraded due to the unrest facing that country following its Maidan revolution that triggered a pro-Russian uprising in the eastern part of the country. [Russia](#) was also implicated in the Ukrainian crisis due to its intervention on behalf of pro-Russian separatists, as

well as its annexation of the Ukrainian territory of Crimea. Strains on the infrastructure of southern and eastern European countries, such as [Serbia](#), [Croatia](#), and [Hungary](#), due to an influx of refugees was expected to pose social and economic challenges, and slight downgrades were made accordingly. So too, a corruption crisis for the Romanian prime minister has affected the ranking of that country. Meanwhile, the rankings for [Spain](#), [Portugal](#), [Ireland](#), and [Italy](#) were maintained due to debt woes and the concomitant effect on the euro zone. [Greece](#), another euro zone nation, was earlier downgraded due to its sovereign debt crisis; however, no further downgrade was added since the country was able to successfully forge a bailout rescue deal with creditor institutions. Cyprus' exposure to Greek banks yielded a downgrade in its case.

In Asia, [Nepal](#) was downgraded in response to continuous political instability and a constitutional crisis that prevails well after landmark elections were held. Both [India](#) and China retain their rankings; [India](#) holds a slightly higher ranking than [China](#) due to its record of democratic representation and accountability. Increasing violence and political instability in [Pakistan](#) resulted in a downgrade for this country's already low rating. Meanwhile, [Singapore](#) retained its strong rankings due to its continued effective stewardship of the economy and political stability.

In the Americas, ongoing political and economic woes, as well as crime and corruption have affected the rankings for [Mexico](#), [Guatemala](#), and [Brazil](#). [Argentina](#) was downgraded due to its default on debt following the failure of talks with bond holders. [Venezuela](#) was downgraded due to its mix of market unfriendly policies and political oppression. For the moment, the [United States](#) maintains a strong ranking along with [Canada](#), and most of the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean; however, a renewed debt ceiling crisis could cause the [United States](#) to be downgraded in a future edition. Finally, a small but significant upgrade was attributed to [Cuba](#) due to its recent pro-business reforms and its normalization of ties with the United States.

Source:

Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, CountryWatch Inc. www.countrywatch.com

Updated:

2015

Political Stability

Political Stability

The **Political Stability Index** is a proprietary index measuring a country's level of stability, standard of good governance, record of constitutional order, respect for human rights, and overall strength of democracy. The [Political Stability Index](#) is calculated using an established methodology* by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on a given country's record of peaceful transitions of power, ability of a government to stay in office and carry out its policies vis a vis risk credible risks of government collapse. Threats include coups, domestic violence and instability, terrorism, etc. This index measures the dynamic between the quality of a country's government and the threats that can compromise and undermine stability. Scores are assigned from 0-10 using the aforementioned criteria. A score of 0 marks the lowest level of political stability and an ultimate nadir, while a score of 10 marks the highest level of political stability possible, according to this proprietary index. Rarely will there be scores of 0 or 10 due to the reality that countries contain complex landscapes; as such, the index offers a range of possibilities ranging from lesser to greater stability.

Country	Assessment
Afghanistan	2
Albania	4.5-5
Algeria	5
Andorra	9.5
Angola	4.5-5
Antigua	8.5-9
Argentina	7
Armenia	5.5
Australia	9.5

Austria	9.5
Azerbaijan	5
Bahamas	9
Bahrain	6
Bangladesh	4.5
Barbados	9
Belarus	4
Belgium	9
Belize	8
Benin	5
Bhutan	5
Bolivia	6
Bosnia-Herzegovina	5
Botswana	8.5
Brazil	7
Brunei	8
Bulgaria	7.5
Burkina Faso	4

Burma (Myanmar)	4.5
Burundi	4
Cambodia	4.5-5
Cameroon	6
Canada	9.5
Cape Verde	6
Central African Republic	3
Chad	4.5
Chile	9
China	7
China: Hong Kong	8
China: Taiwan	8
Colombia	7.5
Comoros	5
Congo DRC	3
Congo RC	5
Costa Rica	9.5
Cote d'Ivoire	3.5

Croatia	7.5
Cuba	4.5
Cyprus	8
Czech Republic	8.5
Denmark	9.5
Djibouti	5
Dominica	8.5
Dominican Republic	7
East Timor	5
Ecuador	7
Egypt	4.5-5
El Salvador	7.5-8
Equatorial Guinea	4.5
Eritrea	4
Estonia	9
Ethiopia	4.5
Fiji	5
Finland	9

Fr. Yugoslav Rep. Macedonia	6.5
France	9
Gabon	5
Gambia	4.5
Georgia	5
Germany	9.5
Ghana	7
Greece	6
Grenada	8.5
Guatemala	7
Guinea	3.5-4
Guinea-Bissau	4
Guyana	6
Haiti	3.5-4
Holy See (Vatican)	9.5
Honduras	6
Hungary	7.5
Iceland	9

India	8
Indonesia	7
Iran	3.5
Iraq	2.5
Ireland	9.5
Israel	8
Italy	8.5-9
Jamaica	8
Japan	9
Jordan	6
Kazakhstan	6
Kenya	5
Kiribati	8
Korea, North	2
Korea, South	8.5
Kosovo	5.5
Kuwait	7
Kyrgyzstan	5

Laos	5
Latvia	8.5
Lebanon	5.5
Lesotho	5
Liberia	3.5-4
Libya	2
Liechtenstein	9
Lithuania	9
Luxembourg	9.5
Madagascar	4
Malawi	5
Malaysia	8
Maldives	4.5-5
Mali	4.5-5
Malta	9
Marshall Islands	8
Mauritania	6
Mauritius	8

Mexico	6.5-7
Micronesia	8
Moldova	5.5
Monaco	9.5
Mongolia	6.5-7
Montenegro	8
Morocco	7
Mozambique	5
Namibia	8.5
Nauru	8
Nepal	4.5
Netherlands	9.5
New Zealand	9.5
Nicaragua	6
Niger	4.5
Nigeria	4.5
Norway	9.5
Oman	7

Pakistan	3
Palau	8
Panama	8.5
Papua New Guinea	6
Paraguay	8
Peru	7.5
Philippines	6
Poland	9
Portugal	9
Qatar	7
Romania	7
Russia	6
Rwanda	5
Saint Kitts and Nevis	9
Saint Lucia	9
Saint Vincent and Grenadines	9
Samoa	8
San Marino	9.5

Sao Tome and Principe	7
Saudi Arabia	6
Senegal	7.5
Serbia	6.5
Seychelles	8
Sierra Leone	4.5
Singapore	9.5
Slovak Republic (Slovakia)	8.5
Slovenia	9
Solomon Islands	6.5-7
Somalia	2
South Africa	7.5
Spain	9
Sri Lanka	5
Sudan	3
Suriname	5
Swaziland	5
Sweden	9.5

Switzerland	9.5
Syria	2
Tajikistan	4.5
Tanzania	6
Thailand	6
Togo	5
Tonga	7
Trinidad and Tobago	8
Tunisia	5
Turkey	7.5
Turkmenistan	5
Tuvalu	8.5
Uganda	6
Ukraine	3.5-4
United Arab Emirates	7
United Kingdom	9
United States	9
Uruguay	8.5

Uzbekistan	4
Vanuatu	8.5
Venezuela	4.5-5
Vietnam	4.5
Yemen	2.5
Zambia	5
Zimbabwe	3

*Methodology

The Political Stability Index is calculated by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on the combined scoring of varied criteria as follows --

1. record of peaceful transitions of power (free and fair elections; adherence to political accords)
2. record of democratic representation, presence of instruments of democracy; systemic accountability
3. respect for human rights; respect for civil rights
4. strength of the system of jurisprudence, adherence to constitutional order, and good governance
5. ability of a government to stay in office and carry out its policies vis a vis risk credible risks of government collapse (i.e. government stability versus a country being deemed "ungovernable")
6. threat of coups, insurgencies, and insurrection
7. level of unchecked crime and corruption
8. risk of terrorism and other threats to national security

9. relationship with regional powers and international community; record of bilateral or multilateral cooperation

10. degree of economic strife (i.e. economic and financial challenges)

Editor's Note:

As of 2015, the current climate of upheaval internationally -- both politically and economically -- has affected the ratings for several countries across the world. The usual suspects -- North Korea, [Afghanistan](#), and [Somalia](#) -- retain their low rankings. The reclusive and ultra-dictatorial North Korean regime, which has terrified the world with its nuclear threats, has exhibited internal instability. Of note was a cut-throat purge of hundreds of high ranking officials deemed to be a threat to Kim Jung-un. Despite their attempts to recover from years of lawlessness, war, and warlordism, both [Afghanistan](#) and [Somalia](#) continue to be beset by terrorism and turmoil. In [Afghanistan](#), while international forces have seen success in the effort against the terror group, al-Qaida, the other Islamist extremist group, the Taliban, continues to carry out a vicious insurgency using terrorism. In [Somalia](#), while the government attempts to do the nation's business, the terror group, al-Shabab continues to make its presence known not only in [Somalia](#), but across the border into [Kenya](#) with devastating results/ Also in this category is [Iraq](#), which continues to be rocked by horrific violence and terrorism at the hands of Islamic State, which has taken over wide swaths of Iraqi territory.

Syria, [Libya](#), and [Yemen](#) have been added to this unfortunate echelon of the world's most politically unstable countries. [Syria](#) has been mired by the twin hazards of 1. a civil war as rebels oppose the Assad regime; and 2. the rampage of terror being carried out by Islamic State, which also seized control over vast portions of Syrian territory. Meanwhile, the post-Qaddhafi landscape of [Libya](#) has devolved into chaos as rival militias battle for control -- the elected government of the country notwithstanding. Rounding out this grim triad is [Yemen](#), which was dealing with a Houthi rebellion, secessionists in the south, as well as the threat of terrorism from al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula as well as Islamic State, while also being the site of a proxy war between Shi'a [Iran](#) and Sunni [Saudi Arabia](#).

Meanwhile, several Middle Eastern and North African countries, such as [Tunisia](#), [Egypt](#), and [Bahrain](#) were downgraded in recent years due to political instability occurring in the "season of unrest" sweeping the region since 2011 and continuing today. All three of these countries have stabilized in recent years and have been upgraded accordingly. In [Bahrain](#), the landscape had calmed. In [Egypt](#), the secular military-backed government has generated criticism for its crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood; however, the country had ratified the presidency via democratic elections and were on track to hold parliamentary elections as the country moved along the path of democratization. Perhaps the most impressive story was coming out of [Tunisia](#) -- the

country whose Jasmine Revolution sparked the entire Arab Spring -- and where after a few years of strife, a new progressive constitution was passed into law and a secular government had been elected to power. [Tunisia](#), [Egypt](#), and [Bahrain](#) have seen slight upgrades as these countries stabilize.

In Africa, the [Central African Republic](#) was downgraded the previous year due to the takeover of the government by Muslim Seleka rebels. Although the country has been trying to emerge from this crisis, the fact of the matter was that it was difficult to halt the precipitous decline into lawlessness in that country. [Zimbabwe](#) has maintained its consistently poor ranking due to the dictatorial regime of Mugabe, who continues to hold a tight grip on power, intimidates the opposition, squashes dissent, and oppresses the white farmer population of the country. Moving in a slightly improved direction is [Nigeria](#), which has sported abysmal ratings due to the government's fecklessness in dealing with the threat posed by the Islamist terror group, Boko Haram. Under its newly-elected government, there appears to be more of a concerted effort to make national security a priority action item. [Mali](#) was also slightly upgraded due to its efforts to return to constitutional order following the 2012 coup and to neutralize the threat of separatists and Islamists. Political instability has visited [Burkina Faso](#) and [Burundi](#) as the leaders of those countries attempted to side-step constitutional limits to hold onto power. In [Burundi](#), an attempted coup ensued but quelled, and the president won a (questionable) new term in office; unrest has since punctuated the landscape. In [Burkina Faso](#), the political climate has turned stormy as a result of a successful coup that ended the rule of the president, and then a putsch against the transitional government. These two African countries have been downgraded as a result.

It should be noted that the African country of South [Sudan](#) -- the world's newest nation state -- has not been officially included in this assessment; however, it can be unofficially assessed to be in the vicinity of "3" due to its manifold political and economic challenges. [Guinea](#) has endured poor rankings throughout, but was slightly downgraded further over fears of social unrest and the Ebola heath crisis.

In Europe, [Ukraine](#) was downgraded due to the unrest facing that country following its Maidan revolution that triggered a pro-Russian uprising in the eastern part of the country. [Russia](#) was also implicated in the Ukrainian crisis due to its intervention on behalf of pro-Russian separatists, as well as its annexation of the Ukrainian territory of Crimea. [Serbia](#) and [Albania](#) were slightly downgraded due to eruptions of unrest, while [Romania](#) was slightly downgraded on the basis of corruption charges against the prime minister. [Spain](#), [Portugal](#), [Ireland](#), and [Italy](#) were downgraded due to debt woes and the concomitant effect on the euro zone. [Greece](#), another euro zone nation, was downgraded the previous year due to its sovereign debt crisis; however, the country successfully forged a rescue deal with international creditors and stayed within the Euro zone. Greek voters rewarded the hitherto unknown upstart party at the polls for these efforts. As a result, [Greece](#) was actually upgraded slightly as it proved to the world that it could endure the political and economic storms. Meanwhile, [Germany](#), [France](#), [Switzerland](#), the [United Kingdom](#),

the [Netherlands](#), and the Scandinavian countries continue to post impressive ranking consistent with these countries' strong records of democracy, freedom, and peaceful transfers of power.

In Asia, [Nepal](#) was downgraded in response to continuous political instability well after landmark elections that prevails today. [Cambodia](#) was very slightly downgraded due to post-election instability that has resulted in occasional flares of violence. Despite the "trifecta of tragedy" in [Japan](#) in 2011 -- the earthquake, the ensuing tsunami, and the resulting nuclear crisis -- and the appreciable destabilization of the economic and political terrain therein, this country has only slightly been downgraded. Japan's challenges have been assessed to be transient, the government remains accountable, and there is little risk of default. Both [India](#) and [China](#) retain their rankings; [India](#) holds a slightly higher ranking than [China](#) due to its record of democratic representation and accountability. Increasing violence and political instability in [Pakistan](#) resulted in a downgrade for this country's already low rating.

In the Americas, [Haiti](#) retained its downgraded status due to ongoing political and economic woes. [Mexico](#) was downgraded due to its alarming rate of crime. [Guatemala](#) was downgraded due to charges of corruption, the arrest of the president, and uncertainty over the outcome of elections. [Brazil](#) was downgraded due to the corruption charges erupting on the political landscape, the stalling of the economy, and the increasingly loud calls for the impeachment of President Rousseff. [Argentina](#) was downgraded due to its default on debt following the failure of talks with bond holders. [Venezuela](#) was downgraded due to the fact that the country's post-Chavez government is every bit as autocratic and nationalistic, but even more inclined to oppress its political opponents. [Colombia](#) was upgraded slightly due to efforts aimed at securing a peace deal with the FARC insurgents. A small but significant upgrade was attributed to [Cuba](#) due to its recent pro-business reforms and its normalization of ties with the United States. Meanwhile, the [United States](#), [Canada](#), [Costa Rica](#), [Panama](#), and most of the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean retain their strong rankings due to their records of stability and peaceful transfers of power.

In the Pacific, [Fiji](#) was upgraded due to its return to constitutional order and democracy with the holding of the first elections in eight years.

In Oceania, [Maldives](#) has been slightly downgraded due to the government's continued and rather relentless persecution of the country's former pro-democracy leader - former President Nasheed.

Source:

Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, CountryWatch Inc. www.countrywatch.com

Updated:

2015

Freedom Rankings

Freedom Rankings

Freedom in the World

Editor's Note: This ranking by Freedom House quantifies political freedom and civil liberties into a single combined index on each sovereign country's level of freedom and liberty. The initials "PR" and "CL" stand for Political Rights and Civil Liberties, respectively. The number 1 represents the most free countries and the number 7 represents the least free. Several countries fall in the continuum in between. The freedom ratings reflect an overall judgment based on survey results.

Country	PR	CL	Freedom Status	Trend Arrow
Afghanistan	6 ?	6	Not Free	
Albania*	3	3	Partly Free	
Algeria	6	5	Not Free	
Andorra*	1	1	Free	
Angola	6	5	Not Free	
Antigua and Barbuda*	3 ?	2	Free	

Argentina*	2	2	Free	
Armenia	6	4	Partly Free	
Australia*	1	1	Free	
Austria*	1	1	Free	
Azerbaijan	6	5	Not Free	
Bahamas*	1	1	Free	
Bahrain	6 ?	5	Not Free ?	
Bangladesh*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	
Barbados*	1	1	Free	
Belarus	7	6	Not Free	
Belgium*	1	1	Free	
Belize*	1	2	Free	
Benin*	2	2	Free	
Bhutan	4	5	Partly Free	
Bolivia*	3	3	Partly Free	
Bosnia-Herzegovina*	4	3	Partly Free	
Botswana*	3 ?	2	Free	
Brazil*	2	2	Free	

Brunei	6	5	Not Free	
Bulgaria*	2	2	Free	
Burkina Faso	5	3	Partly Free	
Burma	7	7	Not Free	
Burundi*	4	5	Partly Free	↑
Cambodia	6	5	Not Free	↓
Cameroon	6	6	Not Free	
Canada*	1	1	Free	
Cape Verde*	1	1	Free	
Central African Republic	5	5	Partly Free	
Chad	7	6	Not Free	
Chile*	1	1	Free	
China	7	6	Not Free	
Colombia*	3	4	Partly Free	
Comoros*	3	4	Partly Free	
Congo (Brazzaville)	6	5	Not Free	↓
Congo (Kinshasa)	6	6	Not Free	↓
Costa Rica*	1	1	Free	

Cote d'Ivoire	6	5	Not Free	
Croatia*	1 ?	2	Free	
Cuba	7	6	Not Free	
Cyprus*	1	1	Free	
Czech Republic*	1	1	Free	
Denmark*	1	1	Free	
Djibouti	5	5	Partly Free	
Dominica*	1	1	Free	
Dominican Republic*	2	2	Free	↓
East Timor*	3	4	Partly Free	
Ecuador*	3	3	Partly Free	
Egypt	6	5	Not Free	
El Salvador*	2	3	Free	
Equatorial Guinea	7	7	Not Free	
Eritrea	7	7 ?	Not Free	
Estonia*	1	1	Free	
Ethiopia	5	5	Partly Free	↓
Fiji	6	4	Partly Free	

Finland*	1	1	Free	
France*	1	1	Free	
Gabon	6	5 ?	Not Free ?	
The Gambia	5	5 ?	Partly Free	
Georgia	4	4	Partly Free	
Germany*	1	1	Free	
Ghana*	1	2	Free	
Greece*	1	2	Free	
Grenada*	1	2	Free	
Guatemala*	4 ?	4	Partly Free	
Guinea	7	6 ?	Not Free	
Guinea-Bissau*	4	4	Partly Free	
Guyana*	2	3	Free	
Haiti*	4	5	Partly Free	
Honduras	4 ?	4 ?	Partly Free	
Hungary*	1	1	Free	
Iceland*	1	1	Free	
India*	2	3	Free	

Indonesia*	2	3	Free	
Iran	6	6	Not Free	↓
Iraq	5 ?	6	Not Free	
Ireland*	1	1	Free	
Israel*	1	2	Free	
Italy*	1	2	Free	
Jamaica*	2	3	Free	
Japan*	1	2	Free	
Jordan	6 ?	5	Not Free ?	
Kazakhstan	6	5	Not Free	↓
Kenya	4	4 ?	Partly Free	
Kiribati*	1	1	Free	
Kosovo	5 ?	4 ?	Partly Free ?	
Kuwait	4	4	Partly Free	
Kyrgyzstan	6 ?	5 ?	Not Free ?	
Laos	7	6	Not Free	
Latvia*	2	1	Free	
Lebanon	5	3 ?	Partly Free	

Lesotho*	3 ?	3	Partly Free ?	
Liberia*	3	4	Partly Free	
Libya	7	7	Not Free	
Liechtenstein*	1	1	Free	
Lithuania*	1	1	Free	
Luxembourg*	1	1	Free	
Macedonia*	3	3	Partly Free	↑
Madagascar	6 ?	4 ?	Partly Free	
Malawi*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	
Malaysia	4	4	Partly Free	
Maldives*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	
Mali*	2	3	Free	
Malta*	1	1	Free	↓
Marshall Islands*	1	1	Free	
Mauritania	6	5	Not Free	
Mauritius*	1	2	Free	
Mexico*	2	3	Free	
Micronesia*	1	1	Free	

Moldova*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	
Monaco*	2	1	Free	
Mongolia*	2	2	Free	↑
Montenegro*	3	2 ?	Free ?	
Morocco	5	4	Partly Free	↓
Mozambique	4 ?	3	Partly Free	
Namibia*	2	2	Free	
Nauru*	1	1	Free	
Nepal	4	4	Partly Free	
Netherlands*	1	1	Free	
New Zealand*	1	1	Free	
Nicaragua*	4	4 ?	Partly Free	
Niger	5 ?	4	Partly Free	
Nigeria	5	4	Partly Free	↓
North Korea	7	7	Not Free	↓
Norway*	1	1	Free	
Oman	6	5	Not Free	
Pakistan	4	5	Partly Free	

Palau*	1	1	Free	
Panama*	1	2	Free	
Papua New Guinea*	4	3	Partly Free	
Paraguay*	3	3	Partly Free	
Peru*	2	3	Free	
Philippines	4	3	Partly Free	↓
Poland*	1	1	Free	
Portugal*	1	1	Free	
Qatar	6	5	Not Free	
Romania*	2	2	Free	
Russia	6	5	Not Free	↓
Rwanda	6	5	Not Free	
Saint Kitts and Nevis*	1	1	Free	
Saint Lucia*	1	1	Free	
Saint Vincent and Grenadines*	2	1	Free	
Samoa*	2	2	Free	
San Marino*	1	1	Free	
Sao Tome and Principe*	2	2	Free	

Saudi Arabia	7	6	Not Free	
Senegal*	3	3	Partly Free	
Serbia*	2 ?	2	Free	
Seychelles*	3	3	Partly Free	
Sierra Leone*	3	3	Partly Free	
Singapore	5	4	Partly Free	
Slovakia*	1	1	Free	↓
Slovenia*	1	1	Free	
Solomon Islands	4	3	Partly Free	
Somalia	7	7	Not Free	
South Africa*	2	2	Free	
South Korea*	1	2	Free	
Spain*	1	1	Free	
Sri Lanka*	4	4	Partly Free	
Sudan	7	7	Not Free	
Suriname*	2	2	Free	
Swaziland	7	5	Not Free	
Sweden*	1	1	Free	

Switzerland*	1	1	Free	↓
Syria	7	6	Not Free	
Taiwan*	1 ?	2 ?	Free	
Tajikistan	6	5	Not Free	
Tanzania	4	3	Partly Free	
Thailand	5	4	Partly Free	
Togo	5	4 ?	Partly Free	
Tonga	5	3	Partly Free	
Trinidad and Tobago*	2	2	Free	
Tunisia	7	5	Not Free	
Turkey*	3	3	Partly Free	↓
Turkmenistan	7	7	Not Free	
Tuvalu*	1	1	Free	
Uganda	5	4	Partly Free	
Ukraine*	3	2	Free	
United Arab Emirates	6	5	Not Free	
United Kingdom*	1	1	Free	
United States*	1	1	Free	

Uruguay*	1	1	Free	
Uzbekistan	7	7	Not Free	
Vanuatu*	2	2	Free	
Venezuela	5 ?	4	Partly Free	
Vietnam	7	5	Not Free	↓
Yemen	6 ?	5	Not Free ?	
Zambia*	3	4 ?	Partly Free	
Zimbabwe	6 ?	6	Not Free	

Methodology:

PR and CL stand for political rights and civil liberties, respectively; 1 represents the most free and 7 the least free rating. The ratings reflect an overall judgment based on survey results.

? ? up or down indicates a change in political rights, civil liberties, or status since the last survey.

↑ ↓ up or down indicates a trend of positive or negative changes that took place but that were not sufficient to result in a change in political rights or civil liberties ratings of 1-7.

* indicates a country's status as an electoral democracy.

Source:

This data is derived from the latest edition of Freedom House's Freedom in the World 2010 edition.

Available at URL: <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

Updated:

Reviewed in 2015

Human Rights

Overview of Human Rights in Turkmenistan

Since its independence in 1991, Turkmenistan's human rights record has been poor with serious abuses committed by the government and its agents.

There is no government accountability in conjunction with restrictions on freedoms of speech, press, expression, assembly, association, and religion. Turkmenistan law states that any criticism of presidential policy is considered high treason and punishable with life in prison. For those who still choose to dissent against the government, punishment such as harassment, house arrest, arbitrary arrest, incommunicado and/or indefinite detention, torture, deportation, and death can and do occur. The judiciary is under the control of the president. Due process and fair trials are denied to political prisoners.

Ethnic discrimination is rampant in Turkmenistan. Ethnic minorities are forced to assimilate while being denied other rights enjoyed by Turkmen citizens. Restrictions on access to certain employment opportunities, forced internal displacement, restrictions on freedom of movement, and the forced loss of culture and language are challenges facing minorities on a daily basis.

Freedom of religion is restricted in numerous ways. New mosques are not allowed to be built. Authorities have intentionally delayed the registration of twelve new Catholic parishes and a convent. They also continue to deny visas to priests who are assigned to the region. While Turkmenistan buckled to Western pressure to register five Protestant congregations in 2005, many other religious minorities cannot register in the nation. Registration does not guarantee freedom from harassment and further restrictions arbitrarily decided on by the government.

With the death of President Niyazov, which brought an end to his personalist authoritarian regime, it was yet unknown in if President Berdymukhamedov would move the country in a new direction.

Human Development Index (HDI) Rank:

See Social Overview in Country Review for full list.

Human Poverty Index Rank:

Not Ranked

Gini Index:

40.8

Life Expectancy at Birth (years):

68 years

Unemployment Rate:

60%

Population living on \$1 a day (%):

N/A

Population living on \$2 a day (%):

N/A

Population living beneath the Poverty Line (%):

58%

Internally Displaced People:

N/A

Note, 12,000 Tajikistani refugees are currently in Turkmenistan

Total Crime Rate (%):

N/A

Health Expenditure (% of GDP):

Public: 3.0%

% of GDP Spent on Education:

4.3%

Human Rights Conventions Party to:

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Conventions on the Rights of the Child
- Convention relating to the Status of Refugees

*Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite index that measures the level of well-being in 177 nations in the world. It uses factors such as poverty, literacy, life-expectancy, education, gross domestic product, and purchasing power parity to assess the average achievements in each nation. It has been used in the United Nation's Human Development Report since 1993.

*Human Poverty Index Ranking is based on certain indicators used to calculate the Human Poverty Index. Probability at birth of not surviving to age 40, adult literacy rate, population without sustainable access to an improved water source, and population below income poverty line are the indicators assessed in this measure.

*The Gini Index measures inequality based on the distribution of family income or consumption. A value of 0 represents perfect equality (income being distributed equally), and a value of 100 perfect inequality (income all going to one individual).

*The calculation of the total crime rate is the % of the total population which has been effected by property crime, robbery, sexual assault, assault, or bribery (corruption) related occurrences.

Government Functions

Constitution

A new constitution of Turkmenistan was adopted in 2008, effectively moving the country into a more progressive and democratic direction.

Executive Authority

The president is elected for a five-year-term by the people.*

There is no vice president or prime minister. A group of officials, each holding the title of deputy chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and holding responsibilities in a defined area, constitutes the next level of executive authority. The president appoints the Cabinet of Ministers.

According to the constitution, the chairman of the "Mejlis" (parliament) assumes the presidency upon the death or permanent incapacitation of the president and then calls elections.

* In February 2016, a presidential commission drafted a new constitution; key provisions within the draft included an extension of the presidential term from five years to seven years and the removal of the upper age limit of 70 years for presidential candidates. The measures would essentially ensure a lock on power for President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov. While the constitution would have to be ratified by parliament, legislators in that body were expected to easily approve it.

Legislative Authority

December 2008 saw the people of Turkmenistan vote in high numbers in the country's first parliamentary election. Indeed, the country's Central Election Commission said that turnout was almost 90 percent and included Turkmen living abroad. The election was also observed by monitors from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

The election occurred as a result of the adoption of a new constitution earlier in 2008, under the leadership of President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov. Previously, under the leadership of the late President Saparmurat Niyazov, Turkmenistan's legislative body was composed of a People's Council whose members had to be sanctioned by the president. The new president, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, who came to power after Niyazov's death in 2006, has advocated moving Turkmenistan more into the international purview, and to that end, he was attempting to push the country in a more politically progressive direction.

While the parliamentary election was regarded as a critical democratizing measure, there were nonetheless questions about the electoral process. At issue was the fact that the vast majority of candidates contesting the 125 seats at stake in parliament were from the Democratic Party -- Turkmenistan's only political party -- or other organizations aligned with the state government. As well, Uzbeks and other ethnic minorities were not allowed to nominate their own candidates.

Jurisprudence

The legal system is based on civil law with a constitution as the fulcrum of legal authority. At the judicial level, there is a Supreme Court consisting of judges appointed by the president.

Government Structure

Names:

conventional long form:

none

conventional short form:

Turkmenistan

local long form:

none

local short form:

Turkmenistan

former:

Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic; Turkmenia

Type:

Republic; personalist regime, characterized by autocratic presidential rule with little power outside the executive branch

Executive Branch:

Note:

In the third week of December 2006, state television in Turkmenistan announced that President Saparmurat Niyazov, who had ruled the Central Asian country for more than two decades, had died. Reports noted that Niyazov, who had earlier acknowledged suffering from heart disease, had died of a heart attack. His funeral took place on December 24th 2006, in the Turkmen capital city of Ashgabat. His indelible mark on Turkmenistan's political spectrum and its modern society meant that in the wake of his death, there was no clear sense of who would fill the power chasm.

Indeed, Niyazov had left no named successor. Turkmen law specifies that the president must be succeeded by the head of the People's Assembly.

Since Niyazov had effectively held this post as the head of the legislative body -- in addition to his role as the executive head of government -- the result was no clearly designated successor to lead the country. Emergency meetings by the country's representative bodies on December 26, 2006 to determine the next course of action. There was some expectation that the chairman of parliament, Ovezgeldy Atayev, would become the interim leader. However, Deputy Prime Minister Kurbanguly Berdimukhamedov quickly convened a National Security Council, sacked Atayev saying that he was at the heart of a criminal probe, and was himself named the acting head of state.

In early 2007, Kurbanguly Berdimukhamedov won an overwhelming victory in the presidential election to choose a successor to President Saparmurat Niyazov. Soon after winning a clear mandate, Berdimukhamedov was inaugurated into office as the new president. As noted here, he was re-elected to power in 2012,

Head of State and Head of Government:

President and chairman of the cabinet of ministers Kurbanguly BERDIMUHAMMEDOV (since late 2006 when he was named acting head of state; elected into power in 2007 and again in 2012); elected to a five-year term by universal suffrage. The next election was to be held in 2017.

2012 Elections:

A presidential election was set to be held in Turkmenistan on Feb. 12, 2012. The last presidential election was held in February 2007 and was won by Kurbanguly Berdimuhammedov, when he was elected to a five-year term by universal suffrage. The incumbent president was seeking re-election. Other candidates registered for the election contest were: Deputy Energy and Industry Minister Yarmukhammet Orazgulyev; Water Economy Minister Annageldy Yazmyradov; Rejep Bazarov, the deputy leader of Dasoguz Province; Kakageldy Abdullayev, the governor of Türkmenbasy District; Esenguli Gaiypov, the head of the Lebapurlushyk production association; Saparmyrat Batyrov, the director of the Geotepe textile mill; Gurbanmamed Mallanyyzov, the manager of Türkmennebit). All of the candidates were members of Turkmenistan's only political party -- the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan.

On Feb. 9, 2012 -- days ahead of the election -- the border between Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan was closed on the basis of security concerns.

A day after the election was held, there was no official result available. That said, there were reports that the presidential election in Turkmenistan may have been rigged in favor of the incumbent President Berdimuhammedov. According to a report by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Ashirkuly Bayriev -- an independent Turkmen journalist -- claimed that he observed

irregularities at the voting booth. Bayriev was cited as saying, "I saw a person carrying several passports. I figured that, based on all those passports, he was planning to get ballots to vote on behalf of all of his family members." The claim appeared to intimate ballot stuffing or vote fraud of some sort.

That being said, election monitors from the Commonwealth of Independent States reported no significant irregularities at the polls. It should also be noted that regardless of the supposed irregularities, the election contest was not a competitive event for the incumbent president. In fact, as a result of those conditions, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe declined to send observers.

By mid-February 2012, the election results were finalized and, as expected, incumbent President Berdimuhamedov was re-elected to power with a resounding 97 percent of the vote in an election contest virtually devoid of serious competition. Berdymukhamedov was soon inaugurated into power and speaking from a golden throne, he promised to continue to serve the Turkmen people. Berdymukhamedov -- also known as "Arkadag," or "The Patron," by his subjects, declared: "I pledge faithfully and honestly to serve the people of Turkmenistan ... and to protect the independence and neutrality of Turkmenistan." His inauguration ceremony was witnessed by representatives of international energy companies seeking a share of the country's extensive natural gas reserves.

Note:

The president is elected for a five year term* by the people. Note that the next presidential election in Turkmenistan was scheduled to be held in 2017.

* In February 2016, a presidential commission drafted a new constitution; key provisions within the draft included an extension of the presidential term from five years to seven years and the removal of the upper age limit of 70 years for presidential candidates. The measures would essentially ensure a lock on power for President Kurbanguly Berdymukhamedov. While the constitution would have to be ratified by parliament, legislators in that body were expected to easily approve it.

Cabinet:

Council of Ministers; appointed by the president

Legislative Branch:

Unicameral parliament known as the National Assembly (Mejlis):

125 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms

Primer on 2013 Parliamentary Elections in Turkmenistan

Dec. 15, 2013 --

Parliamentary elections were to be held in Turkmenistan in December 2013. At stake would be the composition of the Unicameral parliament known as the National Assembly (Mejlis). In the National Assembly, the 125 members are elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms. The last elections were held in December 2008 and were won by the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan.

Of course, the political landscape is dominated by the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan and its pseudo-civil society parent organization, the Revival Movement, both of which are approved by the president. In 2012, there was some opening in the political field when a new law on political parties was adopted. The Party of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan was established as a result of this change.

Still, the political landscape in Turkmenistan remained less than open in a country known for repressive leadership. After gaining independence in 1991, the central Asian country of Turkmenistan was led by the late president Saparmyrat Niyazov until his death in December 2006. Niyazov held sway over a bizarre personalist regime. Quite apart from his authoritarian governing style, which included massive video surveillance across the Central Asian state for the purpose of knowing "if a fly quietly buzzes past," Niyazov also renamed the months of the year after himself, ordered citizens not to have their teeth capped in gold, and wrote a book on Turkmen culture and identity, which he mandated all citizens to read.

Niyazov's death in 2006 brought to power Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and augured speculation as to if Turkemistan would set upon a less authoritarian path. While, there was some shift at the party politics level (as noted above), the presidential contest in 2012 made it clear that Turkmenistan's legacy of strongman leadership would prevail. Berdimuhamedov was re-elected to power with a resounding 97 percent of the vote in an election contest virtually devoid of serious competition. Meanwhile, whereas Niyazov became infamous for his idiosyncratic tendencies, Berdymukhamedov -- also known as "Arkadag," or "The Patron" -- was garnering a reputation of a brutal autocrat. Human Rights Watch characterized Turkmenistan as "virtually closed to independent scrutiny," and warned that "human rights defenders and other activists face the constant threat of government reprisal."

Nevertheless, President Berdymukhamedov was believed to be trying to highlight progress on the road towards democratization by touting this election as the first multi-party poll in modern times. It was to be seen if the parliamentary contest would signal some shift on the political scene, but the fact remained that the lion's share of political power in Turkmenistan remained in the hands of the president.

Voter turnout on election day was reported to be high -- in excess of 90 percent overall and the

election observer mission from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) said the elections were "free" and adhered to "democratic principles." The main issue, as discussed here, was the fact that despite the opening up of elections to other parties, there remained a lack of competition in the parliamentary elections, reminiscent of the situation for the last presidential contest.

With the ballots cast and counted, as before, the ruling Democratic Party won the plurality of seats -- 47 of the 125 seats at stake -- but lost its parliamentary majority for the first time since independence. The Organization of Trade Unions took second place with 33 seats. The Women's Union of Turkmenistan garnered 16 seats. The newly-established opposition entity, Party of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan, secured a respectable finish with 14 seats. The rest of the seats were won by other parties.

Note:

In September 2008, a new constitution of Turkmenistan abolished a second legislative body known as the People's Council and expanded the number of deputies in the National Assembly from 65 to 125; the powers formerly held by the People's Council were divided up between the president and the National Assembly.

Note that the next parliamentary elections were set to be held in 2018.

Judicial Branch:

Supreme Court; judges are appointed by the president

Constitution:

New constitution adopted in 2008

Legal System:

Based on civil law system

Political Parties and Leaders:

Agrarian Party of Turkmenistan or APT [Rezhep BAZAROV] (government created in September 2014, like the PIE, but not represented in parliament)

Democratic Party of Turkmenistan or DPT [Kasymguly BABAYEW]

Party of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs or PIE [Orazmammet MAMMEDOW]

Note:

A law authorizing the registration of political parties went into effect in January 2012; unofficial, small opposition movements exist abroad; the three most prominent opposition groups-in-exile are the National Democratic Movement of Turkmenistan (NDMT), the Republican Party of Turkmenistan, and the Watan (Fatherland) Party; the NDMT was led by former Foreign Minister Boris SHIKHMURADOV until his arrest and imprisonment in the wake of the 2002 attack on President NYYAZOW's motorcade

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Administrative Divisions:

Five "welayatlar" (singular - "welayat"): Ahal Welayaty (Ashgabat), Balkan Welayaty (Nebitdag), Dashhowuz Welayaty (formerly Tashauz), Lebap Welayaty (Charjew), Mary Welayaty

Note:

Administrative divisions have the same names as their administrative centers. (Exceptions have the administrative center name following in parentheses).

Principal Government Officials

Leadership of Turkmenistan

According to the Turkmen Constitution, the president serves as de facto chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers.

Pres.

Gurbanguly BERDIMUHAMEDOW

Dep. Chmn., Cabinet of Ministers

Yesenmyrat ORAZGELDYEW

Dep. Chmn., Cabinet of Ministers

Batyr ERESOW

Dep. Chmn., Cabinet of Ministers

Annamuhammet GOCYYEW

Dep. Chmn., Cabinet of Ministers
Yagsygeldi KAKAYEW
Dep. Chmn., Cabinet of Ministers
Rasit MEREDOW
Dep. Chmn., Cabinet of Ministers
Satlyk SATLYKOW
Dep. Chmn., Cabinet of Ministers
Palwan TAGANOW
Dep. Chmn., Cabinet of Ministers
Sapardurdy TOYLYYEW
Dep. Chmn., Cabinet of Ministers
Maysa YAZMUHAMMEDOWA
Dep. Chmn., Cabinet of Ministers
Annageldi YAZMYRADOW
Min. of Agriculture & Water Management
Nursahet SAPARDURDYEW
Min. of Communication
Bayramgeldi OWEZOW
Min. of Construction & Architecture
Gapurberdi BAYRAMMYRADOW
Min. of Culture
Annageldi GARAJAYEW
Min. of Defense
Yaylym BERDIYEW
Min. of Economics & Development
Wepa AWDYLHEKIMOW
Min. of Education
Purli AGAMYRADOW
Min. of Energy
Dovranmammed REJEPOW
Min. of Finance
Muhammetguly MUHAMMEDOW
Min. of Foreign Affairs
Rasit MEREDOW
Min. of Health & Medical Industry
Nurmuhammet AMANNEPESOW
Min. of Industry
Dowran NURSAHEDOW
Min. of Internal Affairs
Isgender MULIKOW
Min. of Justice

Begmyrat MUHAMMEDOW
Min. of Labor & Social Protection
Seyidmammad AKHMAMMADOW
Min. of National Security
Guychgeldy HOJABERDYEW
Min. of Oil & Gas Industry
Myratgeldi MEREDOW
Min. of Public Works Management & Sanitation
Kakageldi GURBANOW
Min. of Railways
Bayram ANNAMEREDOW
Min. of Road Transport
Maksat AYDOGDYEW
Min. of Textile Industry
Tacmammet GURBANMAMMEDOW
Min. of Trade & Foreign Economic Relations
Bayar ABAYEW
Min. of Water Resources
Seyitmyrat TAGANOW
Dir., State Agency for the Management & Use of Hydrocarbon Resources
Yagsygeldi KAKAYEW
Prosecutor Gen.
Amanmyrat HALLYYEW
Chmn., Central Bank
Merdan ANNADURDYEW
Ambassador to the US
Mered ORAZOW
Permanent Representative to the UN, New York
Aksoltan ATAYEWA

-- as of 2016

Leader Biography

Leader Biography

President of Turkmenistan

Editor's Note:

In the third week of December 2006, state television in Turkmenistan announced that President Saparmurat Niyazov, who had ruled the Central Asian country for more than two decades, had died. Reports noted that Niyazov, who had earlier acknowledged suffering from heart disease, had died of a heart attack. His funeral took place on December 24th 2006, in the Turkmen capital city of Ashgabat.

Niyazov had ruled Turkmenistan with the proverbial iron fist. He also gained notoriety for his penchant for honoring both himself and his peculiar penchants. Indeed, his idiosyncratic "cult of personality" included the naming of landmarks and even the calendar after himself and his family members. (See "Political Conditions" for more information about the president's "cult of personality.") His indelible mark on Turkmenistan's political spectrum and its modern society meant that in the wake of his death, there was no clear sense of who would fill the power chasm. Indeed, Niyazov had left no named successor.

Turkmen law specifies that the president must be succeeded by the head of the People's Assembly. Since Niyazov had effectively held this post as the head of the legislative body -- in addition to his role as the executive head of government -- the result was no clearly designated successor to lead the country.

Emergency meetings by the country's representative bodies on December 26, 2006 to determine the next course of action. There was some expectation that the chairman of parliament, Ovezgeldy Atayev, would become the interim leader. However, Deputy Prime Minister Kurbanguly Berdymukhamedov quickly convened a National Security Council, sacked Atayev saying that he was at the heart of a criminal probe, and was himself named the acting head of state.

Its strategic location in increasingly fractious Central Asia, as well as its rich assets in the form of gas reserves, meant that Turkmenistan's fate was of significance for the surrounding region, and the global community at large. The international community was watching the situation in

Turkmenistan cautiously. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov called for the power transition in Turkmenistan to take place "in the framework of the law" to ensure stability in the region.

In early 2007, Kurbanguly Berdimukhamedov won an overwhelming victory in the presidential election to choose a successor to President Saparmurat Niyazov. Indeed, he won 89 percent of the votes cast, according to the Central Election Commission. Soon after winning a clear mandate, Berdimukhamedov was inaugurated into office as the new president. In his speech to the People's Assembly, Berdimukhamedov promised to continue Niyazov's policies and to maintain the country's neutral orientation. He said, "I will draw support from the people and unswervingly observe the constitution and follow the path laid by the first president." He added, "Turkmenistan will honor its international commitments and continue exporting energy to other countries."

Update:

A presidential election was set to be held in Turkmenistan on Feb. 12, 2012. The last presidential election was held in February 2007 and was won by Kurbanguly Berdimukhamedov, when he was elected to a five-year term by universal suffrage. The incumbent president was seeking re-election. Other candidates registered for the election contest were: Deputy Energy and Industry Minister Yarmukhammet Orazgulyev; Water Economy Minister Annageldy Yazmyradov; Rejep Bazarov, the deputy leader of Dasoguz Province; Kakageldy Abdullayev, the governor of Türkmenbasy District; Esenguli Gaiypov, the head of the Lebapurlushyk production association; Saparmyrat Batyrov, the director of the Geotepe textile mill; Gurbanmamed Mallanyzov, the manager of Türkmennebit). All of the candidates were members of Turkmenistan's only political party -- the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan.

On Feb. 9, 2012 -- days head of the election -- the border between Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan was closed on the basis of security concerns.

A day after the election was held, there was no official result available. That said, there were reports that the presidential election in Turkmenistan may have been rigged in favor of the incumbent President Berdimuhamedov. According to a report by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Ashirkuly Bayriev -- an independent Turkmen journalist -- claimed that he observed irregularities at the voting booth. Bayriev was cited as saying, "I saw a person carrying several passports. I figured that, based on all those passports, he was planning to get ballots to vote on behalf of all of his family members." The claim appeared to intimate ballot stuffing or vote fraud of some sort.

That being said, election monitors from the Commonwealth of Independent States reported no significant irregularities at the polls. It should also be noted that regardless of the supposed irregularities, the election contest was not a competitive event for the incumbent president. In fact, as a result of those conditions, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe declined to send observers.

By mid-February 2012, the election results were finalized and, as expected, incumbent President Berdimuhamedov was re-elected to power with a resounding 97 percent of the vote in an election contest virtually devoid of serious competition. Berdymukhamedov was soon inaugurated into power and speaking from a golden throne, he promised to continue to serve the Turkmen people. Berdymukhamedov -- also known as "Arkadag," or "The Patron," by his subjects, declared: "I pledge faithfully and honestly to serve the people of Turkmenistan ... and to protect the independence and neutrality of Turkmenistan." His inauguration ceremony was witnessed by representatives of international energy companies seeking a share of the country's extensive natural gas reserves.

Foreign Relations

General Relations

Turkmenistan is a member of numerous international organizations including the United Nations and many of its specialized and regional agencies, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Turkmenistan is also a member of: the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (now the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council or EAPC), NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Turkmenistan has observer status with the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Turkmenistan's declaration of "permanent neutrality" was formally recognized by the United Nations in 1995. Although the Government of Turkmenistan has favored high-profile purchases from the United States like Boeing aircraft, it has significant commercial relationships with Turkey, Russia, and Iran, and increasingly with China. The government worked closely with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan until September 11, 2001, and until that time had a growing cross-border trade with the regime in Afghanistan.

Regional Relations

The five states of Central Asia wrestle with sharing limited water resources and environmental degradation caused by the shrinking of the Aral Sea. Multilaterally accepted Caspian Sea seabed and maritime boundaries have not yet been established. Up to now, Iran has insisted on dividing the Caspian Sea into five equal sectors while Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Russia have generally agreed upon equidistant seabed boundaries. Turkmenistan is negotiating bilateral delimitation with Azerbaijan.

Energy concerns nurture a sense of good neighborliness in the region. In order to bolster relations, facilitate communication, and establish a basis for prosperity, the countries in the Caspian region formed the Organization for Economic Cooperation (OCE), of which Turkmenistan is a member. The legal status of the Caspian Sea remains an important issue for Turkmenistan and the other shoreline states: Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Iran.

Pakistan frequently participates in bilateral or multilateral talks pertaining to Caspian issues. Turkmen President Niyazov and the chief executive of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, met in May 2000 and pledged to "cooperate actively" to establish peace in Afghanistan. The communiqué signed at the end of Musharraf's two-day visit to Turkmenistan said

a pipeline from Turkmenistan involving Afghanistan "can make a significant contribution to developing the infrastructure of the region and to strengthening peace and stability in Central and South Asia."

To expedite realization of this major infrastructure enhancement, the two heads of state emphasized the importance of a peaceful solution of all disputed issues and conflicts taking place in the region.

In 2002, the Asian Development Bank was reported to have taken an interest in financing the pipeline.

Countries situated along the historic Silk Road, stretching from the western frontier of China to Eastern Europe, are hoping that a proposed regional state-of-the-art satellite communications system would bring cooperation and stability to this troubled, vast multicultural expanse.

Presidents and foreign ministers of the countries attending the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000, placed their initials on their countries' locations on a global projection map, symbolizing their support for this bold endeavor. The countries represented at this Silk Road Cooperation Summit were: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine.

The project is expected to build and launch a new-generation, small-sized telecommunications satellite, dedicated to the needs of the countries in the region. Among the benefits of the project would be reliable digital communications for governments, militaries and border security services.

In late 2004, regional relations took center stage when the Turkmen and Uzbek presidents signed a friendship declaration, which detailed an agreement on water resources.

New President Berdymukhamedov's election platform had included plans to build a gas line to China, to complete the AmuDarya railroad bridge in Lebap province, and to create special border trade zones in southern Balkan province - a hint that the new post-Niyazov government might work toward the creation of a friendlier foreign investment environment.

Later in the year, concurrence was reached with Russia and Kazakhstan to construct a pipeline north of the Caspian Sea, for the purpose of facilitating Russian access to Turkmen gas.

Regional ties were strained in early 2008 when Turkmenistan decided to cut gas supplies to Iran. At issue was Turkmenistan's claim that Iran did not pay for gas supplies. But Iran said that the price was double the norm.

In April 2009, regional relations took center stage as Turkmenistan became embroiled in a dispute

with Russia. Specifically, Turkmenistan accused Russia of being behind a pipeline explosion that ultimately affected energy imports. For its part, Russia denied the charge. At the close of 2009, Turkmenistan was making it clear that it wanted more autonomy over energy supplies as it opened a new pipeline for gas exports to China. At the start of 2010, a second gas pipeline to Iran was opened.

The Caspian Sea

Disputes among Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan over Caspian Sea boundaries have not been resolved fully and may provide the catalyst for additional conflict in the region. The five nations surrounding the Caspian Sea have been divided for many years on the question of who owns the resources in the sea and the seabed. Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, the three nations with oil near their coastlines, have wanted the Caspian divided into national sectors, while the other two nations, with little or no oil or gas near their coasts, have wanted the sea's resources to be shared by all five nations.

In April 2002, a summit meeting was held by each of the five states bordering the Caspian Sea to further discuss the division of hydrocarbon wealth.

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Pipeline Politics

As part of its strategy to increase natural gas exports, Turkmenistan is developing alternatives to Russia's pipeline network. The most important proposed project is the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline (TCGP), which would run from Turkmenistan under the Caspian Sea to Azerbaijan, through Georgia, and deliver its gas supply to Turkey. The first phase of the pipeline would handle roughly 565 Bcf per year, with the possibility of an eventual doubling of capacity if transportation onward to Europe can be arranged.

Turkey signed a preliminary agreement with Turkmenistan in March 1999 for gas purchases. Another piece of the puzzle fell into place when Shell, which had earlier studied a route across Iran, endorsed the TCGP plan in August 1999. Shell agreed to take a 50 percent stake in the pipeline, with the rest being held by the pipeline developer PSG, a joint venture between Bechtel and GE Capital.

The TCGP faces significant but not insurmountable hurdles. First, there is some question as to whether Turkey would have enough demand to consume both Turkmen supplies and those from the Blue Stream line under the Black Sea from Russia, on which construction recently began. Second, concerns have been raised about whether the estimated cost, \$3 billion, is economically feasible, especially given banks' reluctance to invest in areas with significant political risk. Third, Azerbaijan recently discovered a large gas deposit at Shakh Deniz, offshore in Azerbaijani waters in the Caspian, which could potentially compete for Turkish gas demand.

On the positive side, Turkish and American officials have strongly supported the TCGP, and former U.S. Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson visited Turkmenistan in August 1999 to promote the project. Shell's endorsement also has given the project more credibility with financial institutions, and the U.S. Export-Import Bank and Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) have pledged to assist with risk guarantees. Competition from the Shakh Deniz field off Azerbaijan is at least a few years away, and the idea of linking Shakh Deniz into the pipeline as its export route to Turkey has been discussed.

Another small Turkmen gas export pipeline runs from Turkmenistan to Iran. In late December 1997, Turkmenistan and Iran opened the 124-mile pipeline linking the Korpedzhe gas field in western Turkmenistan to the town of Kurt-Kui in northern Iran. The \$190 million line currently has a capacity of 141 Bcf, expected to rise to 283 Bcf by 2006. During the first three years of operation, approximately 65 percent of gas supplied through the line is earmarked for Iran as payment for construction costs. The pipeline is the first in Central Asia to bypass Russia, and was intended to support exports through the Iranian gas grid to Turkey. The prospects for this, though, are clouded by the fact that Iran also wants to export gas to Turkey, and would have a lot more available once its South Pars field is fully developed.

Another possible route for Turkmen gas exports, considered in the past, was a pipeline stretching

from Turkmenistan to Pakistan via Afghanistan. In July 1997, officials from Turkmenistan and Pakistan and representatives from Unocal and Saudi Arabia's Delta Oil signed an agreement to build the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan line. The 900+ mile pipeline would have cost between \$2 billion and \$2.7 billion, and would have carried approximately 700 Bcf of gas from Turkmenistan's Daulatabad gas field to the central Pakistani city of Multan. In October 1997, Unocal set up the Central Asian Gas Pipeline (CentGas) consortium to build the pipeline. Construction was scheduled to begin in 1998. In early August 1998, however, Unocal announced that CentGas had not secured the financing necessary to begin the work, and on Aug. 22, 1998, Unocal suspended construction plans due to the continuing civil war in Afghanistan. Unocal stressed that the pipeline project would not proceed until an internationally recognized government was in place in Afghanistan. The removal of the Taliban from power in Afghanistan in 2001, and the installation of an internationally recognized government, might shift the outlook onto more promising footing.

Another proposal is a 4,161-mile gas pipeline running from Turkmenistan to China and possibly on to Japan. In September 1998, a final deal between Turkmenistan and China was delayed due to unfavorable results from a preliminary feasibility study.

In April 2006, Turkmenistan and China signed an agreement to build a pipeline, which would transport Turkmen gas to China. Energy demand in China may have spurred the deal with Turkmenistan, which was home to significant natural gas reserves. Details of the deal were not made available.

Turkmenistan may also be able to take advantage of another oil pipeline currently under consideration. That proposed pipeline would connect Baku in Azerbaijan through Georgia and Turkey to Turkey's Mediterranean port, Ceyhan. Several agreements concerning the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline were signed by the presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey on the "sidelines" of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) summit in Istanbul in November 1999. These three countries, along with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, signed additional agreements concerning shipping the latter two states' oil via the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline (now developed).

Also in Istanbul, the presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkmenistan, Turkey and the United States signed an agreement on the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline (TCGP) discussed above.

As noted above: New President Berdymukhamedov's election platform had included plans to build a gas line to China, to complete the AmuDarya railroad bridge in Lebap province, and to create special border trade zones in southern Balkan province - a hint that the new post-Niyazov government might work toward the creation of a friendlier foreign investment environment.

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Relations with Russia

Central Asia has been a target of Russia since the days of the czars. Its location as a gateway to the East and its vast oil reserves have driven this attraction. In recent years, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Kremlin has sought to keep Muslim leaders neutral in Russia's war against Chechen freedom fighters.

Russian President Vladimir Putin paid a visit to Turkmenistan and other countries in the region in mid-May 2000 to discuss among other things gas sales of Turkmen gas to Russia. Putin's visit to Turkmenistan resulted in an agreement to increase supplies of Turkmen gas to Russia by 10 billion cubic meters a year. This deal remained ineffective however as the two sides failed to agree on the price.

Migration is another sore point between the two countries. After Putin's May visit the Turkmen Foreign Ministry and Russia's Federal Migration Service temporarily extended the agreement on migration. This move eliminated a legal vacuum that appeared when the intergovernmental agreement on regulation of migration and protection of migrants' rights, a document signed in December 1993 and renewed for five years in 1995, expired.

According to the Ministry of Federal Affairs, Nationalities and Migration Policy, over 150,000 people applied to migrate to Russia between 1997 and 1999. The number of Russian speakers seeking to emigrate from Turkmenistan increased significantly when the government declared that all official business in the country would be conducted in Turkmen from January 2000.

In April 2003, on a visit to Moscow, the Turkmen president signed a deal with the Russian company Gazprom for the annual purchase of gas from Turkmenistan. Although this agreement was regarded as a positive bilateral development, tensions rose when President Niyazov cancelled a

dual citizenship agreement with Russia. Dual passport holders were given two months to decide which passport to hold and which one would be relinquished. Russia accused Turkmenistan of compelling tens of thousands of people with dual citizenship to leave one country or the other. Indeed, the decision resulted in a mass exodus of ethnic Russians from Turkmenistan.

In July 2003, the government of Turkmenistan pledged to respect the rights of ethnic Russians in the wake of the decision a few months prior to cancel its dual citizenship agreement with Russia.

Natural gas was on the agenda in 2006 when Turkmenistan threatened to withhold gas supplies to Russia, unless Gazprom, Russia's state-owned gas company, increased its purchase price. Turkmenistan was demanding that Gazprom pay \$100 per 10,000 cubic meters of gas -- a notable increase from the existing rate of \$65. The scenario suggested possible challenges regionally as the Turkmen gas sold to Gazprom is then sold to other countries, such as Ukraine, which was at the center of a gas crisis at the start of 2006 when Russia raised gas prices and then cut off supplies to countries who refused to pay at the new rate. With Turkmen gas likely to increase in price to Gazprom, it was likely that there would be an effect further along to end user countries. There was, however, no immediate effect as Russia was still ruminating about the matter in mid-2006 and had no response to the demand by Turkmenistan at that time.

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Relations with United States

The United States' criticism of Turkmenistan's crackdown against perceived sources of political opposition after the November 2002 motorcade attack led to a marked downturn in bilateral relations between the governments of the United States and Turkmenistan.

Since then, however, Turkmenistan has been interested in engaging with the United States in several areas, including security and energy issues. In order to secure and maintain this engagement, the government has been willing to take some small steps forward in democratic

reform, such as lifting exit visas and allowing the registration of some religious minorities. That said, Turkmenistan's authoritarian political leadership, with a highly centralized government structure, no freedom of the press and no tolerance for opposition political activities, poses an evident rift with American norms.

During the crisis which developed after September 11th as a result of the terrorist attack against the United States, Turkmenistan played the least active role in the military campaign in Afghanistan of the five former Soviet Central Asian states. The United States was nevertheless appreciative of the use of Turkmen bases for channeling humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan.

The United States has a strategic and economic interest in Turkmenistan becoming economically viable, politically independent and well integrated into international political and economic institutions. Turkmenistan has long borders with Iran and Afghanistan as well as close proximity to the Caucasus, the Middle East and South Asia.

As an energy-importing nation, the United States is interested in ensuring that Turkmenistan's energy potential be efficiently realized. Turkmenistan possesses the world's fourth largest natural gas reserves as well as significant oil reserves. It has the potential to become a major player in world energy markets once export route questions are resolved.

The United States and Turkmenistan agreed in February 2007 to "turn a new page" in the bilateral relationship and find ways to cooperate on political and human rights reform, economic and agricultural reform, education and health care, energy, and security.

Relations with France

In 2006, Turkmenistan accused a French diplomat of being involved in clandestine activities against Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan's Security Minister, Geldymukhamed Ashirmukhamedov, accused a French diplomat, Henri Tomasini, of providing a Turkmen dissident, Annakurban Amanklychev, with a specialized video camera, allegedly for the purpose of filming protests, prisons and military bases. Ashirmukhamedov said on television that Tomasini wanted Amanklychev to videotape "material of slanderous and provocative nature intended for foreign special services and subversive centres." In response, the French government denied the accusations and said that the video camera was standard fare used for making videotaped reports. It was unknown if the issue would have a long-term effect on bilateral relations.

Editor's Note:

With the death of President Niyazov, which brought an end to his personalist authoritarian regime,

it was not known if the new President Berdymukhamedov would move the country in a new direction. Upon coming to power, though, President Berdymukhamedov suggested that Turkmenistan would continue its policies of the past. Nevertheless, Berdymukhamedov's election platform included plans to build a gas line to China, to complete the AmuDarya railroad bridge in Lebap province, and to create special border trade zones in southern Balkan province - a hint that the new post-Niyazov government might work toward the creation of a friendlier foreign investment environment.

Written by Dr. Denise Coleman, Editor in Chief at CountryWatch; see Bibliography for source materials.

National Security

External Threats

No foreign country poses an immediate military threat to Turkmenistan. Recently, the governments of Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan were stalled in their delimitation of the Caspian seabed. Also, bilateral talks with Azerbaijan on dividing the seabed and contested oilfields in the middle of the Caspian continue to progress.

Crime

Turkmenistan is a regional narcotics trafficking hub. It serves as an interim destination for Afghan narcotics bound for Russia and, to a lesser extent, Western Europe. Likewise, precursor chemicals used in the production of heroin transit Uzbekistan en route to Afghanistan. Cannabis and poppy are cultivated there on a limited basis, mostly for domestic consumption. Outside of drug trafficking and related activity, Turkmenistan has a generally low rate of violent crime, but street crime is somewhat common in the nation.

Insurgencies

There are no insurgencies operating inside Turkmenistan that pose a direct threat to its government or general population. Turkmenistan has enjoyed generally stable conditions since receiving its

independence from the former Soviet Union in December 1991. There are clearly forces inside and outside the country, however, which oppose Turkmenistan's authoritarian government. In November 2002, armed gunmen attacked the president's motorcade, but failed to assassinate their target. The government labeled the incident an act of domestic terrorism and proceeded to crack down severely on perceived sources of opposition. In fact, the response of Turkmenistan's government was so harsh that it elicited the attention of international human rights organizations. In addition to domestic opposition, a number of organizations operating in the region have advocated the overthrow of secular governments throughout Central Asia and their replacement with Islamic regimes (see below section on terrorism).

Terrorism

Given their agendas and histories, regionally based Islamic militant organizations pose a credible risk to Turkmenistan. In addition to al-Qaida, two of its affiliates have a significant presence in Central Asia: the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement. Both have demonstrated a willingness to perpetrate attacks outside of their base countries in pursuit of an Islamic fundamentalist agenda. A fourth organization, Hizb ut-Tahrir al Islami (HT) has also attracted the attention of the United States government as a possible catalyst of terrorist violence in the region.

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) seeks the overthrow of the Uzbek government and its replacement with an Islamic regime. Like al-Qaida, IMU is also virulently anti-Western. In addition to attacks in Uzbekistan, the organization has been linked to a number of terrorist incidents in Kyrgyzstan, including the 1999 abduction of four American climbers and the 2000 abduction of four Japanese geologists and eight Kyrgyz soldiers. The Kyrgyz government also blames IMU for the December 2002 bombing of a bazaar frequented by foreigners and the May 2003 bombing of a bank in Osh. Officials in Kyrgyzstan interrupted a plot to bomb the United States embassy and a nearby hotel there in 2003. IMU is believed to have fewer than 700 total members.

Similarly oriented, the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) is based in China's western Xinjiang Province. It is comprised of ethnic Uighur separatists who seek to establish an independent "Eastern Turkistan", an area that would include Turkey, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and China's Xinjiang province. Likewise, ETIM has demonstrated an anti-Western bent. The United States (U.S.) Department of State reports that from 1990 to 2001, ETIM orchestrated over 200 acts of terrorism in China, which resulted in at least 162 deaths and over 440 injuries. In May 2002, Kyrgyz officials deported two ETIM members to China for allegedly plotting to attack the United States embassy in Kyrgyzstan, and other U.S. interests abroad. U.S. Department of State indicates that ETIM's agenda to create a pan-Asian, Turkic state does not enjoy widespread support amongst China's ethnic Uighurs. The group's total membership is unknown, but it is believed to have few operatives. In August 2002,

the U.S. placed the ETIM on its list of terrorist groups. As of October 2005, ETIM and IMU had not attempted to attack any targets in Turkmenistan. Their affiliation with the al-Qaida network and their demonstrated willingness to perpetrate attacks outside of their homelands both point to a credible risk that they may do so in the future, however.

The United States government has identified a fourth organization, Hizb ut-Tahrir al Islami (HT), as a potential threat to the greater Central Asian region. Unlike al-Qaida, IMU, or ETIM, however, HT is not believed to be responsible for any acts of violence. Founded in the Middle East in the 1950s, HT is a secretive organization that generally advocates a strict interpretation of the sharia, Islamic law. It has evolved into a transnational organization, drawing support from Muslims throughout Asia, Europe and the Middle East. In Central Asia, HT has traditionally been comprised of ethnic Uzbeks. More recently, it has begun recruiting new members in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and, to a lesser extent in Kazakhstan. Like other Islamic Fundamentalist organizations active in the region, HT preaches the overthrow of Central Asia 's secular governments and their replacement with Islamic regimes. Since the commencement of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, HT has adopted a decidedly militant tone. The organization's leaflets have praised suicide attacks in Israel, denounced the presence of coalition forces in Central Asia, claimed that the United States and the United Kingdom are at war with Islam, and called upon Muslims to defend their faith by engaging in jihad with those countries. Thus, HT's rhetoric, rather than its actions, makes it a potential threat to the security of Central Asian countries. Though it has not committed any acts of terrorism, it clearly promotes violence in the name of an orthodox interpretation of Islam.

Turkmenistan is party to nine of the twelve international protocols and conventions pertaining to terrorism.

Defense Forces

Military Data

Military Branches:

Turkmen Armed Forces: Ground Forces, Navy, Air and Air Defense Forces

Eligible age to enter service:

18-27 years of age for compulsory male military service; 20 years of age for voluntary service; males may enroll in military schools from age 15

Mandatory Service Terms:

24 months for conscripted service

Manpower in general population-fit for military service:

N/A

Manpower reaching eligible age annually:

N/A

Military Expenditures-Percent of GDP:

N/A

Chapter 3

Economic Overview

Economic Overview

Overview

Turkmenistan is made up mainly of desert and has one of the smallest populations among the former Soviet republics in Central Asia. The country is richly endowed with gas and oil resources; its recoverable natural gas reserves rank among the top ten in the world. It also has substantial proven oil reserves and an extensive irrigation system. Agricultural production in Turkmenistan is limited in the irrigated oases, and cotton is planted in half of the irrigated land. The country's economy is based on export of natural gas, oil and oil products, and cotton.

Following its independence in 1991, Turkmenistan experienced several years of economic decline caused by the break-up of traditional economic ties, poor harvests, mismanagement, and payment and transportation problems related to energy export. Since 1999 economic activity has recovered with resumption of natural gas exports to Ukraine and Russia. Thanks to rising revenues from exports of natural gas and oil and oil products, Turkmenistan's economic performance was favorable in recent years with surpluses in its fiscal and current account balances. Since taking office in February 2007, the government under President Berdymuhamedov has launched a wide-ranging program of social and economic reforms aimed at accelerating growth and diversifying the economy, raising living standards, and developing the private sector and a more market-oriented economy. The successful unification of the exchange rates and the adjustment of some administered prices were the key initial steps. Efforts have also been made in attracting foreign direct investment and cooperation with neighboring countries and international institutions. More recently, the government has initiated reform of the financial sector. Banks are becoming more active in mobilizing deposits and providing new services, setting the ground for more commercially-oriented credit activity.

Despite impact from the global economic crisis, Turkmenistan's economic performance has continued to be strong thanks to its limited exposure to global financial markets and prudent macroeconomic policies. Real GDP growth remained positive in 2009, supported by the public investment projects and strong foreign direct investment. New pipelines to China and Iran that began operation in late 2009 and early 2010 have given Turkmenistan additional export routes for its gas, although these new routes have not offset the sharp drop in export revenue since early 2009 from decreased gas exports to Russia. The economy grew strongly in 2010 on the back of a rebound of the hydrocarbon sector and the continued strong pace of public investment. Overall, strong fiscal stimulus continued in 2010, reflecting outlays on industrial and social infrastructure. Growth continued and was even stronger in 2011. The gas-fueled economy continued to expand in

the first quarter of 2012, but at a slower rate than the previous year. As of April 2012, official data showed that Turkmenistan's natural gas reserves equal those of Saudi Arabia and are the world's fourth biggest. Government officials said natural gas output had climbed 19.1 percent in the first quarter of 2012 compared to the prior year. In recent years, Turkmenistan started selling natural gas to China and expanded exports to neighboring Iran. In May 2012, President Berdymukhamedov sacked his oil and gas minister, blaming his poor performance on state television. The move took place days after the country had agreed landmark deals to supply natural gas to Pakistan and India.

The Turkmenistan economy grew an estimated 9.4 percent in the first six months of 2013, according to media reports citing President Berdymukhamedov. The robust growth was in part due to prudent state spending and massive foreign investment, he added. Overall, the International Monetary Fund predicted GDP would climb by 8 percent for the year on the heels of growing gas exports in the country, which holds the world's fourth-largest natural gas reserves. A total of 1,865 investment projects estimated to be worth more than \$41 billion were being implemented in the country as of mid-2013, according to a Reuters article citing Berdymukhamedov, who is essentially the country's main source of economic information. The country was expected to launch production at Galkynsh, the world's second-largest natural gas deposit, later in 2013. The move would give the country the ability to accelerate gas exports to China.

As expected, economic growth in 2013 was strong on the back of the high growth of the nonhydrocarbon economy, which was supported by strong public investment. Economic growth was expected to reach double digits in 2013 and 2014. Meanwhile, the current account was expected to record a deficit in 2013 and 2014 owing to strong import growth, particularly in capital goods. In March 2014, the Daily Sabah reported that Turkey and Turkmenistan would sign a free-trade/economic cooperation agreement in 2014 that would go into effect in 2015. Then, in August 2014, Turkmenistan inked a \$1.7 billion deal with a Turkish-Japanese consortium build a gas-to-liquids plant as part of its strategy to maximize revenues from its gas riches.

Still the country's overall prospects are not encouraging due to widespread internal poverty, endemic corruption, a poor educational system, government misuse of oil and gas revenues, and Ashgabat's hesitation in implementing market-oriented reforms. Previously, Turkmenistan's economic statistics were state secrets. The current government established a State Agency for Statistics, but GDP numbers and other figures are subject to wide margins of error. In particular, the rate of GDP growth is uncertain. Since his election, President Berdymukhamedov unified the country's dual currency exchange rate, ordered the redenomination of the manat, reduced state subsidies for gasoline, and initiated development of a special tourism zone on the Caspian Sea. Although foreign investment is encouraged, many bureaucratic obstacles impede international business activity.

Based on government-provided data, the IMF reported that GDP growth was in double digits in 2014. In January 2015, Turkmenistan devalued its local currency, the manat, by 19 percent. GDP

growth slowed in the first half of 2015 compared to the previous year.

In July 2015, Turkmenistan's leader Kurbanguly Berdymukhamedov sacked several senior government officials, citing pervasive corruption and slow reforms in key sectors of the economy, according to Reuters. The IMF said it expected economic growth to decelerate in 2015 due to declining natural gas export revenues and lower public investment as a share of GDP.

Economic Performance

After several years of double-digit growth, real GDP slowed in 2009 as a result of the global economic crisis. It was estimated to have picked up in 2010 to 2012.

According to CountryWatch estimated calculations for 2014:

Real GDP growth rate was: 10.7 percent

The fiscal deficit/surplus as percent of GDP (%) was: 6.1 percent

Inflation was measured at: 9.5 percent

Updated in 2015

**Please note that the figures in our Economic Performance section are estimates or forecasts based on IMF-based data that are formulated using CountryWatch models of analysis.*

Supplementary Sources: International Monetary Fund, Daily Sabah and Reuters

Nominal GDP and Components

Nominal GDP and Components					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Nominal GDP (LCU billions)	83.315	100.218	116.887	136.606	155.268
Nominal GDP Growth Rate (%)	31.990	20.288	16.633	16.870	13.661
Consumption (LCU billions)	6.493	15.111	17.624	20.597	11.674

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Government Expenditure (LCU billions)	7.590	8.876	10.353	12.099	6.858
Gross Capital Formation (LCU billions)	43.267	47.303	55.171	64.478	73.286
Exports of Goods & Services (LCU billions)	62.233	73.418	85.629	100.075	120.778
Imports of Goods & Services (LCU billions)	36.268	44.490	51.890	60.644	57.328

Population and GDP Per Capita

Population and GDP Per Capita					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Population, total (million)	5.526	5.614	5.704	5.796	5.888
Population growth (%)	1.600	1.592	1.603	1.613	1.587
Nominal GDP per Capita (LCU 1000s)	15,076.91	17,851.44	20,492.11	23,569.01	26,370.24

Real GDP and Inflation

Real GDP and Inflation					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Real Gross Domestic Product (LCU billions 2005 base)	33.575	37.285	41.086	45.327	49.189
Real GDP Growth Rate (%)	14.742	11.050	10.193	10.322	8.522
GDP Deflator (2005=100.0)	248.146	268.788	284.495	301.382	315.654
Inflation, GDP Deflator (%)	15.033	8.318	5.844	5.936	4.736

Government Spending and Taxation

Government Spending and Taxation					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Government Fiscal Budget (billions)	12.180	14.695	18.850	21.099	22.937
Fiscal Budget Growth Rate (percentage)	37.193	20.649	28.275	11.931	8.711
National Tax Rate Net of Transfers (%)	18.266	21.000	17.436	16.269	13.837
Government Revenues Net of Transfers (LCU billions)	15.218	21.046	20.380	22.225	21.484
Government Surplus(-) Deficit(+) (LCU billions)	3.038	6.351	1.530	1.126	-1.4530
Government Surplus(+) Deficit(-) (%GDP)	3.646	6.337	1.309	0.8243	-0.9358

Money Supply, Interest Rates and Unemployment

Money Supply, Interest Rates and Unemployment					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Money and Quasi-Money (M2) (LCU billions)	52.379	63.404	76.029	91.943	104.503
Money Supply Growth Rate (%)	31.074	21.049	19.912	20.930	13.661
Lending Interest Rate (%)	12.497	11.615	11.290	11.303	16.360
Unemployment Rate (%)	12.497	11.615	11.290	11.303	0.0000

Foreign Trade and the Exchange Rate

Foreign Trade and the Exchange Rate					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Official Exchange Rate (LCU/\$US)	2.850	2.850	2.850	2.850	3.500
Trade Balance NIPA (\$US billions)	9.110	10.150	11.838	13.836	18.128
Trade Balance % of GDP	31.165	28.865	28.865	28.865	40.865
Total Foreign Exchange Reserves (\$US billions)	4.724	5.682	6.628	7.746	5.608

Data in US Dollars

Data in US Dollars					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Nominal GDP (\$US billions)	29.233	35.164	41.013	47.932	44.362
Exports (\$US billions)	21.836	25.760	30.045	35.114	34.508
Imports (\$US billions)	12.726	15.610	18.207	21.279	16.379

Energy Consumption and Production Standard Units

Energy Consumption and Production Standard Units					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum Consumption (TBPD)	137.272	146.349	144.000	139.233	142.449
Petroleum Production (TBPD)	224.144	243.413	259.577	271.152	284.602
Petroleum Net Exports (TBPD)	86.872	97.064	115.577	131.919	142.153
Natural Gas Consumption (bcf)	709.832	812.245	847.560	829.177	892.200
Natural Gas Production (bcf)	2,340.13	2,444.67	3,000.86	2,411.70	2,588.62
Natural Gas Net Exports (bcf)	1,630.30	1,632.43	2,153.30	1,582.52	1,696.42
Coal Consumption (1000s st)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Production (1000s st)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Net Exports (1000s st)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Nuclear Production (bil kwh)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Hydroelectric Production (bil kwh)	0.0030	0.0030	0.0030	0.0030	0.0030
Renewables Production (bil kwh)	0.0005	0.0010	0.0018	0.0031	0.0034

Energy Consumption and Production QUADS

Energy Consumption and Production QUADS					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum Consumption (Quads)	0.2931	0.3125	0.3075	0.2973	0.3042
Petroleum Production (Quads)	0.4786	0.5233	0.5561	0.5922	0.4857
Petroleum Net Exports (Quads)	0.1854	0.2108	0.2486	0.2949	0.1816
Natural Gas Consumption (Quads)	0.7240	0.8285	0.8645	0.8458	0.9100
Natural Gas Production (Quads)	2.385	2.485	3.055	2.495	2.260
Natural Gas Net Exports (Quads)	1.661	1.657	2.190	1.649	1.350
Coal Consumption (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Net Exports (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Nuclear Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Hydroelectric Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Renewables Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

World Energy Price Summary

World Energy Price Summary					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum-WTI (\$/bbl)	95.054	94.159	97.943	93.112	48.709
Natural Gas-Henry Hub (\$/mmbtu)	3.999	2.752	3.729	4.369	2.614
Coal Thermal-Australian (\$/mt)	121.448	96.364	84.562	70.130	57.511

CO2 Emissions

CO2 Emissions					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum Based (mm mt C)	31.249	32.870	35.231	33.946	34.627
Natural Gas Based (mm mt C)	11.516	13.178	13.751	13.453	14.475
Coal Based (mm mt C)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Total CO2 Emissions (mm mt C)	42.766	46.048	48.982	47.398	49.102

Agriculture Consumption and Production

Agriculture Consumption and Production					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Corn Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	17.000	18.000	19.000	20.000	18.642
Corn Production (1000 metric tons)	16.968	17.945	18.923	20.306	18.925
Corn Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	-0.0315	-0.0547	-0.0774	0.3060	0.2829
Soybeans Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Soybeans Production (1000 metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Soybeans Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Rice Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	144.000	150.000	130.000	130.000	118.049
Rice Production (1000 metric tons)	144.097	149.998	129.943	129.949	122.449

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rice Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	0.0971	-0.0024	-0.0570	-0.0511	4.400
Coffee Total Consumption (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coffee Production (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coffee Net Exports (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Cocoa Beans Total Consumption (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Cocoa Beans Production (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Cocoa Beans Net Exports (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Wheat Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	1,808.13	1,814.85	1,985.00	1,942.13	1,657.85
Wheat Production (1000 metric tons)	1,297.11	1,206.35	1,367.85	1,203.96	1,016.52
Wheat Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	-511.0199	-608.4976	-617.1458	-738.1689	-641.3265

World Agriculture Pricing Summary

World Agriculture Pricing Summary					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Corn Pricing Summary (\$/metric ton)	291.684	298.417	259.389	192.881	169.750
Soybeans Pricing Summary (\$/metric ton)	540.667	591.417	538.417	491.771	390.417
Rice Pricing Summary (\$/metric ton)	458.558	525.071	473.989	425.148	386.033
Coffee Pricing Summary (\$/kilogram)	5.976	4.111	3.076	4.424	3.526
Cocoa Beans Pricing Summary (\$/kilogram)	2.980	2.392	2.439	3.062	3.135
Wheat Pricing Summary (\$/metric ton)	316.264	313.242	312.248	284.895	203.177

Metals Consumption and Production

Metals Consumption and Production					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Copper Consumption (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Copper Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Copper Net Exports (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Zinc Consumption (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Zinc Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Zinc Exports (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Lead Consumption (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Lead Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Lead Exports (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Tin Consumption (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Tin Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Tin Exports (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Nickel Consumption (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Nickel Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Nickel Exports (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Gold Consumption (kg)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Gold Production (kg)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Gold Exports (kg)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Silver Consumption (mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Silver Production (mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Silver Exports (mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

World Metals Pricing Summary

World Metals Pricing Summary					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Copper (\$/mt)	8,828.19	7,962.35	7,332.10	6,863.40	5,510.46
Zinc (\$/mt)	2,193.90	1,950.41	1,910.26	2,160.97	1,931.68
Tin (\$/mt)	26,053.68	21,125.99	22,282.80	21,898.87	16,066.63
Lead (\$/mt)	2,400.81	2,064.64	2,139.79	2,095.46	1,787.82
Nickel (\$/mt)	22,910.36	17,547.55	15,031.80	16,893.38	11,862.64
Gold (\$/oz)	1,569.21	1,669.52	1,411.46	1,265.58	1,160.66
Silver (\$/oz)	35.224	31.137	23.850	19.071	15.721

Economic Performance Index

Economic Performance Index

The Economic Performance rankings are calculated by CountryWatch's editorial team, and are based on criteria including sustained economic growth, monetary stability, current account deficits, budget surplus, unemployment and structural imbalances. Scores are assessed from 0 to 100 using this aforementioned criteria as well as CountryWatch's proprietary economic research data and models.

	Bank stability risk	Monetary/ Currency stability	Government Finances	Empl./ Unempl.	Econ.GNP growth or decline/ forecast
	0 - 100	0 - 100	0 - 100	0 - 100	%
North Americas					
Canada	92	69	35	38	3.14%
United States	94	76	4	29	3.01%
Western Europe					
Austria	90	27	30	63	1.33%
Belgium	88	27	19	23	1.15%
Cyprus	81	91	16	80	-0.69%
Denmark	97	70	45	78	1.20%
Finland	89	27	41	33	1.25%

France	87	27	18	27	1.52%
Germany	86	27	22	21	1.25%
Greece	79	27	5	24	-2.00%
Iceland	90	17	2	34	-3.04%
Italy	85	27	37	24	0.84%
Ireland	92	27	11	10	-1.55%
Luxembourg	99	27	28	66	2.08%
Malta	77	27	41	51	0.54%
Netherlands	91	27	26	74	1.30%
Norway	98	44	10	76	1.08%
Portugal	77	27	13	20	0.29%
Spain	83	27	9	3	-0.41%
Sweden	94	72	54	32	1.23%
Switzerland	97	86	55	77	1.53%
United Kingdom	85	12	9	37	1.34%
Central and Eastern Europe					
Albania	44	60	33	6	2.30%
Armenia	45	59	49	30	1.80%

Azerbaijan	56	4	84	99	2.68%
Belarus	59	21	83	98	2.41%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	34	68	69	N/A	0.50%
Bulgaria	58	75	88	49	0.20%
Croatia	69	68	94	9	0.18%
Czech Republic	80	89	29	70	1.67%
Estonia	72	90	66	92	0.80%
Georgia	36	60	53	56	2.00%
Hungary	70	66	26	54	-0.16%
Latvia	67	100	65	44	-3.97%
Lithuania	65	91	87	79	-1.65%
Macedonia (FYR)	53	69	56	2	2.03%
Moldova	23	36	81	67	2.50%
Poland	74	74	38	12	2.72%
Romania	62	56	70	62	0.75%
Russia	73	18	90	8	4.00%
Serbia	48	49	52	5	1.97%

Montenegro	39	27	73	1	-1.70%
Slovak Republic	80	62	30	14	4.06%
Slovenia	81	27	36	65	1.12%
Ukraine	41	11	57	N/A	3.68%
Africa					
Algeria	57	18	96	7	4.55%
Angola	49	1	97	N/A	7.05%
Benin	19	91	20	N/A	3.22%
Botswana	68	58	76	N/A	6.33%
Burkina Faso	16	91	13	N/A	4.41%
Burundi	2	91	6	N/A	3.85%
Cameroon	26	91	91	N/A	2.58%
Cape Verde	52	87	4	N/A	4.96%
Central African Republic	9	91	32	N/A	3.18%
Chad	22	91	89	N/A	4.42%
Congo	52	87	87	N/A	12.13%
Côte d'Ivoire	25	91	82	28	2.98%
Dem. Republic					

Congo	4	91	47	N/A	5.44%
Djibouti	31	76	50	N/A	4.47%
Egypt	37	20	24	69	5.01%
Equatorial Guinea	82	91	85	N/A	0.94%
Eritrea	1	3	1	18	1.81%
Ethiopia	6	45	8	N/A	6.96%
Gabon	64	91	96	N/A	5.36%
Gambia	8	48	86	N/A	4.82%
Ghana	9	11	69	N/A	4.50%
Guinea	10	7	91	N/A	3.03%
Guinea-Bissau	5	91	46	N/A	3.47%
Kenya	20	41	59	N/A	4.11%
Lesotho	13	40	12	N/A	2.98%
Liberia	12	73	74	N/A	5.92%
Libya	73	2	94	N/A	5.22%
Madagascar	4	22	24	N/A	-1.02%
Malawi	7	25	55	N/A	5.96%
Mali	20	91	82	N/A	5.12%

Mauritania	15	13	93	N/A	4.58%
Mauritius	65	52	56	55	4.10%
Morocco	37	72	48	26	3.23%
Mozambique	12	23	71	N/A	6.45%
Namibia	40	39	62	N/A	1.70%
Niger	10	91	21	N/A	4.41%
Nigeria	30	6	61	N/A	6.98%
Rwanda	21	40	68	N/A	5.39%
Sao Tome & Principe	1	61	100	N/A	3.40%
Senegal	24	91	63	N/A	3.44%
Seychelles	60	67	97	N/A	4.01%
Sierra Leone	5	10	39	N/A	4.77%
Somalia	2	38	59	N/A	3.19%
South Africa	61	37	70	N/A	2.59%
Sudan	16	5	73	N/A	5.52%
Swaziland	32	44	79	N/A	1.09%
Tanzania	15	45	32	N/A	6.17%
Togo	8	91	92	N/A	2.56%

Tunisia	50	61	44	39	4.00%
Uganda	11	17	54	N/A	5.59%
Zambia	29	20	49	N/A	5.84%
Zimbabwe	0	8	16	N/A	2.24%
South and Central America					
Argentina	66	3	80	36	3.50%
Belize	47	76	80	N/A	1.00%
Bolivia	32	51	61	81	3.99%
Brazil	71	47	78	11	5.50%
Chile	78	25	92	73	4.72%
Columbia	47	52	34	47	2.25%
Costa Rica	60	42	39	57	3.45%
Ecuador	43	76	75	64	2.51%
El Salvador	35	76	67	N/A	1.04%
Guatemala	46	59	58	N/A	2.52%
Honduras	27	47	58	N/A	2.00%
Mexico	69	42	52	61	4.07%
Nicaragua	23	49	42	N/A	1.75%

Panama	66	76	72	45	5.00%
Paraguay	35	46	66	16	5.27%
Peru	59	66	75	22	6.33%
Suriname	58	26	81	59	4.02%
Uruguay	70	26	27	N/A	5.71%
Venezuela	55	1	28	13	-2.63%
Caribbean					
Antigua & Barbuda	72	76	15	N/A	-2.01%
Bahamas	74	76	45	87	-0.50%
Barbados	67	76	33	15	-0.50%
Bermuda	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cuba	45	76	18	95	0.25%
Dominica	53	76	65	N/A	1.40%
Dominican Republic	54	39	43	4	3.50%
Grenada	63	76	48	N/A	0.80%
Guyana	28	56	17	N/A	4.36%
Haiti	11	27	89	N/A	-8.50%
Jamaica	42	9	85	19	-0.28%

St Lucia	55	76	67	N/A	1.14%
St Vincent & Grenadines	49	76	95	N/A	0.50%
Trinidad & Tobago	82	37	77	72	2.13%
Middle East					
Bahrain	84	76	62	91	3.48%
Iran	51	19	40	58	3.01%
Iraq	48	9	8	N/A	7.27%
Israel	87	62	12	48	3.20%
Jordan	41	51	3	N/A	4.10%
Kuwait	96	4	99	N/A	3.10%
Lebanon	63	54	2	N/A	6.00%
Oman	76	16	88	N/A	4.71%
Qatar	99	16	83	N/A	18.54%
Saudi Arabia	76	8	98	N/A	3.70%
Syria	61	24	40	N/A	5.00%
Turkey	75	23	27	60	5.20%
United Arab Emirates	96	24	98	94	1.29%

Yemen	28	2	78	N/A	7.78%
Asia					
Afghanistan	17	70	74	N/A	8.64%
Bangladesh	13	43	25	N/A	5.38%
Bhutan	24	55	5	N/A	6.85%
Brunei	78	19	99	75	0.48%
Cambodia	18	67	42	N/A	4.77%
China	54	90	19	68	11.03%
Hong Kong	89	76	14	82	5.02%
India	31	38	34	35	8.78%
Indonesia	42	46	37	31	6.00%
Japan	88	89	6	71	1.90%
Kazakhstan	62	13	76	42	2.40%
Korea North	18	65	23	N/A	1.50%
Korea South	83	63	22	85	4.44%
Kyrgyz Republic	24	15	84	88	4.61%
Laos	17	54	7	N/A	7.22%
Macao	91	76	14	82	3.00%

Malaysia	68	65	44	90	4.72%
Maldives	44	55	17	N/A	3.45%
Mongolia	33	5	77	93	7.22%
Myanmar	3	41	72	N/A	5.26%
Nepal	3	14	25	N/A	2.97%
Pakistan	19	15	31	41	3.00%
Papua New Guinea	75	50	11	N/A	7.96%
Philippines	30	48	53	43	3.63%
Singapore	93	75	63	40	5.68%
Sri Lanka	38	22	10	N/A	5.50%
Taiwan	84	88	35	89	6.50%
Tajikistan	6	6	60	97	4.00%
Thailand	56	64	90	96	5.46%
Turkmenistan	51	53	68	N/A	12.00%
Uzbekistan	40	10	60	100	8.00%
Vietnam	25	12	20	N/A	6.04%
Pacific					
Australia	96	63	31	46	2.96%

Fiji	46	53	3	N/A	2.06%
Marshall Islands	27	76	46	N/A	1.08%
Micronesia (Fed. States)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
New Caledonia	96	73	51	52	2.00%
New Zealand	98	73	51	52	2.00%
Samoa	34	88	64	N/A	-2.77%
Solomon Islands	14	71	1	N/A	3.36%
Tonga	26	57	38	N/A	0.60%
Vanuatu	33	58	47	N/A	3.80%

Source:

CountryWatch Inc. www.countrywatch.com

Updated:

This material was produced in 2010; it is subject to updating in 2012.

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Chapter 4

Investment Overview

Foreign Investment Climate

Background

Turkmenistan is a largely desert country with intensive agriculture in irrigated oases and large gas and oil resources. One-half of its irrigated land is planted in cotton; formerly it was the world's 10th-largest producer. Poor harvests in recent years have led to an almost 50 percent decline in cotton exports.

Until 2007, under a authoritarian ex-Communist regime in power and a tribally based social structure, Turkmenistan took a cautious approach to economic reform, hoping to use gas and cotton sales to sustain its inefficient economy. Privatization goals remained limited.

Overall prospects in the near future were discouraging because of widespread internal poverty, a poor educational system, government misuse of oil and gas revenues, and Ashgabat's unwillingness to adopt market-oriented reforms.

There were some hopes in 2007 that President BERDYMUKHAMMEDOV's election platform included plans to build a gas line to China, to complete the AmuDarya railroad bridge in Lebap province, and to create special border trade zones in southern Balkan province - a hint that the new post-NIYAZOV government will work to create a friendlier foreign investment environment.

Foreign Investment Assessment

Foreign investment is marred by an almost complete lack of transparency of the regulatory system in conjunction with strong government control. Indeed, governmental control over economic and commercial transactions creates obstacles to investment. Moreover, personal relations with government officials play such a fundamental role in acquiring a contract or running a business that there is no clear set of rules for investors to identify. Instead, investment contracts are concluded on a case-by-case basis.

Labor Force

Labor force: 2.34 million

Labor force - by occupation: agriculture 48%, industry 15%, services 37%

Agriculture and Industry

Agriculture - products: cotton, grain; livestock

Industries: natural gas, oil, petroleum products, textiles, food processing

Import Commodities and Import Partners

Imports - commodities: machinery and equipment 60%, foodstuffs 15%

Imports - partners: Russia 21.5%, Ukraine 15.3%, Turkey 9.4%, UAE 7.6%, Germany 4.2%, China 4.2%

Export Commodities and Export Partners

Exports - commodities: gas 57%, oil 26%, cotton fiber 3%, textiles 2%

Exports - partners: Ukraine 39.2%, Italy 18.1%, Iran 14.7%, Turkey 6.5%

Telephone System

Telephones - main lines in use: 374,000

Telephones - mobile cellular: 52,000

Telephone system: general assessment: poorly developed

international: country code - 993

linked by cable and microwave radio relay to other CIS republics and to other countries by leased connections to the Moscow international gateway switch; a new telephone link from Ashgabat to Iran has been established; a new exchange in Ashgabat switches international traffic through Turkey via Intelsat

satellite earth stations - 1 Orbita and 1 Intelsat

Internet Users

approx. 8,000

Roads, Airports, Ports and Harbors

Railways: total: 2,440 km

Highways: total: 24,000 km

Ports and harbors: Turkmenbasy

Airports: 69; only 24 with paved runways

Legal System and Considerations

Based on civil law; in practice, it functions at the discretion of the leadership

Corruption Perception Ranking

See corruption index, as reported by Transparency International, in this Country Review for Turkmenistan's ranking. Typically, Turkmenistan is one of the most corrupt countries in the world, according to this index.

Cultural Considerations

Turkmenistan is a predominantly Muslim culture and although it is not considered to be a fundamentalist Islamic country, behavior and self-presentation should be appropriate to this environment.

Country Website (s)

N/A

Foreign Investment Index

Foreign Investment Index

The Foreign Investment Index is a proprietary index measuring attractiveness to international investment flows. The Foreign Investment Index is calculated using an established methodology by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on a given country's economic stability (sustained

economic growth, monetary stability, current account deficits, budget surplus), economic risk (risk of non-servicing of payments for goods or services, loans and trade-related finance, risk of sovereign default), business and investment climate (property rights, labor force and laws, regulatory transparency, openness to foreign investment, market conditions, and stability of government). Scores are assigned from 0-10 using the aforementioned criteria. A score of 0 marks the lowest level of foreign investment viability, while a score of 10 marks the highest level of foreign investment viability, according to this proprietary index.

Country	Assessment
Afghanistan	2
Albania	4.5
Algeria	6
Andorra	9
Angola	4.5-5
Antigua	8.5
Argentina	5
Armenia	5
Australia	9.5
Austria	9-9.5
Azerbaijan	5
Bahamas	9

Bahrain	7.5
Bangladesh	4.5
Barbados	9
Belarus	4
Belgium	9
Belize	7.5
Benin	5.5
Bhutan	4.5
Bolivia	4.5
Bosnia-Herzegovina	5
Botswana	7.5-8
Brazil	8
Brunei	7
Bulgaria	5.5
Burkina Faso	4
Burma (Myanmar)	4.5
Burundi	4
Cambodia	4.5

Cameroon	5
Canada	9.5
Cape Verde	6
Central African Republic	3
Chad	4
Chile	9
China	7.5
China: Hong Kong	8.5
China: Taiwan	8.5
Colombia	7
Comoros	4
Congo DRC	4
Congo RC	5
Costa Rica	8
Cote d'Ivoire	4.5
Croatia	7
Cuba	4.5
Cyprus	7

Czech Republic	8.5
Denmark	9.5
Djibouti	4.5
Dominica	6
Dominican Republic	6.5
East Timor	4.5
Ecuador	5.5
Egypt	4.5-5
El Salvador	6
Equatorial Guinea	4.5
Eritrea	3.5
Estonia	8
Ethiopia	4.5
Fiji	5
Finland	9
Former Yugoslav Rep. of Macedonia	5
France	9-9.5
Gabon	5.5

Gambia	5
Georgia	5
Germany	9-9.5
Ghana	5.5
Greece	5
Grenada	7.5
Guatemala	5.5
Guinea	3.5
Guinea-Bissau	3.5
Guyana	4.5
Haiti	4
Holy See (Vatican)	n/a
Hong Kong (China)	8.5
Honduras	5.5
Hungary	8
Iceland	8-8.5
India	8
Indonesia	5.5

Iran	4
Iraq	3
Ireland	8
Israel	8.5
Italy	8
Jamaica	5.5
Japan	9.5
Jordan	6
Kazakhstan	6
Kenya	5
Kiribati	5.5
Korea, North	1
Korea, South	9
Kosovo	4.5
Kuwait	8.5
Kyrgyzstan	4.5
Laos	4
Latvia	7

Lebanon	5
Lesotho	5.5
Liberia	3.5
Libya	3
Liechtenstein	9
Lithuania	7.5
Luxembourg	9-9.5
Madagascar	4.5
Malawi	4.5
Malaysia	8.5
Maldives	6.5
Mali	5
Malta	9
Marshall Islands	5
Mauritania	4.5
Mauritius	7.5-8
Mexico	6.5-7
Micronesia	5

Moldova	4.5-5
Monaco	9
Mongolia	5
Montenegro	5.5
Morocco	7.5
Mozambique	5
Namibia	7.5
Nauru	4.5
Nepal	4
Netherlands	9-9.5
New Zealand	9.5
Nicaragua	5
Niger	4.5
Nigeria	4.5
Norway	9-9.5
Oman	8
Pakistan	4
Palau	4.5-5

Panama	7
Papua New Guinea	5
Paraguay	6
Peru	6
Philippines	6
Poland	8
Portugal	7.5-8
Qatar	9
Romania	6-6.5
Russia	6
Rwanda	4
Saint Kitts and Nevis	8
Saint Lucia	8
Saint Vincent and Grenadines	7
Samoa	7
San Marino	8.5
Sao Tome and Principe	4.5-5
Saudi Arabia	7

Senegal	6
Serbia	6
Seychelles	5
Sierra Leone	4
Singapore	9.5
Slovak Republic (Slovakia)	8.5
Slovenia	8.5-9
Solomon Islands	5
Somalia	2
South Africa	8
Spain	7.5-8
Sri Lanka	5.5
Sudan	4
Suriname	5
Swaziland	4.5
Sweden	9.5
Switzerland	9.5
Syria	2.5

Tajikistan	4
Taiwan (China)	8.5
Tanzania	5
Thailand	7.5-8
Togo	4.5-5
Tonga	5.5-6
Trinidad and Tobago	8-8.5
Tunisia	6
Turkey	6.5-7
Turkmenistan	4
Tuvalu	7
Uganda	5
Ukraine	4.5-5
United Arab Emirates	8.5
United Kingdom	9
United States	9
Uruguay	6.5-7
Uzbekistan	4

Vanuatu	6
Venezuela	5
Vietnam	5.5
Yemen	3
Zambia	4.5-5
Zimbabwe	3.5

Editor's Note:

As of 2015, the global economic crisis (emerging in 2008) had affected many countries across the world, resulting in changes to their rankings. Among those countries affected were top tier economies, such as the [United Kingdom](#), [Iceland](#), [Switzerland](#) and [Austria](#). However, in all these cases, their rankings have moved back upward in the last couple of years as anxieties have eased. Other top tier countries, such as [Spain](#), [Portugal](#), [Ireland](#), and [Italy](#), suffered some effects due to debt woes and the concomitant effect on the euro zone. Greece, another euro zone nation, was also downgraded due to its sovereign debt crisis; however, Greece's position on the precipice of default incurred a sharper downgrade than the other four euro zone countries mentioned above. Cyprus' exposure to Greek bank yielded a downgrade in its case. Slovenia and [Latvia](#) have been slightly downgraded due to a mix of economic and political concerns but could easily be upgraded in a future assessment, should these concerns abate. Meanwhile, the crisis in eastern [Ukraine](#) fueled downgrades in that country and neighboring [Russia](#).

Despite the "trifecta of tragedy" in [Japan](#) in 2011 -- the earthquake, the ensuing tsunami, and the resulting nuclear crisis -- and the appreciable destabilization of the economic and political terrain therein, this country has only slightly been downgraded. Japan's challenges have been assessed to be transient, the government remains accountable, and there is little risk of default. Both [India](#) and China retain their rankings; [India](#) holds a slightly higher ranking than [China](#) due to its record of democratic representation and accountability.

There were shifts in opposite directions for [Mali](#) and [Nigeria](#) versus the [Central African Republic](#), [Burkina Faso](#), and [Burundi](#). [Mali](#) was slightly upgraded due to its efforts to return to constitutional order following the 2012 coup and to neutralize the threat of separatists and Islamists. Likewise, a

new government in [Nigeria](#) generated a slight upgrade as the country attempts to confront corruption, crime, and terrorism. But the [Central African Republic](#) was downgraded due to the takeover of the government by Seleka rebels and the continued decline into lawlessness in that country. Likewise, the attempts by the leaders of [Burundi](#) and [Burkina Faso](#) to hold onto power by by-passing the constitution raised eyebrows and resulted in downgrades.

Political unrest in [Libya](#) and [Algeria](#) have contributed to a decision to marginally downgrade these countries as well. [Syria](#) incurred a sharper downgrade due to the devolution into de facto civil war and the dire security threat posed by Islamist terrorists. [Iraq](#) saw a similar downgrade as a result of the takeover of wide swaths of territory and the threat of genocide at the hands of Islamist terrorists. [Yemen](#), likewise, has been downgraded due to political instability at the hands of secessionists, terrorists, Houthi rebels, and the intervention of external parties. Conversely, [Egypt](#) and [Tunisia](#) saw slight upgrades as their political environments stabilize.

At the low end of the spectrum, devolving security conditions and/or economic crisis have resulted in countries like [Pakistan](#), [Afghanistan](#), [Somalia](#), and [Zimbabwe](#) maintaining their low ratings.

The [United States](#) continues to retain its previous slight downgrade due to the enduring threat of default surrounding the debt ceiling in that country, matched by a conflict-ridden political climate. In the case of [Mexico](#), there is limited concern about default, but increasing alarm over the security situation in that country and the government's ability to contain it. In [Argentina](#), a default to bond holders resulted in a downgrade to that country. Finally, a small but significant upgrade was attributed to [Cuba](#) due to its recent pro-business reforms and its normalization of ties with the United States.

Source:

CountryWatch Inc. www.countrywatch.com

Updated:

2015

Corruption Perceptions Index

Corruption Perceptions Index

Transparency International: [Corruption Perceptions Index](#)

Editor's Note:

Transparency International's [Corruption Perceptions Index](#) is a composite index which ranks countries in terms of the degree to which corruption is perceived to exist among public officials. This index indicates the views of national and international business people and analysts about the levels of corruption in each country. The highest (and best) level of transparency is indicated by the number, 10. The lower (and worse) levels of transparency are indicated by lower numbers.

Rank	Country/Territory	CPI 2009 Score	Surveys Used	Confidence Range
1	New Zealand	9.4	6	9.1 - 9.5
2	Denmark	9.3	6	9.1 - 9.5
3	Singapore	9.2	9	9.0 - 9.4
3	Sweden	9.2	6	9.0 - 9.3
5	Switzerland	9.0	6	8.9 - 9.1
6	Finland	8.9	6	8.4 - 9.4
6	Netherlands	8.9	6	8.7 - 9.0
8	Australia	8.7	8	8.3 - 9.0
8	Canada	8.7	6	8.5 - 9.0
8	Iceland	8.7	4	7.5 - 9.4
11	Norway	8.6	6	8.2 - 9.1
12	Hong Kong	8.2	8	7.9 - 8.5

12	Luxembourg	8.2	6	7.6 - 8.8
14	Germany	8.0	6	7.7 - 8.3
14	Ireland	8.0	6	7.8 - 8.4
16	Austria	7.9	6	7.4 - 8.3
17	Japan	7.7	8	7.4 - 8.0
17	United Kingdom	7.7	6	7.3 - 8.2
19	United States	7.5	8	6.9 - 8.0
20	Barbados	7.4	4	6.6 - 8.2
21	Belgium	7.1	6	6.9 - 7.3
22	Qatar	7.0	6	5.8 - 8.1
22	Saint Lucia	7.0	3	6.7 - 7.5
24	France	6.9	6	6.5 - 7.3
25	Chile	6.7	7	6.5 - 6.9
25	Uruguay	6.7	5	6.4 - 7.1
27	Cyprus	6.6	4	6.1 - 7.1
27	Estonia	6.6	8	6.1 - 6.9
27	Slovenia	6.6	8	6.3 - 6.9
30	United Arab Emirates	6.5	5	5.5 - 7.5

31	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	6.4	3	4.9 - 7.5
32	Israel	6.1	6	5.4 - 6.7
32	Spain	6.1	6	5.5 - 6.6
34	Dominica	5.9	3	4.9 - 6.7
35	Portugal	5.8	6	5.5 - 6.2
35	Puerto Rico	5.8	4	5.2 - 6.3
37	Botswana	5.6	6	5.1 - 6.3
37	Taiwan	5.6	9	5.4 - 5.9
39	Brunei Darussalam	5.5	4	4.7 - 6.4
39	Oman	5.5	5	4.4 - 6.5
39	Korea (South)	5.5	9	5.3 - 5.7
42	Mauritius	5.4	6	5.0 - 5.9
43	Costa Rica	5.3	5	4.7 - 5.9
43	Macau	5.3	3	3.3 - 6.9
45	Malta	5.2	4	4.0 - 6.2
46	Bahrain	5.1	5	4.2 - 5.8
46	Cape Verde	5.1	3	3.3 - 7.0
46	Hungary	5.1	8	4.6 - 5.7

49	Bhutan	5.0	4	4.3 - 5.6
49	Jordan	5.0	7	3.9 - 6.1
49	Poland	5.0	8	4.5 - 5.5
52	Czech Republic	4.9	8	4.3 - 5.6
52	Lithuania	4.9	8	4.4 - 5.4
54	Seychelles	4.8	3	3.0 - 6.7
55	South Africa	4.7	8	4.3 - 4.9
56	Latvia	4.5	6	4.1 - 4.9
56	Malaysia	4.5	9	4.0 - 5.1
56	Namibia	4.5	6	3.9 - 5.1
56	Samoa	4.5	3	3.3 - 5.3
56	Slovakia	4.5	8	4.1 - 4.9
61	Cuba	4.4	3	3.5 - 5.1
61	Turkey	4.4	7	3.9 - 4.9
63	Italy	4.3	6	3.8 - 4.9
63	Saudi Arabia	4.3	5	3.1 - 5.3
65	Tunisia	4.2	6	3.0 - 5.5
66	Croatia	4.1	8	3.7 - 4.5

66	Georgia	4.1	7	3.4 - 4.7
66	Kuwait	4.1	5	3.2 - 5.1
69	Ghana	3.9	7	3.2 - 4.6
69	Montenegro	3.9	5	3.5 - 4.4
71	Bulgaria	3.8	8	3.2 - 4.5
71	FYR Macedonia	3.8	6	3.4 - 4.2
71	Greece	3.8	6	3.2 - 4.3
71	Romania	3.8	8	3.2 - 4.3
75	Brazil	3.7	7	3.3 - 4.3
75	Colombia	3.7	7	3.1 - 4.3
75	Peru	3.7	7	3.4 - 4.1
75	Suriname	3.7	3	3.0 - 4.7
79	Burkina Faso	3.6	7	2.8 - 4.4
79	China	3.6	9	3.0 - 4.2
79	Swaziland	3.6	3	3.0 - 4.7
79	Trinidad and Tobago	3.6	4	3.0 - 4.3
83	Serbia	3.5	6	3.3 - 3.9
84	El Salvador	3.4	5	3.0 - 3.8

84	Guatemala	3.4	5	3.0 - 3.9
84	India	3.4	10	3.2 - 3.6
84	Panama	3.4	5	3.1 - 3.7
84	Thailand	3.4	9	3.0 - 3.8
89	Lesotho	3.3	6	2.8 - 3.8
89	Malawi	3.3	7	2.7 - 3.9
89	Mexico	3.3	7	3.2 - 3.5
89	Moldova	3.3	6	2.7 - 4.0
89	Morocco	3.3	6	2.8 - 3.9
89	Rwanda	3.3	4	2.9 - 3.7
95	Albania	3.2	6	3.0 - 3.3
95	Vanuatu	3.2	3	2.3 - 4.7
97	Liberia	3.1	3	1.9 - 3.8
97	Sri Lanka	3.1	7	2.8 - 3.4
99	Bosnia and Herzegovina	3.0	7	2.6 - 3.4
99	Dominican Republic	3.0	5	2.9 - 3.2
99	Jamaica	3.0	5	2.8 - 3.3
99	Madagascar	3.0	7	2.8 - 3.2

99	Senegal	3.0	7	2.5 - 3.6
99	Tonga	3.0	3	2.6 - 3.3
99	Zambia	3.0	7	2.8 - 3.2
106	Argentina	2.9	7	2.6 - 3.1
106	Benin	2.9	6	2.3 - 3.4
106	Gabon	2.9	3	2.6 - 3.1
106	Gambia	2.9	5	1.6 - 4.0
106	Niger	2.9	5	2.7 - 3.0
111	Algeria	2.8	6	2.5 - 3.1
111	Djibouti	2.8	4	2.3 - 3.2
111	Egypt	2.8	6	2.6 - 3.1
111	Indonesia	2.8	9	2.4 - 3.2
111	Kiribati	2.8	3	2.3 - 3.3
111	Mali	2.8	6	2.4 - 3.2
111	Sao Tome and Principe	2.8	3	2.4 - 3.3
111	Solomon Islands	2.8	3	2.3 - 3.3
111	Togo	2.8	5	1.9 - 3.9
120	Armenia	2.7	7	2.6 - 2.8

120	Bolivia	2.7	6	2.4 - 3.1
120	Ethiopia	2.7	7	2.4 - 2.9
120	Kazakhstan	2.7	7	2.1 - 3.3
120	Mongolia	2.7	7	2.4 - 3.0
120	Vietnam	2.7	9	2.4 - 3.1
126	Eritrea	2.6	4	1.6 - 3.8
126	Guyana	2.6	4	2.5 - 2.7
126	Syria	2.6	5	2.2 - 2.9
126	Tanzania	2.6	7	2.4 - 2.9
130	Honduras	2.5	6	2.2 - 2.8
130	Lebanon	2.5	3	1.9 - 3.1
130	Libya	2.5	6	2.2 - 2.8
130	Maldives	2.5	4	1.8 - 3.2
130	Mauritania	2.5	7	2.0 - 3.3
130	Mozambique	2.5	7	2.3 - 2.8
130	Nicaragua	2.5	6	2.3 - 2.7
130	Nigeria	2.5	7	2.2 - 2.7
130	Uganda	2.5	7	2.1 - 2.8

139	Bangladesh	2.4	7	2.0 - 2.8
139	Belarus	2.4	4	2.0 - 2.8
139	Pakistan	2.4	7	2.1 - 2.7
139	Philippines	2.4	9	2.1 - 2.7
143	Azerbaijan	2.3	7	2.0 - 2.6
143	Comoros	2.3	3	1.6 - 3.3
143	Nepal	2.3	6	2.0 - 2.6
146	Cameroon	2.2	7	1.9 - 2.6
146	Ecuador	2.2	5	2.0 - 2.5
146	Kenya	2.2	7	1.9 - 2.5
146	Russia	2.2	8	1.9 - 2.4
146	Sierra Leone	2.2	5	1.9 - 2.4
146	Timor-Leste	2.2	5	1.8 - 2.6
146	Ukraine	2.2	8	2.0 - 2.6
146	Zimbabwe	2.2	7	1.7 - 2.8
154	Côte d'Ivoire	2.1	7	1.8 - 2.4
154	Papua New Guinea	2.1	5	1.7 - 2.5
154	Paraguay	2.1	5	1.7 - 2.5

154	Yemen	2.1	4	1.6 - 2.5
158	Cambodia	2.0	8	1.8 - 2.2
158	Central African Republic	2.0	4	1.9 - 2.2
158	Laos	2.0	4	1.6 - 2.6
158	Tajikistan	2.0	8	1.6 - 2.5
162	Angola	1.9	5	1.8 - 1.9
162	Congo Brazzaville	1.9	5	1.6 - 2.1
162	Democratic Republic of Congo	1.9	5	1.7 - 2.1
162	Guinea-Bissau	1.9	3	1.8 - 2.0
162	Kyrgyzstan	1.9	7	1.8 - 2.1
162	Venezuela	1.9	7	1.8 - 2.0
168	Burundi	1.8	6	1.6 - 2.0
168	Equatorial Guinea	1.8	3	1.6 - 1.9
168	Guinea	1.8	5	1.7 - 1.8
168	Haiti	1.8	3	1.4 - 2.3
168	Iran	1.8	3	1.7 - 1.9
168	Turkmenistan	1.8	4	1.7 - 1.9
174	Uzbekistan	1.7	6	1.5 - 1.8

175	Chad	1.6	6	1.5 - 1.7
176	Iraq	1.5	3	1.2 - 1.8
176	Sudan	1.5	5	1.4 - 1.7
178	Myanmar	1.4	3	0.9 - 1.8
179	Afghanistan	1.3	4	1.0 - 1.5
180	Somalia	1.1	3	0.9 - 1.4

Methodology:

As noted above, the highest (and best) level of transparency with the least perceived corruption is indicated by the number, 10. The lower (and worse) levels of transparency are indicated by lower numbers.

According to Transparency International, the [Corruption Perceptions Index](#) (CPI) table shows a country's ranking and score, the number of surveys used to determine the score, and the confidence range of the scoring.

The rank shows how one country compares to others included in the index. The CPI score indicates the perceived level of public-sector corruption in a country/territory.

The CPI is based on 13 independent surveys. However, not all surveys include all countries. The surveys used column indicates how many surveys were relied upon to determine the score for that country.

The confidence range indicates the reliability of the CPI scores and tells us that allowing for a margin of error, we can be 90% confident that the true score for this country lies within this range.

Note:

Kosovo, which separated from the Yugoslav successor state of [Serbia](#), is not listed above. No calculation is available for [Kosovo](#) at this time, however, a future corruption index by Transparency International may include the world's newest country in its tally. Taiwan has been

listed above despite its contested status; while Taiwan claims sovereign status, [China](#) claims ultimate jurisdiction over Taiwan. Hong Kong, which is also under the rubric of Chinese sovereignty, is listed above. Note as well that Puerto Rico, which is a [United States](#) domain, is also included in the list above. These inclusions likely have to do with the size and fairly autonomous status of their economies.

Source:

Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index; available at URL: <http://www.transparency.org>

Updated:

Uploaded in 2011 using most recent ranking available; reviewed in 2015.

Competitiveness Ranking

Competitiveness Ranking

Editor's Note:

The Global Competitiveness Report's competitiveness ranking is based on the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI), which was developed for the World Economic Forum. The GCI is based on a number of competitiveness considerations, and provides a comprehensive picture of the competitiveness landscape in countries around the world. The competitiveness considerations are: institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, health and primary education, higher education and training, goods market efficiency, labour market efficiency, financial market development, technological readiness, market size, business sophistication, and innovation. The rankings are calculated from both publicly available data and the Executive Opinion Survey.

Country/Economy	GCI 2010 Rank	GCI 2010 Score	GCI 2009 Rank	Change 2009-2010
Switzerland	1	5.63	1	0
Sweden	2	5.56	4	2

Singapore	3	5.48	3	0
United States	4	5.43	2	-2
Germany	5	5.39	7	2
Japan	6	5.37	8	2
Finland	7	5.37	6	-1
Netherlands	8	5.33	10	2
Denmark	9	5.32	5	-4
Canada	10	5.30	9	-1
Hong Kong SAR	11	5.30	11	0
United Kingdom	12	5.25	13	1
Taiwan, China	13	5.21	12	-1
Norway	14	5.14	14	0
France	15	5.13	16	1
Australia	16	5.11	15	-1
Qatar	17	5.10	22	5
Austria	18	5.09	17	-1
Belgium	19	5.07	18	-1
Luxembourg	20	5.05	21	1

Saudi Arabia	21	4.95	28	7
Korea, Rep.	22	4.93	19	-3
New Zealand	23	4.92	20	-3
Israel	24	4.91	27	3
United Arab Emirates	25	4.89	23	-2
Malaysia	26	4.88	24	-2
China	27	4.84	29	2
Brunei Darussalam	28	4.75	32	4
Ireland	29	4.74	25	-4
Chile	30	4.69	30	0
Iceland	31	4.68	26	-5
Tunisia	32	4.65	40	8
Estonia	33	4.61	35	2
Oman	34	4.61	41	7
Kuwait	35	4.59	39	4
Czech Republic	36	4.57	31	-5
Bahrain	37	4.54	38	1
Thailand	38	4.51	36	-2

Poland	39	4.51	46	7
Cyprus	40	4.50	34	-6
Puerto Rico	41	4.49	42	1
Spain	42	4.49	33	-9
Barbados	43	4.45	44	1
Indonesia	44	4.43	54	10
Slovenia	45	4.42	37	-8
Portugal	46	4.38	43	-3
Lithuania	47	4.38	53	6
Italy	48	4.37	48	0
Montenegro	49	4.36	62	13
Malta	50	4.34	52	2
India	51	4.33	49	-2
Hungary	52	4.33	58	6
Panama	53	4.33	59	6
South Africa	54	4.32	45	-9
Mauritius	55	4.32	57	2
Costa Rica	56	4.31	55	-1

Azerbaijan	57	4.29	51	-6
Brazil	58	4.28	56	-2
Vietnam	59	4.27	75	16
Slovak Republic	60	4.25	47	-13
Turkey	61	4.25	61	0
Sri Lanka	62	4.25	79	17
Russian Federation	63	4.24	63	0
Uruguay	64	4.23	65	1
Jordan	65	4.21	50	-15
Mexico	66	4.19	60	-6
Romania	67	4.16	64	-3
Colombia	68	4.14	69	1
Iran	69	4.14	n/a	n/a
Latvia	70	4.14	68	-2
Bulgaria	71	4.13	76	5
Kazakhstan	72	4.12	67	-5
Peru	73	4.11	78	5
Namibia	74	4.09	74	0

Morocco	75	4.08	73	-2
Botswana	76	4.05	66	-10
Croatia	77	4.04	72	-5
Guatemala	78	4.04	80	2
Macedonia, FYR	79	4.02	84	5
Rwanda	80	4.00	n/a	n/a
Egypt	81	4.00	70	-11
El Salvador	82	3.99	77	-5
Greece	83	3.99	71	-12
Trinidad and Tobago	84	3.97	86	2
Philippines	85	3.96	87	2
Algeria	86	3.96	83	-3
Argentina	87	3.95	85	-2
Albania	88	3.94	96	8
Ukraine	89	3.90	82	-7
Gambia, The	90	3.90	81	-9
Honduras	91	3.89	89	-2
Lebanon	92	3.89	n/a	n/a

Georgia	93	3.86	90	-3
Moldova	94	3.86	n/a	n/a
Jamaica	95	3.85	91	-4
Serbia	96	3.84	93	-3
Syria	97	3.79	94	-3
Armenia	98	3.76	97	-1
Mongolia	99	3.75	117	18
Libya	100	3.74	88	-12
Dominican Republic	101	3.72	95	-6
Bosnia and Herzegovina	102	3.70	109	7
Benin	103	3.69	103	0
Senegal	104	3.67	92	-12
Ecuador	105	3.65	105	0
Kenya	106	3.65	98	-8
Bangladesh	107	3.64	106	-1
Bolivia	108	3.64	120	12
Cambodia	109	3.63	110	1
Guyana	110	3.62	104	-6

Cameroon	111	3.58	111	0
Nicaragua	112	3.57	115	3
Tanzania	113	3.56	100	-13
Ghana	114	3.56	114	0
Zambia	115	3.55	112	-3
Tajikistan	116	3.53	122	6
Cape Verde	117	3.51	n/a	n/a
Uganda	118	3.51	108	-10
Ethiopia	119	3.51	118	-1
Paraguay	120	3.49	124	4
Kyrgyz Republic	121	3.49	123	2
Venezuela	122	3.48	113	-9
Pakistan	123	3.48	101	-22
Madagascar	124	3.46	121	-3
Malawi	125	3.45	119	-6
Swaziland	126	3.40	n/a	n/a
Nigeria	127	3.38	99	-28
Lesotho	128	3.36	107	-21

Côte d'Ivoire	129	3.35	116	-13
Nepal	130	3.34	125	-5
Mozambique	131	3.32	129	-2
Mali	132	3.28	130	-2
Timor-Leste	133	3.23	126	-7
Burkina Faso	134	3.20	128	-6
Mauritania	135	3.14	127	-8
Zimbabwe	136	3.03	132	-4
Burundi	137	2.96	133	-4
Angola	138	2.93	n/a	n/a
Chad	139	2.73	131	-8

Methodology:

The competitiveness rankings are calculated from both publicly available data and the Executive Opinion Survey, a comprehensive annual survey conducted by the World Economic Forum together with its network of Partner Institutes (leading research institutes and business organizations) in the countries covered by the Report.

Highlights according to WEF --

- The [United States](#) falls two places to fourth position, overtaken by [Sweden](#) and [Singapore](#) in the rankings of the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2010-2011
- The People's Republic of [China](#) continues to move up the rankings, with marked improvements in several other Asian countries

- [Germany](#) moves up two places to fifth place, leading the Eurozone countries
- [Switzerland](#) tops the rankings

Source:

World Economic Forum; available at URL: <http://www.weforum.org>

Updated:

2011 using most recent ranking available; reviewed in 2015.

Taxation

Income Tax

The top income tax is 10 percent.

Corporate Tax

The corporate tax is 20 percent. There are charges on dividends, copyrights, licenses, leases, royalties and other forms of passive income,

Profit Tax

Payment of the profit tax by companies is not required until investors have recover original investments. As well, companies that choose to reinvest profits enjoy an exemption from tax payments on the reinvested capital.

Indirect Tax

There is a value-added tax (VAT), which is imposed on all goods and services, sold or traded. Recently, the VAT on food was 10 percent, while the 20 percent rate applied to other items.

Stock Market

There are 300 joint stock companies in Turkmenistan which, in practice, cannot fully benefit from the right to issue stock.

In 1993, the Law on Securities and Stock Exchanges was adopted. According to that law, securities must be registered with the Ministry of Economics and Finance and can be bought or sold through the State Commodity and Raw Materials Exchange (SCRME).

Although the Central Bank and some commercial banks have attempted to issue government and commercial bonds, the low buying power of the population and the distrust of local banks have made such transactions unpopular and not commercially lucrative.

So far, about 120 issues of securities and bonds amounting to more than 1 trillion manats (about \$200 million) have been registered in Turkmenistan. State bonds and securities can be obtained from authorized commercial banks such as Turkmenvnesheconombank, bank “Turkmenistan,” Investbank, bank “Rossiysky Kredit,” bank “Bereketly,” and Sberbank (Savings Bank). Currently, the legal and accounting systems, dating from Soviet times, are not transparent or consistent with international standards.

Development of the securities market would depend on the success of the privatization process. The presidential decrees regarding the creation of joint stock companies on the basis of state industrial enterprises and the sale by auction of small- and medium-size enterprises has determined rules for and a range of entities that are subject to privatization. Foreign and Turkmen investors may become shareholders in these companies provided that the Cabinet of Ministers approves the percentage of their shares in the companies' foundation capitals.

Partner Links

Partner Links

Chapter 5

Social Overview

People

Cultural Demography

Turkmenistan's population of approximately 7.5 million is predominantly comprised of ethnic Turkmen (77 percent), with minorities of ethnic Uzbeks (nine percent), ethnic Russians (seven percent), ethnic Kazakhs (two percent), and others (five percent).

Turkmen, spoken by 72 percent of the population, is the official language, although a substantial percentage of Turkmen citizens are also Russian speakers. Uzbek is also spoken. The Turkmen language is a member of the southern Turkic (or Oghuz) ethno-linguistic family of languages, which is closely related to Kazak, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uighur, Uzbek, and others. Most of these Turkic languages are closely related and mutually intelligible. The Turkic languages are also sub-groups of the Altaic language group.

In terms of religious affiliation, 89 percent of Turkmen are Muslim, while 9 percent are Eastern Orthodox. The government of Turkmenistan, through its embassy in the United States, affirms the fact that its population, while being predominantly Sunni Muslim, does not share the fundamentalist beliefs of neighboring countries, and Turkmenistan is considered to be a secular state. Indeed, ancient tribal loyalties and affiliations are considered to be at least as important as religion and regional tribalism dominates to such a notable extent that each tribe is easily distinguished by its dialect, as well as its style and patterns of clothing, jewellery and carpets.

Human Development

Turkmens are expected to have an average life expectancy of 68 years of age -- 65 years for males, 71 years for females), according to recent estimates. The infant mortality rate is 53.5 deaths per 1,000 live births, a fairly high rate among post-Soviet countries. An estimated 98 percent of the total population, age 15 and older, can read and write. About 2.3 percent of GDP is spent on health expenditures. Access to sanitation, water, and health care is considered to be generally good.

One notable measure used to determine a country's quality of life is the Human Development Index (HDI), which has been compiled annually since 1990 by the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP). The HDI is a composite of several indicators, which measure a country's achievements in three main arenas of human development: longevity, knowledge and education, as well as economic standard of living. In a ranking of 169 countries, the HDI placed Turkmenistan in the medium human development category at 87th place.

Note: Although the concept of human development is complicated and cannot be properly captured by values and indices, the HDI, which is calculated and updated annually, offers a wide-ranging assessment of human development in certain countries, not based solely upon traditional economic and financial indicators.

Written by Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, www.countrywatch.com; see Bibliography for research sources.

Human Development Index

Human Development Index

Human Development Index (Ranked Numerically)

The [Human Development Index](#) (HDI) is used to measure quality of life in countries across the world. The HDI has been compiled since 1990 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on a regular basis. The HDI is a composite of several indicators, which measure a country's achievements in three main arenas of human development: longevity, education, and economic standard of living. Although the concept of human development is complicated and cannot be properly captured by values and indices, the HDI offers a wide-ranging assessment of human development in certain countries, not based solely upon traditional economic and financial indicators. For more information about the methodology used to calculate the HDI, please see the "Source Materials" in the appendices of this review.

Very High Human Development	High Human Development	Medium Human Development	Low Human Development
1. Norway	43. Bahamas	86. Fiji	128. Kenya
2. Australia	44. Lithuania	87. Turkmenistan	129. Bangladesh

3. New Zealand	45. Chile	88. Dominican Republic	130. Ghana
4. United States	46. Argentina	89. China	131. Cameroon
5. Ireland	47. Kuwait	90. El Salvador	132. Myanmar (Burma)
6. Liechtenstein	48. Latvia	91. Sri Lanka	133. Yemen
7. Netherlands	49. Montenegro	92. Thailand	134. Benin
8. Canada	50. Romania	93. Gabon	135. Madagascar
9. Sweden	51. Croatia	94. Suriname	136. Mauritania
10. Germany	52. Uruguay	95. Bolivia	137. Papua New Guinea
11. Japan	53. Libya	96. Paraguay	138. Nepal
12. South Korea	54. Panama	97. Philippines	139. Togo
13. Switzerland	55. Saudi Arabia	98. Botswana	140. Comoros
14. France	56. Mexico	99. Moldova	141. Lesotho
15. Israel	57. Malaysia	100. Mongolia	142. Nigeria
16. Finland	58. Bulgaria	101. Egypt	143. Uganda
17. Iceland	59. Trinidad and Tobago	102. Uzbekistan	144. Senegal
18. Belgium	60. Serbia	103. Micronesia	145. Haiti

19. Denmark	61. Belarus	104. Guyana	146. Angola
20. Spain	62. Costa Rica	105. Namibia	147. Djibouti
21. Hong King	63. Peru	106. Honduras	148. Tanzania
22. Greece	64. Albania	107. Maldives	149. Cote d'Ivoire
23. Italy	65. Russian Federation	108. Indonesia	150. Zambia
24. Luxembourg	66. Kazakhstan	109. Kyrgyzstan	151. Gambia
25. Austria	67. Azerbaijan	110. South Africa	152. Rwanda
26. United Kingdom	68. Bosnia and Herzegovina	111. Syria	153. Malawi
27. Singapore	69. Ukraine	112. Tajikistan	154. Sudan
28. Czech Republic	70. Iran	113. Vietnam	155. Afghanistan
29. Slovenia	71. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	114. Morocco	156. Guinea
30. Andorra	72. Mauritius	115. Nicaragua	157. Ethiopia
31. Slovakia	73. Brazil	116. Guatemala	158. Sierra Leone
32. United Arab Emirates	74. Georgia	117. Equatorial Guinea	159. Central African Republic
33. Malta	75. Venezuela	118. Cape Verde	160. Mali

34. Estonia	76. Armenia	119. India	161. Burkina Faso
35. Cyprus	77. Ecuador	120. East Timor	162. Liberia
36. Hungary	78. Belize	121. Swaziland	163. Chad
37. Brunei	79. Colombia	122. Laos	164. Guinea-Bissau
38. Qatar	80. Jamaica	123. Solomon Islands	165. Mozambique
39. Bahrain	81. Tunisia	124. Cambodia	166. Burundi
40. Portugal	82. Jordan	125. Pakistan	167. Niger
41. Poland	83. Turkey	126. Congo RC	168. Congo DRC
42. Barbados	84. Algeria	127. Sao Tome and Principe	169. Zimbabwe
	85. Tonga		

Methodology:

For more information about the methodology used to calculate the HDI, please see the "Source Materials" in the appendices of this Country Review.

Reference:

As published in United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report 2010.

Source:

United Nations Development Programme's [Human Development Index](http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/) available at URL: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>

Updated:

Uploaded in 2011 using ranking available; reviewed in 2015

Life Satisfaction Index

Life Satisfaction Index

Life Satisfaction Index

Created by Adrian G. White, an Analytic Social Psychologist at the University of Leicester, the "Satisfaction with Life Index" measures subjective life satisfaction across various countries. The data was taken from a metastudy (see below for source) and associates the notion of subjective happiness or life satisfaction with qualitative parameters such as health, wealth, and access to basic education. This assessment serves as an alternative to other measures of happiness that tend to rely on traditional and quantitative measures of policy on quality of life, such as GNP and GDP. The methodology involved the responses of 80,000 people across the globe.

Rank	Country	Score
1	Denmark	273.4
2	Switzerland	273.33
3	Austria	260
4	Iceland	260
5	The Bahamas	256.67
6	Finland	256.67

7	Sweden	256.67
8	Iran	253.33
9	Brunei	253.33
10	Canada	253.33
11	Ireland	253.33
12	Luxembourg	253.33
13	Costa Rica	250
14	Malta	250
15	Netherlands	250
16	Antiguaand Barbuda	246.67
17	Malaysia	246.67
18	New Zealand	246.67
19	Norway	246.67
20	Seychelles	246.67
21	Saint Kitts and Nevis	246.67
22	United Arab Emirates	246.67
23	United States	246.67
24	Vanuatu	246.67

25	Venezuela	246.67
26	Australia	243.33
27	Barbados	243.33
28	Belgium	243.33
29	Dominica	243.33
30	Oman	243.33
31	Saudi Arabia	243.33
32	Suriname	243.33
33	Bahrain	240
34	Colombia	240
35	Germany	240
36	Guyana	240
37	Honduras	240
38	Kuwait	240
39	Panama	240
40	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	240
41	United Kingdom	236.67
42	Dominican Republic	233.33

43	Guatemala	233.33
44	Jamaica	233.33
45	Qatar	233.33
46	Spain	233.33
47	Saint Lucia	233.33
48	Belize	230
49	Cyprus	230
50	Italy	230
51	Mexico	230
52	Samoa	230
53	Singapore	230
54	Solomon Islands	230
55	Trinidad and Tobago	230
56	Argentina	226.67
57	Fiji	223.33
58	Israel	223.33
59	Mongolia	223.33
60	São Tomé and Príncipe	223.33

61	El Salvador	220
62	France	220
63	Hong Kong	220
64	Indonesia	220
65	Kyrgyzstan	220
66	Maldives	220
67	Slovenia	220
68	Taiwan	220
69	East Timor	220
70	Tonga	220
71	Chile	216.67
72	Grenada	216.67
73	Mauritius	216.67
74	Namibia	216.67
75	Paraguay	216.67
76	Thailand	216.67
77	Czech Republic	213.33
78	Philippines	213.33

79	Tunisia	213.33
80	Uzbekistan	213.33
81	Brazil	210
82	China	210
83	Cuba	210
84	Greece	210
85	Nicaragua	210
86	Papua New Guinea	210
87	Uruguay	210
88	Gabon	206.67
89	Ghana	206.67
90	Japan	206.67
91	Yemen	206.67
92	Portugal	203.33
93	Sri Lanka	203.33
94	Tajikistan	203.33
95	Vietnam	203.33
96	Bhutan	200

97	Comoros	196.67
98	Croatia	196.67
99	Poland	196.67
100	Cape Verde	193.33
101	Kazakhstan	193.33
102	South Korea	193.33
103	Madagascar	193.33
104	Bangladesh	190
105	Republic of the Congo	190
106	The Gambia	190
107	Hungary	190
108	Libya	190
109	South Africa	190
110	Cambodia	186.67
111	Ecuador	186.67
112	Kenya	186.67
113	Lebanon	186.67
114	Morocco	186.67

115	Peru	186.67
116	Senegal	186.67
117	Bolivia	183.33
118	Haiti	183.33
119	Nepal	183.33
120	Nigeria	183.33
121	Tanzania	183.33
122	Benin	180
123	Botswana	180
124	Guinea-Bissau	180
125	India	180
126	Laos	180
127	Mozambique	180
128	Palestinian Authority	180
129	Slovakia	180
130	Myanmar	176.67
131	Mali	176.67
132	Mauritania	176.67

133	Turkey	176.67
134	Algeria	173.33
135	Equatorial Guinea	173.33
136	Romania	173.33
137	Bosnia and Herzegovina	170
138	Cameroon	170
139	Estonia	170
140	Guinea	170
141	Jordan	170
142	Syria	170
143	Sierra Leone	166.67
144	Azerbaijan	163.33
145	Central African Republic	163.33
146	Republic of Macedonia	163.33
147	Togo	163.33
148	Zambia	163.33
149	Angola	160
150	Djibouti	160

151	Egypt	160
152	Burkina Faso	156.67
153	Ethiopia	156.67
154	Latvia	156.67
155	Lithuania	156.67
156	Uganda	156.67
157	Albania	153.33
158	Malawi	153.33
159	Chad	150
160	Côte d'Ivoire	150
161	Niger	150
162	Eritrea	146.67
163	Rwanda	146.67
164	Bulgaria	143.33
165	Lesotho	143.33
166	Pakistan	143.33
167	Russia	143.33
168	Swaziland	140

169	Georgia	136.67
170	Belarus	133.33
171	Turkmenistan	133.33
172	Armenia	123.33
173	Sudan	120
174	Ukraine	120
175	Moldova	116.67
176	Democratic Republic of the Congo	110
177	Zimbabwe	110
178	Burundi	100

Commentary:

European countries, such as [Denmark](#), [Iceland](#), [Finland](#), [Sweden](#), [Switzerland](#), [Austria](#) resided at the top of the ranking with highest levels of self-reported life satisfaction. Conversely, European countries such as [Latvia](#), [Lithuania](#), [Moldova](#), [Belarus](#) and [Ukraine](#) ranked low on the index. African countries such as Democratic Republic of Congo, [Zimbabwe](#) and [Burundi](#) found themselves at the very bottom of the ranking, and indeed, very few African countries could be found in the top 100. [Japan](#) was at the mid-way point in the ranking, however, other Asian countries such as [Brunei](#) and [Malaysia](#) were in the top tier, while [Pakistan](#) was close to the bottom with a low level of self-identified life satisfaction. As a region, the Middle East presented a mixed bag with Saudi Arabians reporting healthy levels of life satisfaction and Egyptians near the bottom of the ranking. As a region, Caribbean countries were ranked highly, consistently demonstrating high levels of life satisfaction. The findings showed that health was the most crucial determining factor in life satisfaction, followed by prosperity and education.

Source:

White, A. (2007). A Global Projection of Subjective Well-being: A Challenge To Positive Psychology? *Psychtalk* 56, 17-20. The data was extracted from a meta-analysis by Marks, Abdallah, Simms & Thompson (2006).

Uploaded:

Based on study noted above in "Source" ; reviewed in 2015

Happy Planet Index

Happy Planet Index

The Happy Planet Index (HPI) is used to measure human well-being in conjunction with environmental impact. The HPI has been compiled since 2006 by the New Economics Foundation. The index is a composite of several indicators including subjective life satisfaction, life expectancy at birth, and ecological footprint per capita.

As noted by NEFA, the HPI "reveals the ecological efficiency with which human well-being is delivered." Indeed, the index combines environmental impact with human well-being to measure the environmental efficiency with which, country by country, people live long and happy lives. The countries ranked highest by the HPI are not necessarily the ones with the happiest people overall, but the ones that allow their citizens to live long and fulfilling lives, without negatively impacting this opportunity for either future generations or citizens of other countries. Accordingly, a country like the [United States](#) will rank low on this list due to its large per capital ecological footprint, which uses more than its fair share of resources, and will likely cause planetary damage.

It should be noted that the HPI was designed to be a counterpoint to other well-established indices of countries' development, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which measures overall national wealth and economic development, but often obfuscates the realities of countries with stark variances between the rich and the poor. Moreover, the objective of most of the world's people is not to be wealthy but to be happy. The HPI also differs from the [Human Development Index](#) (HDI), which measures quality of life but not ecology, since it [HPI] also includes sustainability as a key indicator.

Rank	Country	HPI
1	Costa Rica	76.1
2	Dominican Republic	71.8
3	Jamaica	70.1
4	Guatemala	68.4
5	Vietnam	66.5
6	Colombia	66.1
7	Cuba	65.7
8	El Salvador	61.5
9	Brazil	61.0
10	Honduras	61.0
11	Nicaragua	60.5
12	Egypt	60.3
13	Saudi Arabia	59.7
14	Philippines	59.0
15	Argentina	59.0
16	Indonesia	58.9

17	Bhutan	58.5
18	Panama	57.4
19	Laos	57.3
20	China	57.1
21	Morocco	56.8
22	Sri Lanka	56.5
23	Mexico	55.6
24	Pakistan	55.6
25	Ecuador	55.5
26	Jordan	54.6
27	Belize	54.5
28	Peru	54.4
29	Tunisia	54.3
30	Trinidad and Tobago	54.2
31	Bangladesh	54.1
32	Moldova	54.1
33	Malaysia	54.0
34	Tajikistan	53.5

35	India	53.0
36	Venezuela	52.5
37	Nepal	51.9
38	Syria	51.3
39	Burma	51.2
40	Algeria	51.2
41	Thailand	50.9
42	Haiti	50.8
43	Netherlands	50.6
44	Malta	50.4
45	Uzbekistan	50.1
46	Chile	49.7
47	Bolivia	49.3
48	Armenia	48.3
49	Singapore	48.2
50	Yemen	48.1
51	Germany	48.1
52	Switzerland	48.1

53	Sweden	48.0
54	Albania	47.9
55	Paraguay	47.8
56	Palestinian Authority	47.7
57	Austria	47.7
58	Serbia	47.6
59	Finland	47.2
60	Croatia	47.2
61	Kyrgyzstan	47.1
62	Cyprus	46.2
63	Guyana	45.6
64	Belgium	45.4
65	Bosnia and Herzegovina	45.0
66	Slovenia	44.5
67	Israel	44.5
68	South Korea	44.4
69	Italy	44.0
70	Romania	43.9

71	France	43.9
72	Georgia	43.6
73	Slovakia	43.5
74	United Kingdom	43.3
75	Japan	43.3
76	Spain	43.2
77	Poland	42.8
78	Ireland	42.6
79	Iraq	42.6
80	Cambodia	42.3
81	Iran	42.1
82	Bulgaria	42.0
83	Turkey	41.7
84	Hong Kong	41.6
85	Azerbaijan	41.2
86	Lithuania	40.9
87	Djibouti	40.4
88	Norway	40.4

89	Canada	39.4
90	Hungary	38.9
91	Kazakhstan	38.5
92	Czech Republic	38.3
93	Mauritania	38.2
94	Iceland	38.1
95	Ukraine	38.1
96	Senegal	38.0
97	Greece	37.6
98	Portugal	37.5
99	Uruguay	37.2
100	Ghana	37.1
101	Latvia	36.7
102	Australia	36.6
103	New Zealand	36.2
104	Belarus	35.7
105	Denmark	35.5
106	Mongolia	35.0

107	Malawi	34.5
108	Russia	34.5
109	Chad	34.3
110	Lebanon	33.6
111	Macedonia	32.7
112	Republic of the Congo	32.4
113	Madagascar	31.5
114	United States	30.7
115	Nigeria	30.3
116	Guinea	30.3
117	Uganda	30.2
118	South Africa	29.7
119	Rwanda	29.6
120	Democratic Republic of the Congo	29.0
121	Sudan	28.5
122	Luxembourg	28.5
123	United Arab Emirates	28.2
124	Ethiopia	28.1

125	Kenya	27.8
126	Cameroon	27.2
127	Zambia	27.2
128	Kuwait	27.0
129	Niger	26.9
130	Angola	26.8
131	Estonia	26.4
132	Mali	25.8
133	Mozambique	24.6
134	Benin	24.6
135	Togo	23.3
136	Sierra Leone	23.1
137	Central African Republic	22.9
138	Burkina Faso	22.4
139	Burundi	21.8
140	Namibia	21.1
141	Botswana	20.9
142	Tanzania	17.8

143	Zimbabwe	16.6
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Source: This material is derived from the Happy Planet Index issued by the New Economics Foundation (NEF).

Methodology: The methodology for the calculations can be found at URL: <http://www.happyplanetindex.org/>

Status of Women

Gender Related Development Index (GDI) Rank:

Not Ranked

Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) Rank:

Not Ranked

Female Population:

2.5 million

Female Life Expectancy at birth:

71 years

Total Fertility Rate:

2.9

Maternal Mortality Ratio (2000):

31

Total Number of Women Living with HIV/AIDS:

N/A

Ever Married Women, Ages 15-19 (%):

6%

Mean Age at Time of Marriage:

23

Contraceptive Use Among Married Women, Any Method (%):

62%

Female Adult Literacy Rate:

98.3%

Combined Female Gross enrollment ratio for Primary, Secondary and Tertiary schools:

N/A

Female-Headed Households (%):

27%

Economically Active Females (%):

62.7%

Female Contributing Family Workers (%):

N/A

Female Estimated Earned Income:

\$4,603

Seats in Parliament held by women (%):

Lower or Single House: N/A

Upper House or Senate: N/A

Year Women Received the Right to Vote:

1927

Year Women Received the Right to Stand for Election:

1927

*The Gender Development Index (GDI) is a composite index which measures the average achievement in a country. While very similar to the Human Development Index in its use of the same variables, the GDI adjusts the average achievement of each country in terms of life expectancy, enrollment in schools, income, and literacy in accordance to the disparities between males and females.

*The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) is a composite index measuring gender inequality in three of the basic dimensions of empowerment; economic participation and decision-making, political participation and decision-making, and power over economic resources.

*Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is defined as the average number of babies born to women during their reproductive years. A TFR of 2.1 is considered the replacement rate; once a TFR of a population reaches 2.1 the population will remain stable assuming no immigration or emigration takes place. When the TFR is greater than 2.1 a population will increase and when it is less than 2.1 a population will eventually decrease, although due to the age structure of a population it will take years before a low TFR is translated into lower population.

*Maternal Mortality Rate is the number of deaths to women per 100,000 live births that resulted from conditions related to pregnancy and or delivery related complications.

*Economically Active Females are the share of the female population, ages 15 and above, whom supply, or are able to supply, labor for the production of goods and services.

*Female Contributing Family Workers are those females who work without pay in an economic enterprise operated by a relative living in the same household.

*Estimated Earned Income is measured according to Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) in US dollars.

Global Gender Gap Index

Global Gender Gap Index

Editor's Note:

The Global Gender Gap Index by the World Economic Forum ranks most of the world's countries in terms of the division of resources and opportunities among males and females. Specifically, the ranking assesses the gender inequality gap in these four arenas:

1. Economic participation and opportunity (salaries and high skilled employment participation levels)
2. Educational attainment (access to basic and higher level education)
3. Political empowerment (representation in decision-making structures)
4. Health and survival (life expectancy and sex ratio)

	2010 rank	2010 score	2010 rank among 2009 countries	2009 rank	2009 score	2008 rank	2008 score	2007 rank
Country								
Iceland	1	0.8496	1	1	0.8276	4	0.7999	4
Norway	2	0.8404	2	3	0.8227	1	0.8239	2
Finland	3	0.8260	3	2	0.8252	2	0.8195	3
Sweden	4	0.8024	4	4	0.8139	3	0.8139	1

New Zealand	5	0.7808	5	5	0.7880	5	0.7859	5
Ireland	6	0.7773	6	8	0.7597	8	0.7518	9
Denmark	7	0.7719	7	7	0.7628	7	0.7538	8
Lesotho	8	0.7678	8	10	0.7495	16	0.7320	26
Philippines	9	0.7654	9	9	0.7579	6	0.7568	6
Switzerland	10	0.7562	10	13	0.7426	14	0.7360	40
Spain	11	0.7554	11	17	0.7345	17	0.7281	10
South Africa	12	0.7535	12	6	0.7709	22	0.7232	20
Germany	13	0.7530	13	12	0.7449	11	0.7394	7
Belgium	14	0.7509	14	33	0.7165	28	0.7163	19
United Kingdom	15	0.7460	15	15	0.7402	13	0.7366	11
Sri Lanka	16	0.7458	16	16	0.7402	12	0.7371	15
Netherlands	17	0.7444	17	11	0.7490	9	0.7399	12
Latvia	18	0.7429	18	14	0.7416	10	0.7397	13
United States	19	0.7411	19	31	0.7173	27	0.7179	31
Canada	20	0.7372	20	25	0.7196	31	0.7136	18
Trinidad and Tobago	21	0.7353	21	19	0.7298	19	0.7245	46

Mozambique	22	0.7329	22	26	0.7195	18	0.7266	43
Australia	23	0.7271	23	20	0.7282	21	0.7241	17
Cuba	24	0.7253	24	29	0.7176	25	0.7195	22
Namibia	25	0.7238	25	32	0.7167	30	0.7141	29
Luxembourg	26	0.7231	26	63	0.6889	66	0.6802	58
Mongolia	27	0.7194	27	22	0.7221	40	0.7049	62
Costa Rica	28	0.7194	28	27	0.7180	32	0.7111	28
Argentina	29	0.7187	29	24	0.7211	24	0.7209	33
Nicaragua	30	0.7176	30	49	0.7002	71	0.6747	90
Barbados	31	0.7176	31	21	0.7236	26	0.7188	n/a
Portugal	32	0.7171	32	46	0.7013	39	0.7051	37
Uganda	33	0.7169	33	40	0.7067	43	0.6981	50
Moldova	34	0.7160	34	36	0.7104	20	0.7244	21
Lithuania	35	0.7132	35	30	0.7175	23	0.7222	14
Bahamas	36	0.7128	36	28	0.7179	n/a	n/a	n/a
Austria	37	0.7091	37	42	0.7031	29	0.7153	27
Guyana	38	0.7090	38	35	0.7108	n/a	n/a	n/a
Panama	39	0.7072	39	43	0.7024	34	0.7095	38

Ecuador	40	0.7072	40	23	0.7220	35	0.7091	44
Kazakhstan	41	0.7055	41	47	0.7013	45	0.6976	32
Slovenia	42	0.7047	42	52	0.6982	51	0.6937	49
Poland	43	0.7037	43	50	0.6998	49	0.6951	60
Jamaica	44	0.7037	44	48	0.7013	44	0.6980	39
Russian Federation	45	0.7036	45	51	0.6987	42	0.6994	45
France	46	0.7025	46	18	0.7331	15	0.7341	51
Estonia	47	0.7018	47	37	0.7094	37	0.7076	30
Chile	48	0.7013	48	64	0.6884	65	0.6818	86
Macedonia, FYR	49	0.6996	49	53	0.6950	53	0.6914	35
Bulgaria	50	0.6983	50	38	0.7072	36	0.7077	25
Kyrgyz Republic	51	0.6973	51	41	0.7058	41	0.7045	70
Israel	52	0.6957	52	45	0.7019	56	0.6900	36
Croatia	53	0.6939	53	54	0.6944	46	0.6967	16
Honduras	54	0.6927	54	62	0.6893	47	0.6960	68
Colombia	55	0.6927	55	56	0.6939	50	0.6944	24
Singapore	56	0.6914	56	84	0.6664	84	0.6625	77

Thailand	57	0.6910	57	59	0.6907	52	0.6917	52
Greece	58	0.6908	58	85	0.6662	75	0.6727	72
Uruguay	59	0.6897	59	57	0.6936	54	0.6907	78
Peru	60	0.6895	60	44	0.7024	48	0.6959	75
China	61	0.6881	61	60	0.6907	57	0.6878	73
Botswana	62	0.6876	62	39	0.7071	63	0.6839	53
Ukraine	63	0.6869	63	61	0.6896	62	0.6856	57
Venezuela	64	0.6863	64	69	0.6839	59	0.6875	55
Czech Republic	65	0.6850	65	74	0.6789	69	0.6770	64
Tanzania	66	0.6829	66	73	0.6797	38	0.7068	34
Romania	67	0.6826	67	70	0.6805	70	0.6763	47
Malawi	68	0.6824	68	76	0.6738	81	0.6664	87
Paraguay	69	0.6804	69	66	0.6868	100	0.6379	69
Ghana	70	0.6782	70	80	0.6704	77	0.6679	63
Slovak Republic	71	0.6778	71	68	0.6845	64	0.6824	54
Vietnam	72	0.6776	72	71	0.6802	68	0.6778	42
Dominican Republic	73	0.6774	73	67	0.6859	72	0.6744	65

Italy	74	0.6765	74	72	0.6798	67	0.6788	84
Gambia, The	75	0.6762	75	75	0.6752	85	0.6622	95
Bolivia	76	0.6751	76	82	0.6693	80	0.6667	80
Brueni Darussalem	77	0.6748	77	94	0.6524	99	0.6392	n/a
Albania	78	0.6726	78	91	0.6601	87	0.6591	66
Hungary	79	0.6720	79	65	0.6879	60	0.6867	61
Madagascar	80	0.6713	80	77	0.6732	74	0.6736	89
Angola	81	0.6712	81	106	0.6353	114	0.6032	110
Bangladesh	82	0.6702	82	93	0.6526	90	0.6531	100
Malta	83	0.6695	83	88	0.6635	83	0.6634	76
Armenia	84	0.6669	84	90	0.6619	78	0.6677	71
Brazil	85	0.6655	85	81	0.6695	73	0.6737	74
Cyprus	86	0.6642	86	79	0.6706	76	0.6694	82
Indonesia	87	0.6615	87	92	0.6580	93	0.6473	81
Georgia	88	0.6598	88	83	0.6680	82	0.6654	67
Tajikistan	89	0.6598	89	86	0.6661	89	0.6541	79
El Salvador	90	0.6596	90	55	0.6939	58	0.6875	48

Mexico	91	0.6577	91	98	0.6503	97	0.6441	93
Zimbabwe	92	0.6574	92	95	0.6518	92	0.6485	88
Belize	93	0.6536	93	87	0.6636	86	0.6610	94
Japan	94	0.6524	94	101	0.6447	98	0.6434	91
Mauritius	95	0.6520	95	96	0.6513	95	0.6466	85
Kenya	96	0.6499	96	97	0.6512	88	0.6547	83
Cambodia	97	0.6482	97	104	0.6410	94	0.6469	98
Malaysia	98	0.6479	98	100	0.6467	96	0.6442	92
Maldives	99	0.6452	99	99	0.6482	91	0.6501	99
Azerbaijan	100	0.6446	100	89	0.6626	61	0.6856	59
Senegal	101	0.6414	101	102	0.6427	n/a	n/a	n/a
Suriname	102	0.6407	102	78	0.6726	79	0.6674	56
United Arab Emirates	103	0.6397	103	112	0.6198	105	0.6220	105
Korea, Rep.	104	0.6342	104	115	0.6146	108	0.6154	97
Kuwait	105	0.6318	105	105	0.6356	101	0.6358	96
Zambia	106	0.6293	106	107	0.6310	106	0.6205	101
Tunisia	107	0.6266	107	109	0.6233	103	0.6295	102
Fiji	108	0.6256	108	103	0.6414	n/a	n/a	n/a

Guatemala	109	0.6238	109	111	0.6209	112	0.6072	106
Bahrain	110	0.6217	110	116	0.6136	121	0.5927	115
Burkina Faso	111	0.6162	111	120	0.6081	115	0.6029	117
India	112	0.6155	112	114	0.6151	113	0.6060	114
Mauritania	113	0.6152	113	119	0.6103	110	0.6117	111
Cameroon	114	0.6110	114	118	0.6108	117	0.6017	116
Nepal	115	0.6084	115	110	0.6213	120	0.5942	125
Lebanon*	116	0.6084	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Qatar	117	0.6059	116	125	0.5907	119	0.5948	109
Nigeria	118	0.6055	117	108	0.6280	102	0.6339	107
Algeria	119	0.6052	118	117	0.6119	111	0.6111	108
Jordan	120	0.6048	119	113	0.6182	104	0.6275	104
Ethiopia	121	0.6019	120	122	0.5948	122	0.5867	113
Oman	122	0.5950	121	123	0.5938	118	0.5960	119
Iran	123	0.5933	122	128	0.5839	116	0.6021	118
Syria	124	0.5926	123	121	0.6072	107	0.6181	103
Egypt	125	0.5899	124	126	0.5862	124	0.5832	120
Turkey	126	0.5876	125	129	0.5828	123	0.5853	121

Morocco	127	0.5767	126	124	0.5926	125	0.5757	122
Benin	128	0.5719	127	131	0.5643	126	0.5582	123
Saudi Arabia	129	0.5713	128	130	0.5651	128	0.5537	124
Côte d'Ivoire*	130	0.5691	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Mali	131	0.5680	129	127	0.5860	109	0.6117	112
Pakistan	132	0.5465	130	132	0.5458	127	0.5549	126
Chad	133	0.5330	131	133	0.5417	129	0.5290	127
Yemen	134	0.4603	132	134	0.4609	130	0.4664	128
Belarus	n/a	n/a	n/a	34	0.7141	33	0.7099	23
Uzbekistan	n/a	n/a	n/a	58	0.6913	55	0.6906	41

*new country 2010

Commentary:

According to the report's index, Nordic countries, such as [Iceland](#), [Norway](#), [Finland](#), and [Sweden](#) have continued to dominate at the top of the ranking for gender equality. Meanwhile, [France](#) has seen a notable decline in the ranking, largely as a result of decreased number of women holding ministerial portfolios in that country. In the Americas, the [United States](#) has risen in the ranking to top the region, predominantly as a result of a decreasing wage gap, as well as higher number of women holding key positions in the current Obama administration. [Canada](#) has continued to remain as one of the top ranking countries of the Americas, followed by the small Caribbean island

nation of Trinidad and Tobago, which has the distinction of being among the top three countries of the Americas in the realm of gender equality. [Lesotho](#) and South African ranked highly in the index, leading not only among African countries but also in global context. Despite [Lesotho](#) still lagging in the area of life expectancy, its high ranking was attributed to high levels of female participation in the labor force and female literacy. The [Philippines](#) and [Sri Lanka](#) were the top ranking countries for gender equality for Asia, ranking highly also in global context. The [Philippines](#) has continued to show strong performance in all strong performance on all four dimensions (detailed above) of the index. Finally, in the Arab world, the [United Arab Emirates](#) held the highest-rank within that region of the world; however, its placement near the bottom of the global list highlights the fact that Arab countries are generally poor performers when it comes to the matter of gender equality in global scope.

Source:

This data is derived from the latest edition of The Global Gender Gap Report by the World Economic Forum.

Available at URL:

<http://www.weforum.org/en/Communities/Women%20Leaders%20and%20Gender%20Parity/Gende>

Updated:

Based on latest available data as set forth in chart; reviewed in 2014

Culture and Arts

Content coming soon.

Etiquette

Cultural Dos and Taboos

- The traditional Muslim greeting is "A-salaam a-laykum" ("Peace be upon you"), to which the reply is "w-laykum o a-salaam" ("And upon you be peace").
- Titles are preferable to first names, especially in the case of elders or superiors. The word "haji" can be used for a Muslim who has been on pilgrimage to Mecca.
- Normally, one should be prepared to remove one's shoes before entering a building or a home. When one removes one's shoes, the soles of the shoes are placed together, preventing the sole from being pointed at anyone. Also, among Muslim Turkmen, one should never show the bottom of one's feet as it is considered offensive. Be sure not to walk on prayer mats, which will likely be present within homes.
- One should expect to see the Yurta, or traditional tent, which is constructed in the front yard of homes and used as a summer house of sorts. The Yurta has a wooden frame which can easily collapse, and it is covered by reeds and felt. This ancient symbol of the traditional Turkmen nomadic home is still used today.
- Turkmen are noted for their joviality and kind hospitality to visitors. If one is invited into the home of a Turkmen, it is customary to take a gift to the host or hostess. Baked goods, chocolates, or a bag of sweets, are good choices. More elaborate offerings, such as a beautiful ornament, possibly from one's own country, would constitute an acceptable gift between business associates. A finely made compass, symbolizing the direction of Mecca to a devout Muslim, would constitute a thoughtful gesture on the part of the giver, and would most assuredly be treasured by the recipient.
- Expect to partake of many vegetarian dishes in Turkmen cuisine. Some of these include herb-filled pastries and cornmeal pancakes, which are common in the markets. (Note that haggling in the markets is customary). Porridges with mung beans, or cornmeal and pumpkin, or rice, milk and yogurt, are also commonly consumed. Note that due to economic stagnation, restaurants in Turkmenistan are rare, and in those that do exist, sources suggest that their offering is usually not the best example of tasty Turkmen cuisine.
- There are also a number of prohibitions and customs involving food that one should adhere to in a Muslim country. For example, one should also note that the consumption of alcohol or pork is disallowed.
- One should always use the right hand in preference to the left. The left hand is considered unclean in the Muslim world and as such, one should never eat with the left hand. Likewise, one should avoid gesturing with the left hand while making sure that gifts are received with the right hand. Of course, it is acceptable to use both hands when one is insufficient. One should also avoid pointing at another person, and one should never use the North American "thumbs up" gesture as is considered to be vulgar throughout the Muslim world.
- In conversation, good topic choices include Turkmen history, current or modern achievements, sports and culture. The best possible choices, however, would be to show interest in Turkmenistan's famous Akhal-Teke horses. Turkmenistan is renowned for the breeding and training of these horses. Questions about Turkmenistan's beautifully woven carpets is also a good

topic. Generally, discussions about politics or religion, while not prohibited, are not recommended among new friends. Before embarking upon any kind of business discussion, one should ask after one's counterpart's health and life. Men should be careful not to bring up the subject of women unless one's counterpart does so first.

- For many people of Turkmenistan, especially those outside the urban centers, life revolves around their rural traditions, their (aforementioned) Akhal-Teke horses, and their ceremonies. Showing an interest in these aspects of life is suggested protocol for visitors.
- In urban centers, expect the prevailing Soviet penchant for bureaucracy to be present, even in the post-Soviet era. Much of the Turkmen infrastructure and services follows the old Soviet processes. Have patience and be good humored about this reality.
- In the realm of personal protocol, one should not enter a room or home without knocking or coughing to announce one's presence. One should also not shout, laugh too loudly or sing during meal times. Note that it is appropriate to cover the mouth when laughing.
- Generally, visitors are urged to acquaint themselves with the calendar and traditions of Islam, such as the fasting, daily prayer and practices. Praying five times daily, for example, is customary and affects the schedule of all events and practices in countries with Muslim populations. During the period of Ramadan, for instance, fasting and prayer is mandatory for Muslims.
- Turkmenistan is a predominantly Muslim culture and although it is not considered to be a fundamentalist Islamic country, clothing should be appropriate to this environment. Business wear is typically more conventional; suits are the norm for both men and women, although more casual attire may also be permissible. Western women should try to be more restrained in regard to makeup and jewelry. Both men and women should dress modestly. Tight, revealing clothing is simply not acceptable, while shorts, bikinis and short hems are objectionable. Necklines should be high and sleeves should come to the elbows. Hemlines should be well below the knee, if not ankle length. While the rules for men's attire is not as strict, men must keep their chest covered in public and should never wear shorts in public.
- Local Turkmen will likely wear traditional dress. For men, this means wearing high, shaggy, sheepskin hats and red robes placed over white shirts. For women, this means wearing long sack-like dresses over narrow trousers, which are often decorated with bands of embroidery at the ankle. Headdresses, bracelets and brooches are usually decorated with silver jewelry and semi-precious stones. The decorative patterns of these pieces of apparel and jewelry (and even carpets!) can often denote particular tribal affiliations.
- Following local traditions, single women will be distinguished from married women by the fact that their hair is braided in two, using a scarf, while married women wear their hair in single braids.

Travel Information

Please Note

This is a generalized travel guide and it is intended to coalesce several resources, which a traveler might find useful, regardless of a particular destination. As such, it does not include travel warnings for specific "hot spot" destinations.

For travel alerts and warnings, please see the United States Department of State's listings available at URL:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html>

Please note that travel to the following countries, based on these warnings, is ill-advised, or should be undertaken with the utmost precaution:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Honduras, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories of West Bank and Gaza, Philippines areas of Sulu Archipelago, Mindanao, and southern Sulu Sea, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Yemen.

International Travel Guide

Checklist for Travelers

- 1. Take out travel insurance to cover hospital treatment or medical evacuation. Overseas medical costs are expensive to most international travelers, where one's domestic, nationalized or even private health insurance plans will not provide coverage outside one's home country. Learn about "reciprocal insurance plans" that some international health care companies might offer.**
- 2. Make sure that one's travel insurance is appropriate. If one intends to indulge in adventurous activities, such as parasailing, one should be sure that one is fully insured in such cases. Many traditional insurance policies do not provide coverage in cases of extreme circumstances.**
- 3. Take time to learn about one's destination country and culture. Read and learn about the place one is traveling. Also check political, economic and socio-cultural developments at the destination by reading country-specific travel reports and fact sheets noted below.**
- 4. Get the necessary visas for the country (or countries) one intends to visit - but be aware that a visa does not guarantee entry. A number of useful sites regarding visa and other entry requirements are noted below.**
- 5. Keep in regular contact with friends and relatives back at home by phone or email, and be sure**

to leave a travel itinerary.

6. Protect one's personal information by making copies of one's passport details, insurance policy, travelers checks and credit card numbers. Taking copies of such documents with you, while leaving another collection copies with someone at home is also good practice for travelers. Taking copies of one's passport photograph is also recommended.

7. Stay healthy by taking all possible precautions against illness. Also, be sure to take extra supplies of prescription drugs along for the trip, while also taking time to pack general pharmaceutical supplies, such as aspirin and other such painkillers, bandages, stomach ailment medication, anti-inflammatory medication and anti-bacterial medication.

8. Do not carry illicit drugs. Understand that the punishment for possession or use of illegal drugs in some countries may be capital punishment. Make sure your prescription drugs are legal in the countries you plan to visit.

9. Know the laws of one's destination country and culture; be sure to understand the repercussions of breaking those laws and regulations. Often the transparency and freedoms of the juridical system at home is not consistent with that of one's destination country. Become aware of these complexities and subtleties before you travel.

10. For longer stays in a country, or where the security situation is volatile, one should register one's self and traveling companions at the local embassy or consulate of one's country of citizenship.

11. Women should take care to be prepared both culturally and practically for traveling in a different country and culture. One should be sure to take sufficient supplies of personal feminine products and prescription drugs. One should also learn about local cultural standards for women, including norms of dressing. Be aware that it is simply inappropriate and unsafe for women to travel alone in some countries, and take the necessary precautions to avoid risk-filled situations.

12. If one is traveling with small children, one should pack extra supplies, make arrangements with the travel carrier for proper seating that would adequately accommodate children, infants or toddlers. Note also that whether one is male or female, traveling with children means that one's hands are thus not free to carry luggage and bags. Be especially aware that this makes one vulnerable to pickpockets, thieves and other sorts of crime.

13. Make proper arrangements for accommodations, well in advance of one's arrival at a destination. Some countries have limited accommodation, while others may have culturally distinctive facilities. Learning about these practicalities before one travels will greatly aid the enjoyment of one's trip.

14. Travel with different forms of currency and money (cash, traveler's checks and credit cards) in anticipation that venues may not accept one or another form of money. Also, ensuring that one's financial resources are not contained in one location, or by one person (if one is traveling with others) can be a useful measure, in the event that one loses a wallet or purse.

15. Find out about transportation in the destination country. In some places, it might be advisable to hire a local driver or taxi guide for safety reasons, while in other countries, enjoying one's travel experience may well be enhanced by renting a vehicle and seeing the local sights and culture independently. Costs may also be prohibitive for either of these choices, so again, prior planning is

suggested.

Tips for Travelers

- Get adequate Travel and Medical Insurance.
- Check with your embassy, consulate, or appropriate government institution related to travel before traveling.
- Bring enough money, preferably in small denomination US dollars.
- Keep belongings in a safe place at all times.
- Enter next of kin details into the back of your passport.
- Beware of pickpockets (especially at local markets).
- Only drink bottled water.
- Beware of sunburn and dehydration in summer (May-September).
- Leave a photocopy of your passport and itinerary with a contact in your home country.
- Turkmenistan is in an earthquake zone - familiarize yourself with earthquake safety practices.
- Do not overstay your visa and register with the local police if you are staying for more than three days.
- Don't carry drugs; penalties can be severe.
- Carry ID at all times

Note: This information is directly quoted from the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Sources: *United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office*

Business Culture: Information for Business Travelers

For general information on etiquette in Turkmenistan see our Cultural Etiquette page.

Online Resources Regarding Entry Requirements and Visas

Foreign Entry Requirements for Americans from the United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html

Visa Services for Non-Americans from the United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html

Visa Bulletins from the United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/bulletin/bulletin_1360.html

Visa Waivers from the United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without_1990.html - new

Passport and Visa Information from the Government of the United Kingdom

<http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

Visa Information from the Government of Australia

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/visas/index.html>

Passport Information from the Government of Australia

<https://www.passports.gov.au/Web/index.aspx>

Passport Information from the Government of Canada

http://www.voyage.gc.ca/preparation_information/passport_passeport-eng.asp

Visa Information from the Government of Canada

http://www.voyage.gc.ca/preparation_information/visas-eng.asp

Online Visa Processing by Immigration Experts by VisaPro

<http://www.visapro.com>

Sources: United States Department of State, United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Government of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of Canada Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Useful Online Resources for Travelers

Country-Specific Travel Information from United States

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html

Travel Advice by Country from Government of United Kingdom

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country/>

General Travel Advice from Government of Australia

<http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/General>

Travel Bulletins from the Government of Australia

<http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/TravelBulletins/>

Travel Tips from Government of Australia

<http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/tips/index.html>

Travel Checklist by Government of Canada

http://www.voyage.gc.ca/preparation_information/checklist_sommaire-eng.asp

Travel Checklist from Government of United Kingdom

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/staying-safe/checklist>

Your trip abroad from United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/brochures/brochures_1225.html

A safe trip abroad from United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html

Tips for expatriates abroad from United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/residing/residing_1235.html

Tips for students from United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/studying/studying_1238.html http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/brochures/brochures_1225.html

Medical information for travelers from United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health_1185.html

US Customs Travel information

<http://www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/travel/>

Sources: United States Department of State; United States Customs Department, United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Government of Australia; Government of Canada: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Other Practical Online Resources for Travelers

Foreign Language Phrases for Travelers

<http://www.travlang.com/languages/>

<http://www.omniglot.com/language/phrases/index.htm>

World Weather Forecasts

<http://www.intellicast.com/>

<http://www.wunderground.com/>

<http://www.worldweather.org/>

Worldwide Time Zones, Map, World Clock

<http://www.timeanddate.com/>

<http://www.worldtimezone.com/>

International Airport Codes

<http://www.world-airport-codes.com/>

International Dialing Codes

<http://www.kropla.com/dialcode.htm>

<http://www.countrycallingcodes.com/>

International Phone Guide

<http://www.kropla.com/phones.htm>

International Mobile Phone Guide

<http://www.kropla.com/mobilephones.htm>

International Internet Café Search Engine

<http://cybercaptive.com/>

Global Internet Roaming

<http://www.kropla.com/roaming.htm>

World Electric Power Guide

<http://www.kropla.com/electric.htm>

<http://www.kropla.com/electric2.htm>

World Television Standards and Codes

<http://www.kropla.com/tv.htm>

International Currency Exchange Rates

<http://www.xe.com/ucc/>

Banking and Financial Institutions Across the World

<http://www.123world.com/banks/index.html>

International Credit Card or Automated Teller Machine (ATM) Locator

<http://visa.via.infonow.net/locator/global/>

<http://www.mastercard.com/us/personal/en/cardholderservices/atmlocations/index.html>

International Chambers of Commerce

<http://www.123world.com/chambers/index.html>

World Tourism Websites

<http://123world.com/tourism/>

Diplomatic and Consular Information

United States Diplomatic Posts Around the World

<http://www.usembassy.gov/>

United Kingdom Diplomatic Posts Around the World

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-the-fco/embassies-and-posts/find-an-embassy-overseas/>

Australia's Diplomatic Posts Around the World

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/missions/>

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/embassies.html>

Canada's Embassies and High Commissions

<http://www.international.gc.ca/ciw-cdm/embassies-ambassades.aspx>

Resources for Finding Embassies and other Diplomatic Posts Across the World

<http://www.escapeartist.com/embassy1/embassy1.htm>

Safety and Security

Travel Warnings by Country from Government of Australia

<http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/>

Travel Warnings and Alerts from United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1766.html

Travel Reports and Warnings by Government of Canada

http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp

http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/updates_mise-a-jour-eng.asp

Travel Warnings from Government of United Kingdom

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country/>

[http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country/?](http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country/?action=noTravelAll#noTravelAll)

[action=noTravelAll#noTravelAll](http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country/?action=noTravelAll#noTravelAll)

Sources: United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the United States Department of State, the Government of Canada: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Government of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Other Safety and Security Online Resources for Travelers

United States Department of State Information on Terrorism

<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/>

Government of the United Kingdom Resource on the Risk of Terrorism

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?>

[pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1044011304926](http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1044011304926)

Government of Canada Terrorism Guide

<http://www.international.gc.ca/crime/terrorism-terrorisme.aspx?lang=eng>

Information on Terrorism by Government of Australia

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/icat/index.html>

FAA Resource on Aviation Safety

<http://www.faasafety.gov/>

In-Flight Safety Information for Air Travel (by British Airways crew trainer, Anna Warman)

<http://www.warman.demon.co.uk/anna/inflight.html>

Hot Spots: Travel Safety and Risk Information

<http://www.airsecurity.com/hotspots/HotSpots.asp>

Information on Human Rights

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/hr/>

Sources: The United States Department of State, the United States Customs Department, the Government of Canada, the Government of United Kingdom, the Government of Australia, the Federal Aviation Authority, Anna Warman's In-flight Website, Hot Spots Travel and Risk Information

Diseases/Health Data

Please Note: Most of the entry below constitutes a generalized health advisory, which a traveler might find useful, regardless of a particular destination.

As a supplement, however, the reader will also find below a list of countries flagged with current health notices and alerts issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Please note that travel to the following countries, based on these 3 levels of warnings, is ill-advised, or should be undertaken with the utmost precaution:

Level 3 (highest level of concern; avoid non-essential travel) --

Guinea - Ebola

Liberia - Ebola

Nepal - Earthquake zone

Sierra Leone - Ebola

Level 2 (intermediate level of concern; use utmost caution during travel) --

Cameroon - Polio

Somalia - Polio

Vanuatu - Tropical Cyclone zone

Throughout Middle East and Arabia Peninsula - MERS ((Middle East Respiratory Syndrome)

Level 1 (standard level of concern; use practical caution during travel) -

Australia - Ross River disease

Bosnia-Herzegovina - Measles

Brazil - Dengue Fever

Brazil - Malaria

Brazil - Zika

China - H7N9 Avian flu

Cuba - Cholera

Egypt - H5N1 Bird flu

Ethiopia - Measles

Germany - Measles

Japan - Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD)

Kyrgyzstan - Measles

Malaysia -Dengue Fever

Mexico - Chikungunya

Mexico - Hepatitis A

Nigeria - Meningitis

Philippines - Measles

Scotland - Mumps

Singapore - Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD)

South Korea - MERS ((Middle East Respiratory Syndrome)

Throughout Caribbean - Chikungunya

Throughout Central America - Chikungunya

Throughout South America - Chikungunya

Throughout Pacific Islands - Chikungunya

For specific information related to these health notices and alerts please see the CDC's listing available at URL:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>

Health Advisory for Turkmenistan

Food and waterborne diseases are the number one cause of illness in travelers. Travelers' diarrhea can be caused by viruses, bacteria, or parasites, which are found throughout Eastern Europe and can contaminate food or water. Infections may cause diarrhea and vomiting (*E. coli*, *Salmonella*, cholera, and parasites), fever (typhoid fever and toxoplasmosis), or liver damage (hepatitis). Make sure your food and drinking water are safe. (See below.)

Malaria is a preventable infection that can be fatal if left untreated. Prevent infection by taking prescription antimalarial drugs and protecting yourself against mosquito bites (see below). Risk for malaria exists only in small southern border areas of Azerbaijan and Tajikistan. Travelers to these areas should take chloroquine to prevent malaria. For more detailed information about malaria in this region, see Malaria Risk and Prevention in Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/regionalmalaria/easteurp.htm>).

A certificate of yellow fever vaccination may be required for entry into certain of these countries if you are coming from a tropical South American or sub-Saharan African country. (There is no risk for yellow fever in Eastern European and NIS countries.) For detailed information, see Comprehensive Yellow Fever Vaccination Requirements (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/yelfever.htm>).

An outbreak of diphtheria is occurring in all the states of the former Soviet Union. Travelers to these areas should be sure that their diphtheria immunization is up to date.

Tickborne encephalitis, a viral infection of the central nervous system occurs chiefly in Central and Western Europe. Travelers are at risk who visit or work in forested areas during the summer months and who consume unpasteurized dairy products. Vaccine for this disease is not available in the United States at this time. To prevent tickborne encephalitis, as well as Lyme disease, travelers should take precautions to prevent tick bites (see below).

Because motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of injury among travelers, walk and drive defensively. Avoid nighttime travel if possible and always use seat belts.

CDC Recommends the Following Vaccines (as Appropriate for Age):

See your doctor at least 4-6 weeks before your trip to allow time for shots to take effect.

- Hepatitis A or immune globulin (IG).
- Hepatitis B, if you might be exposed to blood (for example, health-care workers), have sexual contact with the local population, stay longer than 6 months, or be exposed through medical treatment.
- Rabies, if you might be exposed to wild or domestic animals through your work or recreation.

- Typhoid, particularly if you are visiting developing countries in this region.
- As needed, booster doses for tetanus-diphtheria, measles, and a one-time dose of polio vaccine for adults. Hepatitis B vaccine is now recommended for all infants and for 11- to 12-year-olds who did not receive the series as infants.

To Stay Healthy, Do:

- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Drink only bottled or boiled water, or carbonated (bubbly) drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes. If this is not possible, make water safer by BOTH filtering through an "absolute 1-micron or less" filter AND adding iodine tablets to the filtered water. "Absolute 1-micron filters" are found in camping/outdoor supply stores.
- Eat only thoroughly cooked food or fruits and vegetables you have peeled yourself. Remember: boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it.
- If you are going to visit risk areas for malaria, take your malaria prevention medication before, during, and after travel, as directed. (See your doctor for a prescription.)
- Protect yourself from insects by remaining in well-screened areas, using repellents (applied sparingly at 4-hour intervals), and wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants tucked into boots or socks as a deterrent to ticks.
- To prevent fungal and parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry, and do not go barefoot.
- Always use latex condoms to reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

To Avoid Getting Sick:

- Don't eat food purchased from street vendors.
- Don't drink beverages with ice.
- Don't eat dairy products unless you know they have been pasteurized.
- Don't share needles with anyone.
- Don't handle animals (especially monkeys, dogs, and cats), to avoid bites and serious diseases (including rabies and plague).

What You Need To Bring with You:

- Long-sleeved shirt and long pants to wear while outside whenever possible, to prevent illnesses carried by insects.
- Insect repellent containing DEET (diethylmethyltoluamide), in 30%-35% strength for adults and 6%-10% for children. The insecticide permethrin applied to clothing is an effective deterrent to ticks.
- Over-the-counter antidiarrheal medicine to take if you have diarrhea.
- Iodine tablets and water filters to purify water if bottled water is not available. See above for more information about water filters.
- Sunblock, sunglasses, hat.
- Prescription medications: make sure you have enough to last during your trip, as well as a copy of the prescription(s).

After You Return Home:

If you have visited an area where there is risk for malaria, continue taking your malaria medication weekly for 4 weeks after you leave the area.

If you become ill after your trip-even as long as a year after you return-tell your doctor where you have traveled.

For More Information:

Ask your doctor or check the CDC web sites for more information about how to protect yourself against diseases that occur in Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States (NIS).

For information about diseases-

Carried by Insects

Lyme disease, Malaria

Carried in Food or Water

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy ("mad cow disease"), Cholera, *Escherichia coli*, diarrhea, Hepatitis A, Typhoid Fever

Person-to-Person Contact

Hepatitis B, HIV/AIDS

For more information about these and other diseases, also check the Diseases (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/diseases.htm>) section and the Health Topics A - Z (<http://www.cdc.gov/health/diseases.htm>).

Note:

Turkmenistan is located in the Eastern Europe and Newly Independent States (NIS) health region.

Sources:

The Center for Disease Control Destinations Website:

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/destinat.htm>

Chapter 6

Environmental Overview

Environmental Issues

Current Issues:

- contamination of soil and groundwater with agricultural chemicals and pesticides
- salinization of soil
- water logging of soil due to poor irrigation methods
- Caspian Sea pollution
- diversion of a large share of the flow of the Amu Darya into irrigated areas, which, in turn, contributes to the river's inability to replenish the Aral Sea
- desertification

Total Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Mtc):

17.0

Country Rank (GHG output):

65th

Natural Hazards:

N/A

Environmental Policy

Regulation and Jurisdiction:

The regulation and protection of the environment in Turkmenistan is under the jurisdiction of the following:

- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Environmental Protection
- State Committee for the Supervision of Industrial Safety and Mining Inspection

Major Non-Governmental Organizations:

N/A

International Environmental Accords:

Party to:

- Biodiversity
- Climate Change
- Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol
- Desertification
- Hazardous Wastes
- Ozone Layer Protection

Signed but not ratified:

- None

Kyoto Protocol Status (year ratified):

1999

Greenhouse Gas Ranking

Greenhouse Gas Ranking

GHG Emissions Rankings

Country Rank	Country
1	United States
2	China
4	Russia
5	Japan
6	India
7	Germany
8	United Kingdom
9	Canada
10	Korea, South
11	Italy
12	Mexico
13	France

14	South Africa
15	Iran
16	Indonesia
17	Australia
18	Spain
19	Brazil
20	Saudi Arabia
21	Ukraine
22	Poland
23	Taiwan
24	Turkey
25	Thailand
26	Netherlands
27	Kazakhstan
28	Malaysia
29	Egypt
30	Venezuela
31	Argentina

32	Uzbekistan
33	Czech Republic
34	Belgium
35	Pakistan
36	Romania
37	Greece
38	United Arab Emirates
39	Algeria
40	Nigeria
41	Austria
42	Iraq
43	Finland
44	Philippines
45	Vietnam
46	Korea, North
47	Israel
48	Portugal
49	Colombia

50	Belarus
51	Kuwait
52	Hungary
53	Chile
54	Denmark
55	Serbia & Montenegro
56	Sweden
57	Syria
58	Libya
59	Bulgaria
60	Singapore
61	Switzerland
62	Ireland
63	Turkmenistan
64	Slovakia
65	Bangladesh
66	Morocco
67	New Zealand

68	Oman
69	Qatar
70	Azerbaijan
71	Norway
72	Peru
73	Cuba
74	Ecuador
75	Trinidad & Tobago
76	Croatia
77	Tunisia
78	Dominican Republic
79	Lebanon
80	Estonia
81	Yemen
82	Jordan
83	Slovenia
84	Bahrain
85	Angola

86	Bosnia & Herzegovina
87	Lithuania
88	Sri Lanka
89	Zimbabwe
90	Bolivia
91	Jamaica
92	Guatemala
93	Luxembourg
94	Myanmar
95	Sudan
96	Kenya
97	Macedonia
98	Mongolia
99	Ghana
100	Cyprus
101	Moldova
102	Latvia
103	El Salvador

104	Brunei
105	Honduras
106	Cameroon
107	Panama
108	Costa Rica
109	Cote d'Ivoire
110	Kyrgyzstan
111	Tajikistan
112	Ethiopia
113	Senegal
114	Uruguay
115	Gabon
116	Albania
117	Nicaragua
118	Botswana
119	Paraguay
120	Tanzania
121	Georgia

122	Armenia
123	Congo, RC
124	Mauritius
125	Nepal
126	Mauritius
127	Nepal
128	Mauritania
129	Malta
130	Papua New Guinea
131	Zambia
132	Suriname
133	Iceland
134	Togo
135	Benin
136	Uganda
137	Bahamas
138	Haiti
139	Congo, DRC

140	Guyana
141	Mozambique
142	Guinea
143	Equatorial Guinea
144	Laos
145	Barbados
146	Niger
147	Fiji
148	Burkina Faso
149	Malawi
150	Swaziland
151	Belize
152	Afghanistan
153	Sierra Leone
154	Eritrea
155	Rwanda
156	Mali
157	Seychelles

158	Cambodia
159	Liberia
160	Bhutan
161	Maldives
162	Antigua & Barbuda
163	Djibouti
164	Saint Lucia
165	Gambia
166	Guinea-Bissau
167	Central African Republic
168	Palau
169	Burundi
170	Grenada
171	Lesotho
172	Saint Vincent & the Grenadines
173	Solomon Islands
174	Samoa
175	Cape Verde

176	Nauru
177	Dominica
178	Saint Kitts & Nevis
179	Chad
180	Tonga
181	Sao Tome & Principe
182	Comoros
183	Vanuatu
185	Kiribati
Not Ranked	Andorra
Not Ranked	East Timor
Not Ranked	Holy See
Not Ranked	Hong Kong
Not Ranked	Liechtenstein
Not Ranked	Marshall Islands
Not Ranked	Micronesia
Not Ranked	Monaco
Not Ranked	San Marino

Not Ranked	Somalia
Not Ranked	Tuvalu

* European Union is ranked 3rd

Cook Islands are ranked 184th

Niue is ranked 186th

Global Environmental Snapshot

Introduction

The countries of the world face many environmental challenges in common. Nevertheless, the nature and intensity of problem vary from region to region, as do various countries' respective capacities, in terms of affluence and infrastructure, to remediate threats to environmental quality.

Consciousness of perils affecting the global environment came to the fore in the last third or so of the 20th century has continued to intensify well into the new millennium. According to the United Nations Environment Programme, considerable environmental progress has been made at the level of institutional developments, international cooperation accords, and public participation. Approximately two-dozen international environmental protection accords with global implications have been promulgated since the late 1970s under auspices of the United Nations and other international organizations, together with many additional regional agreements. Attempts to address and rectify environmental problems take the form of legal frameworks, economic instruments, environmentally sound technologies and cleaner production processes as well as conservation efforts. Environmental impact assessments have increasingly been applied across the globe.

Environmental degradation affects the quality, or aesthetics, of human life, but it also displays potential to undermine conditions necessary for the sustainability of human life. Attitudes toward the importance of environmental protection measures reflect ambivalence derived from this bifurcation. On one hand, steps such as cleaning up pollution, dedicating parkland, and suchlike, are seen as embellishments undertaken by wealthy societies already assured they can successfully perform those functions deemed, ostensibly, more essential-for instance, public health and education, employment and economic development. On the other hand, in poorer countries, activities causing environmental damage-for instance the land degradation effects of unregulated logging, slash-and-burn agriculture, overgrazing, and mining-can seem justified insofar as such

activities provide incomes and livelihoods.

Rapid rates of resource depletion are associated with poverty and high population growth, themselves correlated, whereas consumption per capita is much higher in the most developed countries, despite these nations' recent progress in energy efficiency and conservation. It is impossible to sequester the global environmental challenge from related economic, social and political challenges.

First-tier industrialized countries have recently achieved measurable decreases in environmental pollution and the rate of resource depletion, a success not matched in middle income and developing countries. It is believed that the discrepancy is due to the fact that industrialized countries have more developed infrastructures to accommodate changes in environmental policy, to apply environmental technologies, and to invest in public education. The advanced industrialized countries incur relatively lower costs in alleviating environmental problems, in comparison to developing countries, since in the former even extensive environmental programs represent a rather minuscule percentage of total expenditures. Conversely, budget constraints, lagged provision of basic services to the population, and other factors such as debt service and militarization may preclude institution of minimal environmental protection measures in the poorest countries.

A synopsis for the current situation facing each region of the world follows:

Regional Synopsis: Africa

The African continent, the world's second-largest landmass, encompasses many of the world's least developed countries. By global standards, urbanization is comparatively low but rising at a rapid rate. More heavily industrialized areas at the northern and southern ends of the continent experience the major share of industrial pollution. In other regions the most serious environmental problems typically stem from inefficient subsistence farming methods and other forms of land degradation, which have affected an increasingly extensive area under pressure of a widely impoverished, fast-growing population. Africa's distribution of natural resources is very uneven. It is the continent at greatest risk of desertification, especially in the Sahel region at the edge of the Sahara but also in other dry-range areas. Yet at the same time, Africa also harbors some of the earth's richest and most diverse biological zones.

Key Points:

Up to half a billion hectares of African land are moderately to severely degraded, an occurrence reflecting short-fallow shifting cultivation and overgrazing as well as a climatic pattern of recurrent droughts.

Soil degradation is severe along the expanse directly south of the Sahara, from the west to the east coasts. Parts of southern Africa, central-eastern Africa, and the neighboring island of Madagascar suffer from serious soil degradation as well.

Africa contains about 17 percent of the world's forest cover, concentrated in the tropical belt of the continent. Many of the forests, however, are severely depleted, with an estimated 70 percent showing some degree of degradation.

Population growth has resulted in continuing loss of arable land, as inefficient subsistence farming techniques affect increasingly extensive areas. Efforts to implement settled, sustainable agriculture have met with some recent success, but much further progress in this direction is needed. Especially in previously uninhabited forestlands, concern over deforestation is intensifying.

By contrast, the African savanna remains the richest grassland in the world, supporting a substantial concentration of animal and plant life. Wildlife parks are sub-Saharan Africa's greatest tourist attraction, and with proper management-giving local people a stake in conservation and controlling the pace of development-could greatly enhance African economies.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of northern, southern and eastern Africa are currently threatened, while the biological diversity in Mauritania and Madagascar is even further compromised with over 20 percent of the mammal species in these two countries currently under threat.

With marine catch trends increasing from 500,000 metric tons in the 1950s to over 3,000,000 metric tons by 2000, there was increasing concern about the reduction in fisheries and marine life, should this trend continue unabated.

Water resource vulnerability is a major concern in northeastern Africa, and a moderate concern across the rest of the continent. An exception is central Africa, which has plentiful water supplies.

Many Africans lack adequate access to resources, not just (if at all) because the resources are unevenly distributed geographically, but also through institutional failures such as faulty land tenure systems or political upheaval. The quality of Africa's natural resources, despite their spotty distribution, is in fact extraordinarily rich. The infrastructure needed to protect and benefit from this natural legacy, however, is largely lacking.

Regional Synopsis: Asia and the Pacific

Asia-earth's largest landmass-and the many large and nearly innumerable small islands lying off its Pacific shore display extraordinarily contrasting landscapes, levels of development, and degrees of

environmental stress. In the classification used here, the world's smallest continent, Australia, is also included in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Asia-Pacific region is home to 9 of the world's 14 largest urban areas, and as energy use for utilities, industry and transport increases in developing economies, urban centers are subject to worsening air quality. Intense population density in places such as Bangladesh or Hong Kong is the quintessential image many people have of Asia, yet vast desert areas such as the Gobi and the world's highest mountain range, the Himalayas, span the continent as well. Forested areas in Southeast Asia and the islands of Indonesia and the Philippines were historically prized for their tropical hardwood, but in many places this resource is now severely depleted. Low-lying small island states are extremely vulnerable to the effects of global warming, both rising sea levels and an anticipated increase in cyclones.

Key Points:

Asian timber reserves are forecast to be depleted in the next 40 years. Loss of natural forest is irreversible in some areas, but plantation programs to restore tree cover may ameliorate a portion of the resulting land degradation.

Increased usage of fossil fuels in China and other parts of southern Asia is projected to result in a marked increase in emissions, especially in regard to carbon dioxide. The increased usage of energy has led to a marked upsurge in air pollution across the region.

Acidification is an emerging problem regionally, with sulfur dioxide emissions expected to triple by 2010 if the current growth rate is sustained. China, Thailand, India, and Korea seem to be suffering from particularly high rates of acid deposition. By contrast, Asia's most highly developed economy, Japan, has effected substantial improvements in its environmental indicators.

Water pollution in the Pacific is an urgent concern since up to 70 percent of the water discharged into the region's waters receives no treatment. Additionally, the disposal of solid wastes, in like manner, poses a major threat in a region with many areas of high population density.

The Asia-Pacific region is the largest expanse of the world's land that is adversely affected by soil degradation.

The region around Australia reportedly suffers the largest degree of ozone depletion.

The microstates of the Pacific suffer land loss due to global warming, and the consequent rise in the levels of ocean waters. A high-emissions scenario and anthropogenic climate impact at the upper end of the currently predicted range would probably force complete evacuation of the lowest-elevation islands sometime in this century.

The species-rich reefs surrounding Southeast Asia are highly vulnerable to the deleterious effects of coastal development, land-based pollution, over-fishing and exploitative fishing methods, as well as marine pollution from oil spills and other activities.

With marine catch trends increasing from 5,000,000 metric tons in the 1950s to over 20,000,000 metric tons by 2000, there was increasing concern about the reduction in fisheries and marine life, should this trend continue unabated.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of China and south-east Asia are currently threatened, while the biological diversity in India, Japan, Australia, the Philippines, Indonesia and parts of Malaysia is even further compromised with over 20 percent of the mammal species in these countries currently under threat.

Water resource vulnerability is a serious concern in areas surrounding the Indian subcontinent.

Regional Synopsis: Central Asia

The Central Asian republics, formerly in the Soviet Union, experience a range of environmental problems as the result of poorly executed agricultural, industrial, and nuclear programs during the Soviet era. Relatively low population densities are the norm, especially since upon the breakup of the U.S.S.R. many ethnic Russians migrated back to European Russia. In this largely semi-arid region, drought, water shortages, and soil salinization pose major challenges.

Key Points:

The use of agricultural pesticides, such as DDT and other chemicals, has contributed to the contamination of soil and groundwater throughout the region.

Land and soil degradation, and in particular, increased salinization, is mostly attributable to faulty irrigation practices.

Significant desertification is also a problem in the region.

Air pollution is prevalent, mostly due to use of low octane automobile fuel.

Industrial pollution of the Caspian Sea and the Aral Sea, as a result of industrial effluents as well as mining and metal production, presents a challenge to the countries bordering these bodies of water.

One of the most severe environmental problems in the region is attributable to the several billion

tons of hazardous materials stored in landfills across Central Asia.

Uzbekistan's particular problem involves the contraction of the Aral Sea, which has decreased in size by a third, as a consequence of river diversions and poor irrigation practices. The effect has been the near-total biological destruction of that body of water.

Kazakhstan, as a consequence of being the heartland of the former Soviet Union's nuclear program, has incurred a high of cancerous malignancies, biogenetic abnormalities and radioactive contamination.

While part of the Soviet Union, the republics in the region experienced very high levels of greenhouse gas emissions, as a consequence of rapid industrialization using cheap but dirty energy sources, especially coal.

By contrast, however, there have recently been substantial reductions in the level of greenhouse gas emissions, especially those attributable to coal burning, with further decreases anticipated over the next decade. These changes are partially due to the use of cleaner energy technologies, such as natural gas, augmented by governmental commitment to improving environmental standards.

Regional Synopsis: Europe

Western Europe underwent dramatic transformation of its landscape, virtually eliminating large-scale natural areas, during an era of rapid industrialization, which intensified upon its recovery from World War II. In Eastern Europe and European Russia, intensive land development has been less prevalent, so that some native forests and other natural areas remain. Air and water pollution from use of dirty fuels and industrial effluents, however, are more serious environmental problems in Eastern than in Western Europe, though recent trends show improvement in many indicators. Acid rain has inflicted heavy environmental damage across much of Europe, particularly on forests. Europe and North America are the only regions in which water usage for industry exceeds that for agriculture, although in Mediterranean nations agriculture is the largest water consumer.

Key Points:

Europe contributes 36 percent of the world's chlorofluorocarbon emissions, 30 percent of carbon dioxide emissions, and 25 percent of sulfur dioxide emissions.

Sulfur and nitrogen oxide emissions are the cause of 30 to 50 percent of Central and Eastern Europe's deforestation.

Acid rain has been an environmental concern for decades and continues to be a challenge in parts

of Western Europe.

Overexploitation of up to 60 percent of Europe's groundwater presents a problem in industrial and urban areas.

With marine catch trends increasing from 5,000,000 metric tons in the 1950s to over 20,000,000 metric tons by 2000, there was increasing concern about the reduction in fisheries and marine life, should this trend continue unabated.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of western Europe, Eastern Europe and Russia are currently threatened, while the biological diversity on the Iberian Peninsula is even further compromised with over 40 percent of the mammal species in this region currently under threat. As a result, there has been a 10 percent increase in protected areas of Europe.

A major environmental issue for Europe involves the depletion of various already endangered or threatened species, and most significantly, the decline of fish stocks. Some estimates suggest that up to 50 percent of the continent's fish species may be considered endangered species. Coastal fisheries have been over-harvested, resulting in catch limits or moratoriums on many commercially important fish species.

Fortunately, in the last few years, these policies have started to yield measurable results with decreasing trends in marine fish catch.

Recently, most European countries have adopted cleaner production technologies, and alternative methods of waste disposal, including recycling.

The countries of Eastern Europe have made air quality a major environmental priority. This is exemplified by the Russian Federation's addition to the 1995 "Berlin Mandate" (transnational legislation based on resolutions of the Rio Earth Summit) compelling nations to promote "carbon sinks" to absorb greenhouse gases.

On a relative basis, when compared with the degree of industrial emissions emitted by many Eastern European countries until the late 1980s, there has been some marked increase in air quality in the region, as obsolete plants are closed and a transition to cleaner fuels and more efficient energy use takes place.

Regional Synopsis: The Middle and Near East

Quite possibly, the Middle East will exemplify the adage that, as the 20th century was a century

fixated on oil, the 21st century will be devoted to critical decisions about water. Many (though far from all) nations in the Middle East rank among those countries with the largest oil and gas reserves, but water resources are relatively scarce throughout this predominantly dry region. Effects of global warming may cause moderately high elevation areas that now typically receive winter "snowpack" to experience mainly rain instead, which would further constrain dry-season water availability. The antiquities and religious shrines of the region render it a great magnet for tourism, which entails considerable economic growth potential but also intensifies stresses on the environment.

Key Points:

Water resource vulnerability is a serious concern across the entire region. The increased usage of, and further demand for water, has exacerbated long-standing water scarcity in the region. For instance, river diversions and industrial salt works have caused the Dead Sea to shrink by one-third from its original surface area, with further declines expected.

The oil industry in the region contributes to water pollution in the Persian Gulf, as a result of oil spills, which have averaged 1.2 million barrels of oil spilt per year (some sources suggest that this figure is understated). The consequences are severe because even after oil spills have been cleaned up, environmental damage to the food webs and ecosystems of marine life will persist for a prolonged period.

The region's coastal zone is considered one of the most fragile and endangered ecosystems of the world. Land reclamation, shoreline construction, discharge of industrial effluents, and tourism (such as diving in the Red Sea) contribute to widespread coastal damage.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of the Middle East are currently threatened.

Since the 1980s, 11 percent of the region's natural forest has been depleted.

Regional Synopsis: Latin America and the Caribbean

The Latin American and Caribbean region is characterized by exceedingly diverse landforms that have generally seen high rates of population growth and economic development in recent decades. The percentage of inhabitants residing in urban areas is quite high at 73.4 percent; the region includes the megacities of Mexico City, Sao Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro. The region also includes the world's second-highest mountain range, the Andes; significant expanses of desert and grassland; the coral reefs of the Caribbean Sea; and the world's largest contiguous tropical forest in the Amazon basin. Threats to the latter from subsistence and commercial farming, mineral exploitation and timbering are well publicized. Nevertheless, of eight countries worldwide that still retain at least 70

percent of their original forest cover, six are in Latin America. The region accounts for nearly half (48.3 percent) of the world's greenhouse gas emissions derived from land clearing, but as yet a comparatively minuscule share (4.3 percent) of such gases from industrial sources.

Key Points:

Although Latin America is one of the most biologically diverse regions of the world, this biodiversity is highly threatened, as exemplified by the projected extinction of up to 100,000 species in the next few decades. Much of this loss will be concentrated in the Amazon area, although the western coastline of South America will also suffer significant depletion of biological diversity. The inventory of rainforest species with potentially useful commercial or medical applications is incomplete, but presumed to include significant numbers of such species that may become extinct before they are discovered and identified.

Up to 50 percent of the region's grazing land has lost its soil fertility as a result of soil erosion, salinization, alkalinization and overgrazing.

The Caribbean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Pacific Ocean have all been contaminated by agricultural wastes, which are discharged into streams that flow into these major waters. Water pollution derived from phosphorous, nitrates and pesticides adversely affects fish stocks, contributes to oxygen depletion and fosters overgrowth of aquatic vegetation. Marine life will continue to be severely compromised as a result of these conditions.

Due to industrial development in the region, many beaches of eastern Latin America and the Caribbean suffer from tar deposits.

Most cities in the region lack adequate sewage treatment facilities, and rapid migration of the rural poor into the cities is widening the gap between current infrastructure capacity and the much greater level needed to provide satisfactory basic services.

The rainforest region of the Amazon Basin suffers from dangerously high levels of deforestation, which may be a significant contributory factor to global warming or "the greenhouse effect." In the late 1990s and into the new millennium, the rate of deforestation was around 20 million acres of rainforest being destroyed annually.

Deforestation on the steep rainforest slopes of Caribbean islands contributes to soil erosion and landslides, both of which then result in heavy sedimentation of nearby river systems. When these sedimented rivers drain into the sea and coral reefs, they poison the coral tissues, which are vital to the maintenance of the reef ecosystem. The result is marine degradation and nutrient depletion. Jamaica's coral reefs have never quite recovered from the effects of marine degradation.

The Southern Cone of Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay) suffers the effects of greatly increased ultraviolet-B radiation, as a consequence of more intense ozone depletion in the southern hemisphere.

Water resource vulnerability is an increasingly major concern in the northwestern portion of South America.

Regional Synopsis: North America

North American nations, in particular the United States and Canada, rank among the world's most highly developed industrial economies—a fact which has generated significant pollution problems, but also financial resources and skills that have enabled many problems to be corrected. Although efforts to promote energy efficiency, recycling, and suchlike have helped ease strains on the environment in a part of the world where per capita consumption levels are high, sprawling land development patterns and recent preferences many households have demonstrated for larger vehicles have offset these advances.

Meanwhile, a large portion of North America's original forest cover has been lost, though in many cases replaced by productive second-growth woodland. In recent years, attitudes toward best use of the region's remaining natural or scenic areas seem to be shifting toward recreation and preservation and away from resource extraction. With increasing attention on the energy scarcity in the United States, however, there is speculation that this shift may be short-lived. Indeed, the energy shortage on the west coast of the United States and associated calls for energy exploration, indicate a possible retrenchment toward resource extraction. At the same time, however, it has also served to highlight the need for energy conservation as well as alternative energy sources.

Despite generally successful anti-pollution efforts, various parts of the region continue to suffer significant air, water and land degradation from industrial, vehicular, and agricultural emissions and runoff. Mexico, as a middle-income country, displays environmental problems characteristic of a developing economy, including forest depletion, pollution from inefficient industrial processes and dirty fuels, and lack of sufficient waste-treatment infrastructure.

Key Points:

Because of significantly greater motor vehicle usage in the United States (U.S.) than in the rest of the world, the U.S. contribution of urban air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, especially carbon dioxide, is disproportionately high in relation to its population.

Acid rain is an enduring issue of contention in the northeastern part of the United States, on the border with Canada.

Mexico's urban areas suffer extreme air pollution from carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and other toxic air pollutants. Emissions controls on vehicles are in their infancy, compared to analogous regulations in the U.S.

The cities of Mexico, including those on the U.S. border, also discharge large quantities of untreated or poorly treated sewage, though officials are currently planning infrastructure upgrades.

Deforestation is noteworthy in various regions of the U.S., especially along the northwest coastline. Old growth forests have been largely removed, but in the northeastern and upper midwestern sections of the United States, evidence suggests that the current extent of tree cover probably surpasses the figure for the beginning of the 20th century.

Extreme weather conditions in the last few years have resulted in a high level of soil erosion along the north coast of California; in addition, the coastline itself has shifted substantially due to soil erosion and concomitant landslides.

Agricultural pollution-including nitrate contamination of well water, nutrient runoff to waterways, and pesticide exposure-is significant in various areas. Noteworthy among affected places are California's Central Valley, extensive stretches of the Midwest, and land in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Inland waterways, especially around the Great Lakes, have substantially improved their water quality, due to concentrated efforts at reducing water pollution by governmental, commercial and community representatives. Strict curbs on industrial effluents and near-universal implementation of sewage treatment are the chief factors responsible for this improvement.

A major environmental issue for Canada and the United States involves the depletion of various already endangered or threatened species, and most significantly, the decline of fish stocks. Coastal fisheries have been over-harvested, resulting in catch limits or moratoriums on many commercially important fish species. In the last few years, these policies have started to yield measurable results with decreasing trends in marine fish catch.

Due to the decay of neighboring ecosystems in Central America and the Caribbean, the sea surrounding Florida has become increasingly sedimented, contributing to marine degradation, nutrient depletion of the ecosystem, depletion of fish stocks, and diseases to coral species in particular.

Polar Regions

Key Points:

The significant rise in sea level, amounting 10 to 25 centimeters in the last 100 years, is due to the melting of the Arctic ice sheets, and is attributed to global warming.

The Antarctic suffers from a significant ozone hole, first detected in 1976. By 1985, a British scientific team reported a 40 percent decrease in usual regeneration rates of the ozone. Because a sustained increase in the amount of ultraviolet-B radiation would have adverse consequences upon all planetary life, recent environmental measures have been put into effect, aimed at reversing ozone depletion. These measures are projected to garner significant results by 2050.

Due to air and ocean currents, the Arctic is a sink for toxic releases originally discharged thousands of miles away. Arctic wildlife and Canada's Inuit population have higher bodily levels of contaminants such as PCB and dioxin than those found in people and animals in much of the rest of the world.

Global Environmental Concepts

1. Global Warming and Greenhouse Gases

The Greenhouse Effect:

In the early 19th century, the French physicist, Jean Fourier, contended that the earth's atmosphere functions in much the same way as the glass of a greenhouse, thus describing what is now understood as the "greenhouse effect." Put simply, the "greenhouse effect" confines some of the sun's energy to the earth, preserving some of the planet's warmth, rather than allowing it to flow back into space. In so doing, all kinds of life forms can flourish on earth. Thus, the "greenhouse effect" is necessary to sustain and preserve life forms and ecosystems on earth.

In the late 19th century, a Swedish chemist, Svante Arrhenius, noticed that human activities, such as the burning of coal and other fossil fuels for heat, and the removal of forested lands for urban development, led to higher concentrations of greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide and methane, in the atmosphere. This increase in the levels of greenhouse gases was believed to advance the "greenhouse effect" exponentially, and might be related to the trend in global warming.

In the wake of the Industrial Revolution, after industrial development took place on a large scale and the total human population burgeoned simultaneously with industrialization, the resulting increase in greenhouse gas emissions could, many scientists believe, be significant enough to have some bearing on climate. Indeed, many studies in recent years support the idea that there is a linkage between human activities and global warming, although there is less consensus on the extent to which this linkage may be relevant to environmental concerns.

That said, some scientists have argued that temperature fluctuations have existed throughout the evolution of the planet. Indeed, Dr. S. Fred Singer, the president of the Science and Environment Policy Project has noted that 3,000-year-old geological records of ocean sediment reveal changes in the surface temperature of the ocean. Hence, it is possible that climate variability is merely a normal fact of the planet's evolution. Yet even skeptics as to anthropogenic factors concur that any substantial changes in global temperatures would likely have an effect upon the earth's ecosystems, as well as the life forms that inhabit them.

The Relationship Between Global Warming and Greenhouse Gases:

A large number of climatologists believe that the increase in atmospheric concentrations of "greenhouse gas emissions," mostly a consequence of human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels, are contributing to global warming. The cause notwithstanding, the planet has reportedly warmed 0.3°C to 0.6°C over the last century. Indeed, each year during the 1990s was one of the very warmest in the 20th century, with the mean surface temperature for 1999 being the fifth warmest on record since 1880.

In early 2000, a panel of atmospheric scientists for the National Research Council concluded in a report that global warming was, indeed, a reality. While the panel, headed by Chairman John Wallace, a professor of atmospheric sciences at the University of Washington, stated that it remained unclear whether human activities have contributed to the earth's increasing temperatures, it was apparent that global warming exists.

In 2001, following a request for further study by the incoming Bush administration in the [United States](#), the National Academy of Sciences again confirmed that global warming had been in existence for the last 20 years. The study also projected an increase in temperature between 2.5 degrees and 10.4 degrees Fahrenheit by the year 2100. Furthermore, the study found the leading cause of global warming to be emissions of carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels, and it noted that greenhouse gas accumulations in the earth's atmosphere was a result of human activities.

Within the scientific community, the controversy regarding has centered on the difference between surface air and upper air temperatures. Information collected since 1979 suggests that while the earth's surface temperature has increased by about a degree in the past century, the atmospheric temperature five miles above the earth's surface has indicated very little increase. Nevertheless, the

panel stated that this discrepancy in temperature between surface and upper air does not invalidate the conclusion that global warming is taking place. Further, the panel noted that natural events, such as volcanic eruptions, can decrease the temperature in the upper atmosphere.

The major consequences of global warming potentially include the melting of the polar ice caps, which, in turn, contribute to the rise in sea levels. Many islands across the globe have already experienced a measurable loss of land as a result. Because global warming may increase the rate of evaporation, increased precipitation, in the form of stronger and more frequent storm systems, is another potential outcome. Other consequences of global warming may include the introduction and proliferation of new infectious diseases, loss of arable land (referred to as "desertification"), destructive changes to existing ecosystems, loss of biodiversity and the isolation of species, and concomitant adverse changes in the quality of human life.

International Policy Development in Regard to Global Warming:

Regardless of what the precise nature of the relationship between greenhouse gas emissions and global warming may be, it seems that there is some degree of a connection between the phenomena. Any substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and global warming trends will likely involve systematic changes in industrial operations, the use of advanced energy sources and technologies, as well as global cooperation in implementing and regulating these transformations.

In this regard, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) stipulated the following objectives:

1. To stabilize "greenhouse gas" concentrations within the atmosphere, in such a manner that would preclude hazardous anthropogenic intervention into the existing biosphere and ecosystems of the world. This stabilization process would facilitate the natural adaptation of ecosystems to changes in climate.
2. To ensure and enable sustainable development and food production on a global scale.

*** See section on "International Environmental Agreements and Associations" for information related to international policies related to limiting greenhouse gases and controlling climate change emanating from historic summits at Kyoto, Copenhagen, Doha, and Paris. ***

2. Air Pollution

Long before global warming reared its head as a significant issue, those concerned about the

environment and public health noted the deleterious effects of human-initiated combustion upon the atmosphere. Killer smogs from coal burning triggered acute health emergencies in London and other places. At a lower level of intensity motor vehicle, power plant, and industrial emissions impaired long-range visibility and probably had some chronic adverse consequences on the respiratory systems of persons breathing such air.

In time, scientists began associating the sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides released from coal burning with significant acid deposition in the atmosphere, eventually falling as "acid rain." This phenomenon has severely degraded forestlands, especially in Europe and a few parts of the [United States](#). It has also impaired some aquatic ecosystems and eaten away the surface of some human artifacts, such as marble monuments. Scrubber technology and conversion to cleaner fuels have enabled the level of industrial production to remain at least constant while significantly reducing acid deposition. Technologies aimed at cleaning the air and curtailing acid rain, soot, and smog may, nonetheless, boomerang as the perils of global warming become increasingly serious. In brief, these particulates act as sort of a sun shade -- comparable to the effect of volcanic eruptions on the upper atmosphere whereby periods of active volcanism correlate with temporarily cooler weather conditions. Thus, while the carbon dioxide releases that are an inevitable byproduct of combustion continue, by scrubbing the atmosphere of pollutants, an industrial society opens itself to greater insolation (penetration of the sun's rays and consequent heating), and consequently, it is likely to experience a correspondingly greater rise in ambient temperatures.

The health benefits of removing the sources of acid rain and smog are indisputable, and no one would recommend a return to previous conditions. Nevertheless, the problematic climatic effects of continually increasing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases pose a major global environmental challenge, not as yet addressed adequately.

3. Ozone Depletion

The stratospheric ozone layer functions to prevent ultraviolet radiation from reaching the earth. Normally, stratospheric ozone is systematically disintegrated and regenerated through natural photochemical processes. The stratospheric ozone layer, however, has been depleted unnaturally as a result of anthropogenic (man-made) chemicals, most especially chlorine and bromide compounds such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), halons, and various industrial chemicals in the form of solvents, refrigerants, foaming agents, aerosol propellants, fire retardants, and fumigants. Ozone depletion is of concern because it permits a greater degree of ultraviolet-B radiation to reach the earth, which then increases the incidences of cancerous malignancies, cataracts, and human immune deficiencies. In addition, even in small doses, ozone depletion affects the ecosystem by disturbing food chains, agriculture, fisheries and other forms of biological diversity.

Transnational policies enacted to respond to the dangers of ozone depletion include the 1985

Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. The Montreal Protocol was subsequently amended in London in 1990, Copenhagen in 1992 and Vienna in 1995. By 1996, 155 countries had ratified the Montreal Protocol, which sets out a time schedule for the reduction (and eventual elimination) of ozone depleting substances (OPS), and bans exports and imports of ODS from and to non-participant countries.

In general, the Protocol stipulates that developed countries must eliminate halon consumption by 1994 and CFC consumption by 1996, while developing countries must eliminate these substances by 2010. Consumption of methyl bromide, which is used as a fumigant, was to be frozen at the 1995 in developed countries, and fully eliminated in 2010, while developing countries are to freeze consumption by 2002, based on average 1995-1998 consumption levels. Methyl chloroform is to be phased out by 2005. Under the Montreal Protocol, most ODS will be completely eliminated from use by 2010.

4. Land Degradation

In recent decades, land degradation in more arid regions of the world has become a serious concern. The problem, manifest as both "desertification" and "devegetation," is caused primarily by climate variability and human activities, such as "deforestation," excessive cultivation, overgrazing, and other forms of land resource exploitation. It is also exacerbated by inadequate irrigation practices. Although the effects of droughts on drylands have been temporary in the past, today, the productivity and sustainability of these lands have been severely compromised for the long term. Indeed, in every region of the world, land degradation has become an acute issue.

Desertification and Devegetation:

"Desertification" is a process of land degradation causing the soil to deteriorate, thus losing its nutrients and fertility, and eventually resulting in the loss of vegetation, known as "devegetation." As aforementioned, "desertification" and "devegetation" are caused by human activities, yet human beings are also the greatest casualties. Because these forms of land degradation affect the ability of the soil to produce crops, they concomitantly contribute to poverty. As population increases and demographic concentrations shift, the extent of land subject to stresses by those seeking to wrest subsistence from it has inexorably risen.

In response, the United Nations has formed the Convention to Combat Desertification-aimed at implementing programs to address the underlying causes of desertification, as well as measures to prevent and minimize its effects. Of particular significance is the formulation of policies on transboundary resources, such as areas around lakes and rivers. At a broader level, the Convention

has established a Conference of Parties (COP), which includes all ratifying governments, for directing and advancing international action.

To ensure more efficacious use of funding, the Convention intends to reconfigure international aid to utilize a consultative and coordinated approach in the disbursement and expenditure of donor funds. In this way, local communities that are affected by desertification will be active participants in the solution-generation process. In-depth community education projects are envisioned as part of this new international aid program, and private donor financing is encouraged. Meanwhile, as new technologies are developed to deal with the problem of desertification, they need to be distributed for application across the world. Hence, the Convention calls for international cooperation in scientific research in this regard.

Desertification is a problem of sustainable development. It is directly connected to human challenges such as poverty, social and economic well-being and environmental protection as well. Broader environmental issues, such as climate change, biological diversity, and freshwater supplies, are indirectly related, so any effort to resolve this environmental challenge must entail coordinated research efforts and joint action.

Deforestation:

Deforestation is not a recent phenomenon. For centuries, human beings have cut down trees to clear space for land cultivation, or in order to use the wood for fuel. Over the last 200 years, and most especially after World War II, deforestation increased because the logging industry became a globally profitable endeavor, and so the clearing of forested areas was accelerated for the purposes of industrial development. In the long term, this intensified level of deforestation is considered problematic because the forest is unable to regenerate itself quickly. The deforestation that has occurred in tropical rainforests is seen as an especially serious concern, due to the perceived adverse effects of this process upon the entire global ecosystem.

The most immediate consequence of deforestation is soil degradation. Soil, which is necessary for the growth of vegetation, can be a fragile and vital property. Organically, an extensive evolution process must take place before soil can produce vegetation, yet at the same time, the effects of natural elements, such as wind and rain, can easily and quickly degrade this resource. This phenomenon is known as soil erosion. In addition, natural elements like wind and rain reduce the amount of fertile soil on the ground, making soil scarcity a genuine problem. When fertile topsoil that already exists is removed from the landscape in the process of deforestation, soil scarcity is further exacerbated. Equally significant is the fact that once land has been cleared so that the topsoil can be cultivated for crop production, not only are the nutrient reserves in the soil depleted, thus producing crops of inferior quality, but the soil structure itself becomes stressed and deteriorates further.

Another direct result of deforestation is flooding. When forests are cleared, removing the cover of vegetation, and rainfall occurs, the flow of water increases across the surface of land. When extensive water runoff takes place, the frequency and intensity of flooding increases. Other adverse effects of deforestation include the loss of wildlife and biodiversity within the ecosystem that supports such life forms.

At a broader level, tropical rainforests play a vital role in maintaining the global environmental system. Specifically, destruction of tropical rainforests affects the carbon dioxide cycle. When forests are destroyed by burning (or rotting), carbon dioxide is released into the air, thus contributing to an intensified "greenhouse effect." The increase in greenhouse gas emissions like carbon dioxide is a major contributor to global warming, according to many environmental scientists. Indeed, trees themselves absorb carbon dioxide in the process of photosynthesis, so their loss also reduces the absorption of greenhouse gases.

Tropical rainforest destruction also adversely affects the nitrogen cycle. Nitrogen is a key nutrient for both plants and animals. Plants derive nitrogen from soil, while animals obtain it via nitrogen-enriched vegetation. This element is essential for the formation of amino acids, and thereby for proteins and biochemicals that all living things need for metabolism and growth. In the nitrogen cycle, vegetation acquires these essential proteins and biochemicals, and then cyclically returns them to the atmosphere and global ecosystem. Accordingly, when tropical rainforest ecosystems are compromised, not only is vegetation removed; the atmosphere is also affected and climates are altered. At a more immediate level, the biodiversity within tropical rainforests, including wildlife and insect species and a wealth of plant varieties, is depleted. Loss of rare plants is of particular concern because certain species as yet unknown and unused could likely yield many practical benefits, for instance as medicines.

As a result of the many challenges associated with deforestation, many environmental groups and agencies have argued for government policies on the sustainable development of forests by governments across the globe. While many countries have instituted national policies and programs aimed at reducing deforestation, and substantial research has been advanced in regard to sustainable and regenerative forestry development, there has been very little progress on an international level. Generally speaking, most tropical rainforests are located in developing and less developed countries, where economic growth is often dependent upon the exploitation of tropical rainforests. Timber resources as well as wildlife hunting tend to be particularly lucrative arenas.

In places such as the Amazon, where deforestation takes place for the construction of energy plants aimed at industrialization and economic development, there is an exacerbated effect on the environment. After forests are cleared in order to construct such projects, massive flooding usually ensues. The remaining trees then rot and decay in the wake of the flooding. As the trees deteriorate, their biochemical makeup becomes more acidic, producing poisonous substances such

as hydrogen sulphide and methane gases. Acidified water subsequently corrodes the mechanical equipment and operations of the plants, which are already clogged by rotting wood after the floodwaters rise.

Deforestation generally arises from an economically plausible short-term motivation, but nonetheless poses a serious global concern because the effects go beyond national boundaries. The United Nations has established the World Commission on Forest and Sustainable Development. This body's task is to determine the optimal means of dealing with the issue of deforestation, without unduly affecting normal economic development, while emphasizing the global significance of protecting tropical forest ecosystems.

5. Water Resources

For all terrestrial fauna, including humans, water is the most immediate necessity to sustain life. As the population has increased and altered an ever-greater portion of the landscape from its natural condition, demand on water resources has intensified, especially with the development of industrialization and large-scale irrigation. The supply of freshwater is inherently limited, and moreover distributed unevenly across the earth's landmasses. Moreover, not just demand for freshwater but activities certain to degrade it are becoming more pervasive. By contrast, the oceans form a sort of "last wilderness," still little explored and in large part not seriously affected by human activity. However, coastal environments - the biologically richest part of the marine ecosystem-are experiencing major depletion due to human encroachment and over-exploitation.

Freshwater:

In various regions, for instance the Colorado River in the western [United States](#), current withdrawals of river water for irrigation, domestic, and industrial use consume the entire streamflow so that almost no water flows into the sea at the river's mouth. Yet development is ongoing in many such places, implying continually rising demand for water. In some areas reliant on groundwater, aquifers are being depleted at a markedly faster rate than they are being replenished. An example is the San Joaquin Valley in California, where decades of high water withdrawals for agriculture have caused land subsidence of ten meters or more in some spots. Naturally, the uncertainty of future water supplies is particularly acute in arid and semi-arid regions. Speculation that the phenomenon of global warming will alter geographic and seasonal rainfall patterns adds further uncertainty.

Water conservation measures have great potential to alleviate supply shortages. Some city water systems are so old and beset with leaking pipes that they lose as much water as they meter. Broad-scale irrigation could be replaced by drip-type irrigation, actually enhancing the sustainability of

agriculture. In many areas where heavy irrigation has been used for decades, the result is deposition of salts and other chemicals in the soil such that the land becomes unproductive for farming and must be abandoned.

Farming is a major source of water pollution. Whereas restrictions on industrial effluents and other "point sources" are relatively easy to implement, comparable measures to reform hydraulic practices at farms and other "nonpoint sources" pose a significantly knottier challenge. Farm-caused water pollution takes the following main forms:

- Nitrate pollution found in wells in intensive farming areas as a consequence of heavy fertilizer use is a threat to human health. The most serious danger is to infants, who by ingesting high-nitrate water can contract methemoglobinemia, sometimes called "blue baby syndrome," a potentially fatal condition.
- Fertilizer runoff into rivers and lakes imparts unwanted nutrients that cause algae growth and eventual loss of oxygen in the body of water, degrading its ability to support fish and other desirable aquatic life.
- Toxic agricultural chemicals - insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides - are detectable in some aquifers and waterways.

In general, it is much easier to get a pollutant into water than to retrieve it out. Gasoline additives, dry cleaning chemicals, other industrial toxins, and in a few areas radionuclides have all been found in water sources intended for human use. The complexity and long time scale of subterranean hydrological movements essentially assures that pollutants already deposited in aquifers will continue to turn up for decades to come. Sophisticated water treatment processes are available, albeit expensive, to reclaim degraded water and render it fit for human consumption. Yet source protection is unquestionably a more desirable alternative.

In much of the developing world, and even some low-income rural enclaves of the developed world, the population lacks ready access to safe water. Surface water and shallow groundwater supplies are susceptible to contamination from untreated wastewater and failing septic tanks, as well as chemical hazards. The occurrence of waterborne disease is almost certainly greatly underreported.

Marine Resources:

Coastal areas have always been desirable places for human habitation, and population pressure on them continues to increase. Many types of water degradation that affect lakes and rivers also affect coastal zones: industrial effluents, untreated or partially treated sewage, nutrient load from

agriculture figure prominently in both cases. Prospects for more extreme storms as a result of global warming, as well as the pervasiveness of poorly planned development in many coastal areas, forebode that catastrophic hurricanes and landslides may increase in frequency in the future. Ongoing rise in sea levels will force remedial measures and in some cases abandonment of currently valuable coastal property.

Fisheries over much of the globe have been overharvested, and immediate conservation measures are required to preserve stocks of many species. Many governments subsidized factory-scale fishing fleets in the 1970s and 1980s, and the resultant catch increase evidently surpassed a sustainable level. It is uncertain how much of the current decline in fish stocks stems from overharvesting and how much from environmental pollution. The deep ocean remains relatively unaffected by human activity, but continental shelves near coastlines are frequently seriously polluted, and these close-to-shore areas are the major biological nurseries for food fish and the smaller organisms they feed on.

6. Environmental Toxins

Toxic chemical pollution exploded on the public consciousness with disclosure of spectacularly polluted industrial areas such as Love Canal near Buffalo, New York. There is no question that pollutants such as organophosphates or radionucleides can be highly deleterious to health, but evidence to date suggests that seriously affected areas are a localized rather than universal problem.

While some explore the possibilities for a lifestyle that fully eschews use of modern industrial chemicals, the most prevalent remediative approach is to focus on more judicious use. The most efficient chemical plants are now able to contain nearly all toxic byproducts of their production processes within the premises, minimizing the release of such substances into the environment. Techniques such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) dictate limited rather than broadcast use of pesticides: application only when needed using the safest available chemical, supplemented as much as possible with nontoxic controls.

While heightened public awareness and growing technical sophistication suggest a hopeful outlook on limiting the damage from manmade environmental toxins, one must grant that previous incidents of their misuse and mishandling have already caused environmental damage that will have to be dealt with for many years to come. In the case of the most hazardous radioactive substances, the time scale for successful remediation actually extends beyond that of the recorded history of civilization. Moreover, in this era of high population density and rapid economic growth, quotidian activities such as the transport of chemicals will occasionally, seemingly inevitably result in accidents with adverse environmental consequences.

7. "Islandization" and Biodiversity

With increased awareness regarding the adverse effects of unregulated hunting and habitat depletion upon wildlife species and other aspects of biodiversity, large-scale efforts across the globe have been initiated to reduce and even reverse this trend.

In every region of the world, many species of wildlife and areas of biodiversity have been saved from extinction. Nationally, many countries have adopted policies aimed at preservation and conservation of species, and one of the most tangible measures has been the proliferation of protected habitats. Such habitats exist in the form of wildlife reserves, marine life reserves, and other such areas where biodiversity can be protected from external encroachment and exploitation.

Despite these advances in wildlife and biodiversity protection, further and perhaps more intractable challenges linger. Designated reserves, while intended to prevent further species decline, exist as closed territories, fragmented from other such enclaves and disconnected from the larger ecosystem. This environmental scenario is referred to as "islandization." Habitat reserves often serve as oversized zoos or game farms, with landscapes and wildlife that have effectively been "tamed" to suit. Meanwhile, the larger surrounding ecosystem continues to be seriously degraded and transformed, while within the islandized habitat, species that are the focus of conservation efforts may not have sufficient range and may not be able to maintain healthy genetic variability.

As a consequence, many conservationists and preservationists have demanded that substantially larger portions of land be withheld as habitat reserves, and a network of biological corridors to connect continental reserves be established. While such efforts to combat islandization have considerable support in the [United States](#), how precisely such a program would be instituted, especially across national boundaries, remains a matter of debate. International conservationists and preservationists say without a network of reserves a massive loss of biodiversity will result.

The concept of islandization illustrates why conservation and preservation of wildlife and biodiversity must consider and adopt new, broader strategies. In the past, conservation and preservation efforts have been aimed at specific species, such as the spotted owl and grizzly bear in North America, the Bengal tiger in Southeast Asia, the panda in [China](#), elephants in Africa. Instead, the new approach is to simultaneously protect many and varied species that inhabit the same ecosystem. This method, referred to as "bio-regional conservation," may more efficaciously generate longer-term and more far-reaching results precisely because it is aimed at preserving entire ecosystems, and all the living things within.

More About Biodiversity Issues:

This section is directly taken from the United Nations Environmental Program: "[Biodiversity](#)"

Assessment"

The Global Biodiversity Assessment, completed by 1500 scientists under the auspices of United Nations Environmental Program in 1995, updated what is known (or unknown) about global biological diversity at the ecosystem, species and genetic levels. The assessment was uncertain of the total number of species on Earth within an order of magnitude. Of its working figure of 13 million species, only 13 percent are scientifically described. Ecological community diversity is also poorly known, as is its relationship to biological diversity, and genetic diversity has been studied for only a small number of species. The effects of human activities on biodiversity have increased so greatly that the rate of species extinctions is rising to hundreds or thousands of times the background level. These losses are driven by increasing demands on species and their habitats, and by the failure of current market systems to value biodiversity adequately. The Assessment calls for urgent action to reverse these trends.

There has been a new recognition of the importance of protecting marine and aquatic biodiversity. The first quantitative estimates of species losses due to growing coral reef destruction predict that almost 200,000 species, or one in five presently contributing to coral reef biodiversity, could die out in the next 40 years if human pressures on reefs continue to increase.

Since Rio, many countries have improved their understanding of the status and importance of their biodiversity, particularly through biodiversity country studies such as those prepared under the auspices of UNEP/GEF. The [United Kingdom](#) identified 1250 species needing monitoring, of which 400 require action plans to ensure their survival. Protective measures for biodiversity, such as legislation to protect species, can prove effective. In the USA, almost 40 percent of the plants and animals protected under the Endangered Species Act are now stable or improving as a direct result of recovery efforts. Some African countries have joined efforts to protect threatened species through the 1994 Lusaka Agreement, and more highly migratory species are being protected by specialized cooperative agreements among range states under the Bonn Agreement.

There is an emerging realization that a major part of conservation of biological diversity must take place outside of protected areas and involve local communities. The extensive agricultural areas occupied by small farmers contain much biodiversity that is important for sustainable food production. Indigenous agricultural practices have been and continue to be important elements in the maintenance of biodiversity, but these are being displaced and lost. There is a new focus on the interrelationship between agrodiversity conservation and sustainable use and development practices in smallholder agriculture, with emphasis on use of farmers' knowledge and skills as a source of information for sustainable farming.

Perhaps even more important than the loss of biodiversity is the transformation of global biogeochemical cycles, the reduction in the total world biomass, and the decrease in the biological productivity of the planet. While quantitative measurements are not available, the eventual

economic and social consequences may be so significant that the issue requires further attention.

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1994.

Online resources used generally in the Environmental Overview:

Environmental Protection Agency Global Warming Site. URL: <http://www.epa.gov/globalwarming>

Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations: Forestry. URL: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/sofo/en/>

Global Warming Information Page. URL: <http://globalwarming.org>

U n i t e d N a t i o n s E n v i r o n m e n t a l P r o g r a m . U R L : http://www.unep.org/GEO/GEO_Products/Assessment_Reports/

United Nations Global Environmental Outlook. URL: <http://www.unep.org/geo/geo4/media/>

Note on Edition Dates:

The edition dates for textual resources are noted above because they were used to formulate the original content. We also have used online resources (cited above) to update coverage as needed.

Information Resources

For more information about environmental concepts, CountryWatch recommends the following resources:

The United Nations Environmental Program Network (with country profiles)

<http://www.unep.net/>

The United Nations Environment Program on Climate Change

<http://climatechange.unep.net/>

The United Nations Environmental Program on Waters and Oceans

<http://www.unep.ch/earthw/Pdepwat.htm>

The United Nations Environmental Program on Forestry: "Forests in Flux"

<http://www.unep-wcmc.org/forest/flux/homepage.htm>

FAO "State of the World's Forests"

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/FO/SOFO/SOFO99/sofo99-e.stm>

World Resources Institute.

<http://www.wri.org/>

Harvard University Center for Health and the Global Environment

<http://www.med.harvard.edu/chge/the-review.html>

The University of Wisconsin Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment

<http://sage.aos.wisc.edu/>

International Environmental Agreements and Associations

International Policy Development in Regard to Global Warming:

Introduction

Regardless of what the precise nature of the relationship between greenhouse gas emissions and global warming may be, it seems that there is some degree of a connection between the phenomena. Any substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and global warming trends will likely involve systematic changes in industrial operations, the use of advanced energy sources and technologies, as well as global cooperation in implementing and regulating these transformations.

In this regard, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) stipulated the following objectives:

1. To stabilize "greenhouse gas" concentrations within the atmosphere, in such a manner that would preclude hazardous anthropogenic intervention into the existing biosphere and ecosystems of the world. This stabilization process would facilitate the natural adaptation of ecosystems to changes in climate.
2. To ensure and enable sustainable development and food production on a global scale.

Following are two discussions regarding international policies on the environment, followed by listings of international accords.

Special Entry: The Kyoto Protocol

The UNFCCC was adopted at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, and entered into force in 1994. Over 175 parties were official participants.

Meanwhile, however, many of the larger, more industrialized nations failed to reach the emissions' reduction targets, and many UNFCCC members agreed that the voluntary approach to reducing emissions had not been successful. As such, UNFCCC members reached a consensus that legally binding limits were necessitated, and agreed to discuss such a legal paradigm at a meeting in Kyoto, [Japan](#) in 1997. At that meeting, the UNFCCC forged the Kyoto Protocol. This concord is the first legally binding international agreement that places limits on emissions from industrialized countries. The major greenhouse gas emissions addressed in the Kyoto Protocol include carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride, and methane.

The provisions of the Kyoto Protocol stipulate that economically advanced nations must reduce their combined emissions of greenhouse gases, by approximately five percent from their 1990 levels, before the 2008-2010 deadline. Countries with the highest carbon dioxide emissions, such as the [United States](#) (U.S.), many of the European Union (EU) countries, and [Japan](#), are to reduce emissions by a scale of 6 to 8 percent. All economically advanced nations must show "demonstrable progress" by 2005. In contrast, no binding limits or timetable have been set on developing countries. Presumably, this distinction is due to the fact that most developing countries - - with the obvious exceptions of [India](#) and [China](#) -- simply do not emit as many greenhouse gases as do more industrially advanced countries. Meanwhile, these countries are entrenched in the process of economic development.

Regardless of the aforementioned reasoning, there has been strong opposition against the asymmetrical treatment assigned to emissions limits among developed and developing countries. Although this distinction might be regarded as unfair in principle, associations such as the Alliance of Small Island States have been vocal in expressing how global warming -- a result of greenhouse gas emissions - has contributed to the rise in sea level, and thus deleteriously affected their very

existence as island nation states. For this reason, some parties have suggested that economically advanced nations, upon returning to their 1990 levels, should be required to further reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by a deadline of 2005. In response, interested parties have observed that even if such reductions were undertaken by economically advanced nations, they would not be enough to completely control global warming. Indeed, a reduction in the rate of fossil fuel usage by developing nations would also be necessary to have substantial ameliorative effect on global warming. Indeed, a reduction in the rate of fossil fuel usage by developing nations would also be necessary to have substantial ameliorative effect on global warming.

As such, the Protocol established a "Clean Development Mechanism" which permits developed countries to invest in projects aimed at reducing emissions within developing countries in return for credit for the reductions. Ostensibly, the objective of this mechanism is to curtail emissions in developing countries without unduly penalizing them for their economic development. Under this model, the countries with more potential emissions credits could sell them to other signatories of the Kyoto Protocol, whose emissions are forecast to significantly rise in the next few years. Should this trading of emissions credits take place, it is estimated that the Kyoto Protocol's emissions targets could still be met.

In 1999, the International Energy Outlook projected that Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and Newly Independent States, as well as parts of Asia, are all expected to show a marked decrease in their level of energy-related carbon emissions in 2010. Nations with the highest emissions, specifically, the U.S., the EU and [Japan](#), are anticipated to reduce their emissions by up to 8 percent by 2012. By 2000, however, the emissions targets were not on schedule for achievement. Indeed, the U.S. Department of Energy estimates forecast that by 2010, there will be a 34 percent increase in carbon emissions from the 1990 levels, in the absence of major shifts in policy, economic growth, energy prices, and consumer trends. Despite this assessment in the U.S., international support for the Kyoto Protocol remained strong, especially among European countries and island states, who view the pact as one step in the direction away from reliance on fossil fuels and other sources of greenhouse gases.

In 2001, U.S. President, George W. Bush, rejected his country's participation in the Kyoto Protocol, saying that the costs imposed on the global economic system, and especially, on the US, overshadowed the benefits of the Protocol. He also cited the unfair burden on developed nations to reduce emissions, as another primary reasons for withdrawal from the international pact, as well as insufficient evidence regarding the science of global warming. Faced with impassioned international disapproval for his position, the U.S. president stated that his administration remained interested in dealing with the matter of global warming, but would endorse alternative measures to combat the problem, such as voluntary initiatives limiting emissions. Critics of Bush's position, however, have noted that it was the failure of voluntary initiatives to reduce emissions following the Rio Summit that led to the establishment of the Kyoto Protocol in the first place.

In the wake of the Bush administration's decision, many participant countries resigned themselves to the reality that the goals of the Kyoto Protocol might not be achieved without U.S. involvement. Nevertheless, in Bonn, [Germany](#), in July 2001, the remaining participant countries struck a political compromise on some of the key issues and sticking points, and planned to move forward with the Protocol, irrespective of the absence of the U.S. The key compromise points included the provision for countries to offset their targets with carbon sinks (these are areas of forest and farmland which can absorb carbon through the process of photosynthesis). Another compromise point within the broader Bonn Agreement was the reduction of emissions cuts of six gases from over 5 percent to a more achievable 2 percent. A third key change was the provision of funding for less wealthy countries to adopt more progressive technologies.

In late October and early November 2001, the UNFCCC's 7th Conference of the Parties met in Marrakesh, [Morocco](#), to finalize the measures needed to make the Kyoto Protocol operational. Although the UNFCCC projected that ratification of the Protocol would make it legally binding within a year, many critics noted that the process had fallen short of implementing significant changes in policy that would be necessary to actually stop or even slow climate change. They also maintained that the absence of U.S. participation effectively rendered the Protocol into being a political exercise without any substance, either in terms of transnational policy or in terms of environmental concerns.

The adoption of the compromises ensconced within the Bonn Agreement had been intended to make the provisions of the Kyoto Protocol more palatable to the U.S. In this regard, it failed to achieve its objective as the Bush administration continued to eschew participation in the international accord. Still, however, the Bonn Agreement did manage to render a number of other positive outcomes. Specifically, in 2002, key countries, such as [Russia](#), [Japan](#) and [Canada](#) agreed to ratify the protocol, bringing the number of signatories to 178. The decision by key countries to ratify the protocol was regarded as "the kiss of life" by observers.

By 2005, on the eve of a climate change conference in London, British Prime Minister Tony Blair was hoping to deal with the problems of climate change beyond the provisions set forth in the Kyoto Protocol. Acknowledging that the Kyoto Protocol could not work in its current form, Blair wanted to open the discussion for a new climate change plan.

Blair said that although most of the world had signed on to Kyoto, the protocol could not meet any of its practical goals of cutting greenhouse gas emissions without the participation of the United States, the world's largest polluter. He also noted that any new agreement would have to include India and China -- significant producers of greenhouse gas emissions, but exempt from Kyoto because they have been classified as developing countries. Still, he said that progress on dealing with climate change had been stymied by "a reluctance to face up to reality and the practical action needed to tackle problem."

Blair also touted the "huge opportunities" in technology and pointed toward the possibilities offered by wind, solar and nuclear power, along with fuel cell technology, eco-friendly biofuels, and carbon capture and storage which could generate low carbon power. Blair also asserted that his government was committed to achieving its domestic goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 20 percent by 2010.

In the United States, President George W. Bush has said that global warming remained a debatable issue and despite conclusions reached by his own Environmental Protection Agency, he has not agreed with the conclusion that global warming and climate change are linked with human activities. Bush has also refused to ratify Kyoto on the basis of its economic costs.

Australia, an ally of the United States, has taken a similarly dim view of the Kyoto Protocol. Ahead of the November 2005 climate change meeting in Canada in which new goals for the protocol were to be discussed, Australia's Environment Minister, Ian Campbell, said that negotiating new greenhouse gas emission levels for the Kyoto Protocol would be a waste of time. Campbell said, "There is a consensus that the caps, targets and timetables approach is flawed. If we spend the next five years arguing about that, we'll be fiddling and negotiating while Rome burns." Campbell, like the Bush administration, has also advocated a system of voluntary action in which industry takes up new technologies rather than as a result of compelling the reduction of emissions. But the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) has called on its government to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, to establish a system of emissions trading, and to set binding limits on emissions. Interestingly, although it did not sign on to Kyoto, Australia was expected to meet its emissions target by 2012 (an 8 percent increase in 1990 levels in keeping with the country's reliance on coal). But this success has nothing to do with new technologies and is due to state-based regulations on land clearing.

Note: The Kyoto Protocol calls for developed nations to cut greenhouse emissions by 5.2 percent of 1990 levels by 2012.

Special Entry: Climate Change Summit in Copenhagen (2009) --

In December 2009, the United Nations Climate Change Summit opened in the Danish capital of Copenhagen. The summit was scheduled to last from Dec. 7-18, 2009. Delegates from more than 190 countries were in attendance, and approximately 100 world leaders, including British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and [United States](#) President Barack Obama, were expected to participate. At issue was the matter of new reductions targets on greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

Despite earlier fears that little concurrence would come from the conference, effectively pushing significant actions forward to a 2010 conference in [Mexico](#) City, negotiators were now reporting that the talks were productive and several key countries, such as [South Africa](#), had pledged to

reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The two main issues that could still lead to cleavages were questions of agreement between the industrialized countries and the developing countries of the world, as well as the overall effectiveness of proposals in seriously addressing the perils of climate change.

On Dec. 9, 2009, four countries -- the [United Kingdom](#), [Australia](#), [Mexico](#) and [Norway](#) -- presented a document outlining ideas for raising and managing billions of dollars, which would be intended to help vulnerable countries dealing with the perils of climate change. Described as a "green fund," the concept could potentially help small island states at risk because of the rise in sea level. [Bangladesh](#) identified itself as a potential recipient of an assistance fund, noting that as a country plagued by devastating floods, it was particularly hard-hit by climate change. The "green fund" would fall under the rubric of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, for which developed countries have been committed to quantifying their emission reduction targets, and also to providing financial and technical support to developing countries.

The [United Kingdom](#), [Australia](#), [Mexico](#) and [Norway](#) also called for the creation of a new legal treaty that would replace the Kyoto Protocol. This new treaty, which could go into force in 2012, would focus largely on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. But [Australia](#) went even further in saying that the successor treaty to the Kyoto Protocol, should be one with provisions covering all countries. Such a move would be a departure from the structure of the Kyoto Protocol, which contained emissions targets for industrialized countries due to the prevailing view that developed countries had a particular historic responsibility to be accountable for climate change. More recently, it has become apparent that substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions demanded by scientists would only come to pass with the participation also of significant developing nation states, such as [China](#) and [India](#). Indeed, one of the most pressing critiques of the Kyoto Protocol was that it was a "paper tiger" that failed to address the impact of the actions of emerging economies like [China](#) and [India](#), with its focus on the developed economies.

Now, in 2009, [China](#) -- as the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitter -- was responding this dubious distinction by vocalizing its criticism of the current scenario and foregrounding its new commitments. Ahead of the Copenhagen summit, [China](#) had announced it would reduce the intensity of its carbon emissions per unit of its GDP in 2020 by 40 to 45 percent against 2005 levels. With that new commitment at hand, [China](#) was now accusing the [United States](#) and the European Union of shirking their own responsibilities by setting weak targets for greenhouse gas emissions cuts. Senior Chinese negotiator, Su Wei, characterized the goals of the world's second largest greenhouse gas emitter -- the [United States](#) -- as "not notable," and the European Union's target as "not enough." Su Wei also took issue with [Japan](#) for setting implausible preconditions.

On Dec. 11, 2009, [China](#) demanded that developed and wealthy countries in Copenhagen should help deliver a real agreement on climate change by delivering on their promises to reduce carbon emissions and provide financial support for developing countries to adapt to global warming. In so doing, China's Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei said his country was hoping that a "balanced

outcome" would emerge from the discussions at the summit. Echoing the position of the Australian government, He Yafei spoke of a draft agreement as follows: "The final document we're going to adopt needs to be taking into account the needs and aspirations of all countries, particularly the most vulnerable ones."

China's Vice Foreign Minister emphasized the fact that climate change was "a matter of survival" for developing countries, and accordingly, such countries need wealthier and more developed countries to accentuate not only their pledges of emissions reduction targets, but also their financial commitments under the aforementioned United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. To that end, scientists and leaders of small island states in the Indian Ocean, the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, have highlighted the existential threat posed by global warming and the concomitant rise in sea level.

China aside, attention was also on [India](#) -- another major player in the developing world and a country with an industrializing economy that was impacting the environment. At issue was the Indian government's decision to set a carbon intensity target, which would slow emissions growth by up to 25 percent by the 2020 deadline. This strong position was resisted by some elements in [India](#), who argued that their country should not be taking such a strong position when developed wealthy countries were yet to show accountability for their previous commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The matter grew so heated that the members of the opposition stormed out of the parliament in protest as Indian Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh defended the policy. But the political pressure at home in [India](#) was leaving the Indian delegation in Copenhagen in a state of chaos as well. In fact, India's top environmental negotiator refused to travel to Copenhagen in protest of the government's newly-announced stance.

China and [India](#) were joined by [Brazil](#) and [South Africa](#) in the crafting of a draft document calling for a new global climate treaty to be completed by June 2010. Of concern has been the realization that there was insufficient time to find concurrence on a full legal treaty, which would leave countries only with a politically-binding text by the time the summit at Copenhagen closed. But Guyana's leader, President Bharrat Jagdeo, warned that the summit in [Denmark](#) would be classified as a failure unless a binding document was agreed upon instead of just political consensus. He urged his cohorts to act with purpose saying, "Never before have science, economics, geo-strategic self-interest and politics intersected in such a way on an issue that impacts everyone on the planet."

Likewise, [Tuvalu](#) demanded that legally binding agreements emerge from Copenhagen. Its proposal was supported by many of the vulnerable countries, from small island states and sub-Saharan Africa, all of whom warned of the catastrophic impact of climate change on their citizens. [Tuvalu](#) also called for more aggressive action, such as an amendment to the 1992 agreement, which would focus on sharp greenhouse gas emissions and the accepted rise in temperatures, due to the impact the rise in seas. The delegation from [Kiribati](#) joined the call by

drawing attention to the fact that one village had to be abandoned due to waist-high water, and more such effects were likely to follow. Kiribati's Foreign Secretary, Tessie Lambourne, warned that the people of [Kiribati](#) could well be faced with no homeland in the future saying, "Nobody in this room would want to leave their homeland." But despite such impassioned pleas and irrespective of warnings from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that the rise in sea level from melting polar ice caps would deleteriously affect low-lying atolls such as such as [Tuvalu](#) and [Kiribati](#) in the Pacific, and the [Maldives](#) in the Indian Ocean, the oil-giant [Saudi Arabia](#) was able to block this move.

Meanwhile, within the developed countries, yet another power struggle was brewing. The European Union warned it would only agree to raise its target of 20 percent greenhouse gas emissions reductions to 30 percent if the [United States](#) demonstrated that it would do more to reduce its own emissions. It was unknown if such pressure would yield results. [United States](#) President Barack Obama offered a "provisional" 2020 target of 17 percent reductions, noting that he could not offer greater concessions at Copenhagen due to resistance within the [United States](#) Congress, which was already trying to pass a highly controversial "cap and trade" emissions legislation. However, should that emissions trading bill fail in the Senate, the [United States](#) Environment Protection Agency's declaration that greenhouse gases pose a danger to human health and the environment was expected to facilitate further regulations and limits on power plants and factories at the national level. These moves could potentially strengthen the Obama administration's offering at Copenhagen. As well, President Obama also signaled that he would be willing to consider the inclusion of international forestry credits.

Such moves indicated willingness by the Obama administration to play a more constructive role on the international environmental scene than its predecessor, the Bush administration. Indeed, ahead of his arrival at the Copenhagen summit, President Barack Obama's top environmental advisors promised to work on a substantial climate change agreement. To that end, [United States](#) Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson said at a press conference, "We are seeking robust engagement with all of our partners around the world." But would this pro-engagement assertion yield actual results?

By Dec. 12, 2009, details related to a draft document prepared by Michael Zammit Cutajar, the head of the Ad-hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action, were released at the Copenhagen climate conference. Included in the document were calls for countries to make major reductions in carbon emissions over the course of the next decade. According to the Washington Post, industrialized countries were called on to make cuts of between 25 percent and 40 percent below 1990 levels -- reductions that were far more draconian than the [United States](#) was likely to accept. As discussed above, President Obama had offered a provisional reduction target of 17 percent. The wide gap between the released draft and the United States' actual stated position suggested there was much more negotiating in the offing if a binding agreement could be forged, despite the Obama administration's claims that it was seeking greater engagement on this issue.

In other developments, the aforementioned call for financial support of developing countries to deal with the perils of climate change was partly answered by the European Union on Dec. 11, 2009. The European bloc pledged an amount of 2.4 billion euros (US\$3.5 billion) annually from 2010 to 2012. Environment Minister Andreas Carlgren of [Sweden](#) -- the country that holds the rotating presidency of the European Union at the time of the summit -- put his weight behind the notion of a "legally binding deal." Meanwhile, Yvo de Boer, a top United Nations climate change official, focused less on the essence of the agreement and more on tangible action and effects saying, "Copenhagen will only be a success if it delivers significant and immediate action that begins the day the conference ends."

The division between developed and developing countries in Copenhagen reached new heights on Dec. 14, 2009, when some of the poor and less developed countries launched a boycott at the summit. The move, which was spurred by African countries but backed by [China](#) and [India](#), appeared to be geared toward redirecting attention and primary responsibility to the wealthier and more industrialized countries. The impasse was resolved after the wealthier and more industrialized countries offered assurances that they did not intend on shirking from their commitments to reducing greenhouse gases. As a result, the participating countries ceased the boycott.

Outside the actual summit, thousands of protestors had gathered to demand crucial global warming, leading to clashes between police and demonstrators elsewhere in the Danish capital city. There were reports of scattered violence across Copenhagen and more than 1,000 people were arrested.

Nevertheless, by the second week of the climate change summit, hopes of forging a strong deal were eroding as developed and developing nations remained deadlocked on sharing cuts in greenhouse gases, and particularly on the matters of financing and temperature goals. In a bid to shore up support for a new climate change, [United States](#) President Barack Obama joined other world leaders in Copenhagen. On Dec. 14, 2009, there was a standoff brewing between the [United States](#) and [China](#). At issue was China's refusal to accept international monitoring of its expressed targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The [United States](#) argued that China's opposition to verification could be a deal-breaker.

By the close of the summit, the difficult process eventually resulted in some consensus being cultivated. A draft text called for \$100 billion a year by 2020 to assist poor nations cope with climate change, while aiming to limit global warming to two degrees Celsius compared with pre-industrial levels. The deal also included specific targets for developed countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and called for reductions by developing countries as a share of their economies. Also included in the agreement was a mechanism to verify compliance. The details of the agreement were supported by President Barack Obama, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

This draft would stand as an interim agreement, with a legally-binding international pact unlikely to materialize until 2010. In this way, the summit in Copenhagen failed to achieve its central objective, which was to negotiate a successor to the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gas emissions.

Editor's Note

In the background of these developments was the growing global consciousness related to global warming and climate change. Indeed, as the Copenhagen summit was ongoing, it was clear there was enormous concurrence on the significance of the stakes with an editorial on the matter of climate change being published in 56 newspapers in 45 countries. That editorial warned that without global action, climate change would "ravage our planet." Meanwhile, a global survey taken by Globescan showed that concern over global warming had exponentially increased from 1998 -- when only 20 percent of respondents believed it to be a serious problem -- to 64 percent in 2009. Such survey data, however, was generated ahead of the accusations by climate change skeptics that some climate scientists may have overstated the case for global warming, based on emails derived in an illicit manner from a British University.

Special Entry: Climate change talks in Doha in [Qatar](#) extend life of Kyoto Protocol (2012)

December 2012 saw climate talks ensue in the Qatari city of Doha as representatives from countries across the world gathered to discuss the fate of the Kyoto Protocol, which seeks to minimize greenhouse gas emissions. The summit yielded results with decisions made (1) to extend the Kyoto Protocol until 2020, and (2) for wealthier countries to compensate poorer countries for the losses and damage incurred as a result of climate change.

In regards to the second matter, Malia Talakai of [Nauru](#), a leading negotiator for the Alliance of Small Island States, explained the necessity of the compensation package as follows: "We are trying to say that if you pollute you must help us."

This measure was being dubbed the "Loss and Damage" mechanism, and was being linked with [United States](#) President Barack Obama's request for \$60 billion from Congress to deal with the devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy months before. The sight of a hurricane bearing down on the northern Atlantic seaboard, along with the reality of the scope of reconstruction, appeared to have illustrated the economic costs of climate change -- not so much as a distant environmental issue -- but as a danger to the quotidian lives of people. Still, there was blame to be placed on the [United States](#) and European countries -- some of world's largest emitters -- for failing to do more to reduce emissions.

To that latter end, there was in fact little progress made on the central issue of reducing greenhouse

gas emissions. Had those emissions been reduced, there would have been less of a need to financially deal with the devastation caused by climate change. One interpretation was that the global community was accepting the fact that industrialization was contributing to global warming, which had deleterious effects on the polar ice caps and concomitantly on the rise of sea level, with devastating effects for small island nations. Thus, wealthier countries were willing to pay around \$10 billion a year through 2020, effectively in "damages," to the poor countries that could be viewed as the "collateral damage" of industrial progress. But damages today could potentially be destruction tomorrow, leaving in place the existential challenges and burdens to be born by some of the world's smallest and least wealthy island countries.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the representative for the small island nation states at the Doha summit responded with ire, characterizing the lack of progress on reducing emissions as follows: "We see the package before us as deeply deficient in mitigation (carbon cuts) and finance. It's likely to lock us on the trajectory to a 3,4,5C rise in global temperatures, even though we agreed to keep the global average temperature rise of 1.5C to ensure survival of all islands. There is no new finance (for adapting to climate change and getting clean energy) -- only promises that something might materialize in the future. Those who are obstructive need to talk not about how their people will live, but whether our people will live."

Indeed, in most small island countries not just in the Pacific, but also the Caribbean and Indian Ocean, ecological concerns and the climate crisis have been dominant themes with dire life and death consequences looming in the background for their people. Small island nations in these region are already at risk from the rise of sea-level, tropical cyclones, floods. But their very livelihoods of fishing and subsistence farming were also at risk as a result of ecological and environmental changes. Increasingly high storm surges can wipe out entire villages and contaminate water supplies. Accordingly, the very existence of island nations, such as [Kiribati](#) and [Tuvalu](#), are at severe risk of being obliterated from the map. Yet even with the existential threat of being wiped off the map in the offing, the international community has been either slow or restrictive in its efforts to deal with global warming, climate change, economic and ecological damage, as well as the emerging global challenge of environmental refugees.

A 2012 report from the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the Pacific Regional Environment Program underlined the concerns of small island nations and their people as it concluded that the livelihoods of approximately 10 million people in Pacific island communities were increasingly vulnerable to climate change. In fact, low-lying islands in that region would likely confront losses of up to 18 percent of gross domestic product due to climate change, according to the report. The report covers 21 countries and territories, including [Fiji](#), [Kiribati](#), [Samoa](#) and [Tonga](#), and recommended environmental legislation intended to deal with the climate crisis facing the small island countries particularly. As noted by David Sheppard, the director general of the Pacific Regional Environment Program that co-sponsored this study: "The findings... emphasize the need more than ever to raise the bar through collective actions that address the

region's environmental needs at all levels."

Regardless of the failures of the summit in [Qatar](#) (discussed above), the meeting did facilitate a process starting in 2015, which would bind both wealthy and poor countries together in the mission of forging a new binding treaty that would replace the Kyoto Protocol and tackle the central causes of climate change.

For more information on the threats faced in small island nations by climate change and the measures being undertaken to lobby for international action, please see the Alliance for Small Island States available online at the URL: <http://aosis.org/>

Special Report

COP 21 summit in Paris ends with historic agreement to tackle climate change; rare international consensus formed on environmental crisis facing the planet (2015) --

In mid-December 2015, the highly-anticipated United Nations climate conference of parties (COP) in Paris, [France](#), ended with a historic agreement. In fact, it would very likely be understood as the most significant international agreement signed by all the recognized countries of the world since the Cold War. Accordingly, the Paris Agreement was being distinguished as the first multilateral pact that would compel all countries across the world to cut its carbon emissions -- one of the major causes of increasing greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to global warming, and its deleterious effects ranging from the dangerous rise in sea level to catastrophic climate change.

The accord, which was dubbed to be the "Paris Agreement," was the work of rigorous diplomacy and fervent environmental advocacy, and it aimed to address the climate change crisis facing the planet. As many as 195 countries were represented in the negotiations that led to the landmark climate deal. Indeed, it was only after weeks of passionate debate that international concurrence was reached in addressing the environmental challenges confronting the world, with particular attention to moving beyond fossil fuels and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The success of the COP 21 summit in Paris and the emergence of the landmark Paris Agreement was, to some extent, attributed to the efforts of France's Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius who presided over the negotiations. The French foreign minister's experience and credentials as a seasoned diplomat and respected statesman paid dividends. He skillfully guided the delegates from almost 200 countries and interest groups along the negotiations process, with ostensibly productive results and a reasonably robust deal to show for it.

On Dec. 12, 2015, French Foreign Minister Fabius officially adopted the agreement, declaring: "I

now invite the COP to adopt the decision entitled Paris Agreement outlined in the document. Looking out to the room I see that the reaction is positive, I see no objections. The Paris agreement is adopted." Once Foreign Minister Fabius' gavel was struck, symbolically inaugurating the Paris Agreement into force, the COP delegate rushed to their feet with loud and bouyant cheers as well as thunderous applause.

In general, the Paris Agreement was being hailed as a victory for enviromental activists and a triumph for international diplomats, while at the same time being understood as simply an initial -- and imperfect -- move in the direction of a sustainable future. China's chief negotiator, Xie Zhenhua, issued this message, saying that while the accord was not ideal, it should "not prevent us from marching historical steps forward."

United States President Barack Obama lauded the deal as both "ambitious" and "historic," and the work of strenuous multilateral negotiations as he declared, "Together, we've shown what's possible when the world stands as one." The [United States](#) leader acknowledged that the accord was not "perfect," but he reminded the critics that it was "the best chance to save the one planet we have. "

Former [United States](#) Vice President Al Gore, one of the world's most well known environmental advocates, issued a lengthy statement on the accomplishments ensconced in the Paris Agreement. He highlighted the fact that the Paris Agreement was a first step towards a future with a reduced carbon footprint on Planet Earth as he said, "The components of this agreement -- including a strong review mechanism to enhance existing commitments and a long-term goal to eliminate global-warming pollution this century -- are essential to unlocking the necessary investments in our future. No agreement is perfect, and this one must be strengthened over time, but groups across every sector of society will now begin to reduce dangerous carbon pollution through the framework of this agreement."

The central provisions of the Paris Agreement included the following items:

- Greenhouse gas emissions should peak as quickly as possible, with a move towards balancing energy sources, and ultimately the decrease of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century
- Global temperature increase would be limited to 1.5 degrees Centigrade above pre-industrial levels and would be held "well below" the two degrees Centigrade threshold
- Progress on these goals would be reviewed every five years beginning in 2020 with new greenhouse gas reduction targets issued every five years
- \$100 billion would be expended each year in climate finance for developing countries to move forward with green technologies, with further climate financing to be advanced in the years beyond

It should be noted that there both legally binding and voluntary elements contained within the Paris Agreement. Specifically, the submission of an emissions reduction target and the regular review of that goal would be legally mandatory for all countries. Stated differently, there would be

a system in place by which experts would be able to track the carbon-cutting progress of each country. At the same time, the specific targets to be set by countries would be determined at the discretion of the countries, and would not be binding. While there was some criticism over this non-binding element, the fact of the matter was that the imposition of emissions targets was believed to be a major factor in the failure of climate change talks in Copenhagen, [Denmark](#), in 2009.

In 2015, the talks faced challenges as several countries, such as [China](#) and [India](#), objected to conditions that would stymie economic and development. In order to avoid that kind of landmine, a system Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) was developed and formed the basis of the accord. As such, the Paris Agreement would, in fact, facilitate economic growth and development, as well as technological progress, but with the goal of long-term ecological sustainability based on low carbon sources. In fact, the agreement heralded as "the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel era." As noted by Nick Mabey, the head of the climate diplomacy organization E3G, said, "Paris means governments will go further and faster to tackle climate change than ever before. The transition to a low carbon economy is now unstoppable, ensuring the end of the fossil fuel age."

A particular sticking point in the agreement was the \$100 billion earmarked for climate financing for developing countries to transition from traditional fossil fuels to green energy technologies and a low carbon future. In 2014, a report by the International Energy Agency indicated that the cost of that transition would actually be around \$44 trillion by the mid-century -- an amount that would render the \$100 billion being promised to be a drop in the proverbial bucket. However, the general expectation was that the Republican-controlled Senate in the [United States](#), which would have to ratify the deal in that country, was not interested in contributing significant funds for the cause of climate change.

A key strength of the Paris Agreement was the ubiquitous application of measures to all countries. Of note was the frequently utilized concept of "flexibility" with regard to the Paris Agreement. Specifically, the varying capacities of the various countries in meeting their obligations would be anticipated and accorded flexibility. This aspect presented something of a departure from the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which drew a sharp distinction between developed and developing countries, and mandated a different set of obligations for those categories of countries. Thus, under Kyoto, [China](#) and [India](#) were not held to the same standards as the [United States](#) and European countries. In the Paris Agreement, there would be commitments from all countries across the globe.

Another notable strength of the Paris Agreement was the fact that the countries of the world were finally able to reach consensus on the vital necessity to limit global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Centigrade. Ahead of the global consensus on the deal, and as controversy continued to surface over the targeted global temperature limits, the leaders of island countries were sounding

the alarm about the melting of the Polar ice caps and the associated rise in sea level. Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga of [Tuvalu](#) issued this dismal reminder: “Tuvalu’s future ... is already bleak and any further temperature increase will spell the total demise of [Tuvalu](#). No leader in this room carries such a level of worry and responsibility. Just imagine you are in my shoes, what would you do?” It was thus something of a victory for environmental advocates that the countries of the world could find consensus on the lower number -- 1.5 degrees rather than 2 degrees.

A significant weak point with regard to the Paris deal was a "loss and damage" provision, which anticipates that even with all the new undertakings intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and move to a low carbon future, there would nonetheless be unavoidable climate change consequences. Those consequences ranged from the loss of arable land for farmers as well as soil erosion and contamination of potable water by sea water, to the decimation of territory in coastal zones and on small islands, due to the rise in sea level, with entire small island countries being rendered entirely uninhabitable. The reality was that peoples' homes across the world would be destroyed along with their way of life.

With that latter catastrophic effect being a clear and present danger for small island countries, the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) demanded that the developed world acknowledge its responsibility for this irreversible damage.. Despite the fact that greenhouse gas emissions and the ensuing plague of global warming was, indeed, the consequence of development in the West (the [United States](#) and Europe) and the large power house countries, such as [Russia](#), [China](#) and [India](#), there was no appetite by those countries to sign on to unlimited liability. Under the Paris Agreement, there was a call for research on insurance mechanisms that would address loss and damage issues, with recommendations to come in the future.

The call for research was being regarded as an evasion of sorts and constituted the weakest aspect of the Paris Agreement. Not surprisingly, a coalition of small island nations demanded a "Marshall Plan" for the Pacific. Borrowing the term "Marshall Plan" from the post-World War II reconstruction effort, the coalition of Pacific island nation, which included [Kiribati](#), [Tuvalu](#), [Fiji](#), and the [Marshall Islands](#), called for an initiative that would include investment in renewable energy and shoreline protection, cultural preservation, economic assistance for economies in transition, and a plan for migration and resettlement for these countries as they confront the catastrophic effects of the melting of the Polar ice caps and the concomitant rise in sea level. The precise contours of the initiative remained unknown, unspecified, and a mere exercise in theory at the time of writing. Yet such an initiative would, at some point, have to be addressed, given the realities of climate change and the slow motion calamity unfolding each day for low-lying island nations across the world.

As noted by Vice President Greg Stone of Conservation International, who also functions as an adviser to the government of [Kiribati](#), “Imagine living in a place where you know it’s going to go away someday, but you don’t know what day that wave’s going to come over and wash your

home away." He added, "It's a disaster we know is going to happen." Meanwhile, the intervening years promised to be filled with hardship for small island nations, such as [Kiribati](#). Stone explained, "For every inch of sea-level rise, these islands lose 10 feet of their freshwater table to saltwater intrusion," Stone explained. "So it's not just about the day the water finally goes over the island; it's also about the day that there's just not enough water left and everyone has to move off the island." Presaging the future for island nations that could face submersion, Stone said, "If you look ahead 50 years, a country like [Kiribati](#) could become the first aqueous nation. possibility of migration. That is, they own this big patch of ocean, and they administer it from elsewhere."

Foreign Minister Minister Tony Debrum of the [Marshall Islands](#) emerged as the champion advocating on behalf of small island nation states and a loose coalition of concerned countries from the Pacific to the Caribbean, but with support from the [United States](#). He addressed the comprehensive concerns of small island nations regarding the weaknesses of the deal, while simultaneously making clear that the Paris Agreement signified hope for the countries most at risk. In a formal statement, Debrum declared: "We have made history today. Emissions targets are still way off track, but this agreement has the tools to ramp up ambition, and brings a spirit of hope that we can rise to this challenge. I can go back home to my people and say we now have a pathway to survival." Debrum highlighted the imperatives of Pacific island nations, saying, "Our High Ambition Coalition was the lightning rod we needed to lift our sights and expectations for a strong agreement here in Paris. We were joined by countries representing more than half the world. We said loud and clear that a bare-bones, minimalist agreement would not fly. We instead demanded an agreement to mark a turning point in history, and the beginning of our journey to the post-carbon era."

Debrum of the [Marshall Islands](#) espoused the quintessential synopsis of the accord and its effects for those most likely to be affected by climate change as he noted, "Climate change won't stop overnight, and my country is not out of the firing line just yet, but today we all feel a little safer."

Editor's Entry on [Environmental Policy](#):

The low-lying Pacific island nations of the world, including [Kiribati](#), [Tuvalu](#), the [Marshall Islands](#), [Fiji](#), among others, are vulnerable to the threats posed by global warming and climate change, derived from carbon emissions, and resulting in the rise in sea level. Other island nations in the Caribbean, as well as poor countries with coastal zones, were also at particular risk of suffering the deleterious effects of climate change.

Political policy in these countries are often connected to ecological issues, which have over time morphed into an existential crisis of sorts. Indeed, ecological concerns and the climate crisis have also been dominant themes with life and death consequences for the people of island nations in the Pacific. Indeed, the very livelihoods of fishing and subsistence farming remain at risk as a result of

ecological and environmental changes. Yet even so, these countries are threatened by increasingly high storm surges, which could wipe out entire villages and contaminate water supplies. Moreover, because these are low lying island nations, the sustained rise in sea level can potentially lead to the terrain of these countries being uninhabitable at best, and submerged at worst. Stated in plain terms, these countries are at severe risk of being obliterated from the map and their plight illuminates the emerging global challenge of environmental refugees. In these manifold senses, climate change is the existential crisis of the contemporary era.

Since the time of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, there have been efforts aimed at extending the life of that agreement, with an eye on minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, and thus minimizing the effects of climate change. Those endeavors have largely ended in failure, as exemplified by the unsuccessful Copenhagen talks in 2009 and the fruitless Doha talks in 2012 respectively. The success of the COP 21 talks in [France](#), with the adoption of the landmark Paris Agreement in 2015, was regarded as the first glimmer of hope. Not only did the Paris Agreement signify the triumph of international diplomacy and global consensus, but it also marked the start of the end of the fossil fuel era, with the path forward toward a low carbon future reliant on greener technologies. Most crucially, the Paris Agreement stood as the first significant response in recent times to the central challenge of climate change and its quotidian effects on the lives of real human beings across the world.

1. Major International Environmental Accords:

General Environmental Concerns

Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, Espoo, 1991.

Accords Regarding Atmosphere

Annex 16, vol. II (Environmental Protection: Aircraft Engine Emissions) to the 1044 Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation, Montreal, 1981

Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP), Geneva, 1979

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), New York, 1992

Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, Vienna, 1985 including the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Depleted the Ozone Layer, Montreal, 1987

Accords Regarding Hazardous Substances

Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movements and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa, Bamako, 1991

Convention on Civil Liability for Damage Caused during Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road, Rail and Inland Navigation Vessels (CRTD), Geneva, 1989

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Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, Helsinki, 1992

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Global Conventions

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International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by Protocol of 1978 relation thereto (MARPOL 73/78), London, 1973 and 1978

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International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage 1971 (1971 Fund Convention), Brussels, 1971

Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of

Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea (HNS), London 1996

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Regional Conventions

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Conventions within the UNEP Regional Seas Programme

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Convention for the Protection, Management, and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region, Nairobi, 1985

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Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment, Jeddah, 1982

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Marine Living Resources

Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), Canberra, 1980

International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), Rio de Janeiro, 1966

International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW), Washington, 1946

Nature Conservation and Terrestrial Living Resources

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Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention), Ramsar, 1971

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Freshwater Resources

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Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident (Notification Convention), Vienna, 1986

Convention on Nuclear Safety, Vienna, 1994

Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage, Vienna, 1963

5. Major Intergovernmental Organizations

Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)

European Union (EU): Environment

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

International Labour Organization (ILO)

International Maritime Organization (IMO)

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC Funds)

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Environment Policy Committee (EPOC)

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

World Bank

World Food Programme (WFP)

World Health Organization (WHO)

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

World Trade Organization (WTO)

6. Major Non-Governmental Organizations

Atmosphere Action Network East Asia (AANE)

Climate Action Network (CAN)

Consumers International (CI)

Earth Council

Earthwatch Institute

Environmental Liaison Centre International (ELCI)

European Environmental Bureau (EEB)

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

Friends of the Earth International (FoEI)

Greenpeace International

International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)

International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)

International Solar Energy Society (ISES)

IUCN-The World Conservation Union

Pesticide Action Network (PAN)

Sierra Club

Society for International Development (SID)

Third World Network (TWN)

Water Environment Federation (WEF)

Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)

World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)

World Federalist Movement (WFM)

World Resources Institute (WRI)

World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF)

7. Other Networking Instruments

Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED)

Global Legislators for a Balanced Environment (GLOBE)

Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)

United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS)

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The demographic numbers for cities and national populations listed in CountryWatch content are derived from the Geoba.se website, which analyzes data from the World Bank. The current demographic numbers displayed on the Countrywatch website are reflective of the latest available estimates.

The demographic information for language, ethnicity and religion listed in CountryWatch content is

derived from a mix of sources including the Altapedia, Central Intelligence Agency Factbook, Infoplease, and State Department Background Notes.

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Note on Edition Dates:

The earlier edition dates are noted above because they were used to formulate the original Country Reviews and serve as the baseline for some of the information covered. Later editions have been used in some cases, and are cited as such, while other more recent online resources (cited above) contain recent and ever-updated data sets used for research.

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Methodology Notes for Economic Data:

Estimates by CountryWatch.com of GDP in dollars in most countries are made by converting local currency GDP data from the International Monetary Fund World Economic Outlook to US dollars by market exchange rates estimated from the International Monetary Fund International Financial Statistics and projected out by the CountryWatch Macroeconomic Forecast. Real GDP was estimated by deflating current dollar values by the US GDP Implicit Price Deflator.

Exceptions to this method were used for:

- Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Nauru
- Cuba
- Palau
- Holy See
- San Marino
- Korea, North
- [Serbia](#) & Montenegro
- Liberia
- Somalia
- Liechtenstein
- Tonga
- Monaco
- Tuvalu

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Methodology Notes for the HDI:

Since 1990, the United Nations Development Programme, in concert with organizations across the globe, has produced the [Human Development Index](#) (or HDI). According to the UNDP, the index measures average achievement in basic human development in one simple composite index, and produces from this index a ranking of countries. The HDI is a composite of three basic components of human development: longevity, knowledge and standard of living. Longevity is measured by life expectancy. Knowledge is measured by combination of adult literacy and mean

years of schooling. Standard of living is measured by purchasing power, based on real GDP per capita (in constant US\$) adjusted for differences in international living costs (or, purchasing power parity, PPP). While the index uses these social indicators to measure national performance with regard to human welfare and development, not all countries provide the same level of information for each component needed to compute the index; therefore, as in any composite indicator, the final index is predicated on projections, predictions and weighting schemes. The index is a static measure, and thus, an incomplete measure of human welfare. In fact, the UNDP says itself the concept of human development focuses on the ends rather than the means of development and progress, examining in this manner, the average condition of all people in a given country.

Specifically, the index is calculated by determining the maximum and minimum for each of the three components (as listed above) and then measuring where each country stands in relation to these scales-expressed as a value between 0 and 1. For example, the minimum adult literary rate is zero percent, the maximum is 100 percent, and the reading skills component of knowledge in the HDI for a country where the literacy rate is 75 percent would be 0.75. The scores of all indicators are then averaged into the overall index.

For a more extensive examination of human development, as well as the ranking tables for each participating country, please visit: <http://www.undp.org>

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Note: Some or all these news services have been used to research various sections of this Country Review.

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Examples:

Youngblood-Coleman, Denise. *Country Review: France*. 2003. Houston, Texas: CountryWatch Publications, 2003. *Country Review:France*. Online. Available URL : http://www.countrywatch.com/cw_country.asp?vCOUNTRY=61 October, 12, 2003.

Note:

This is the citation format used when the print version is not used in the reference.

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