Bioko is a volcanic island which is part of the African country of Equatorial Guinea. It is one of five islands, that together with the mainland territory, comprise the country of Equatorial Guinea. The 195-kilometer (120-mi.) coastline is steep and rugged in the south but lower and more accessible in the north. Bioko Island is roughly rectangular in shape, measuring 69 km from north to south, and 32 km from east to west.

Bioko Island is part of a volcanic chain that extends diagonally across the Gulf of Guinea from the British island of St. Helena in the South Atlantic northeast toward Lake Chad. It is located 32 km’s off the coast of Cameroon in west central Africa and hosts the capital city of Malabo.

Location:

Latitude and Longitude: 3° 50’ N, 8° 70’ E

Time Zone: GMT +1

Total Land Area: 2

EEZ: 0

Climate:

Bioko's high mountains lead to great variations in rainfall and temperature on the island. Because it is near the equator, the island is generally warm with temperatures near sea level varying between 17 and 34 degrees Celsius (63 to 92 degrees F), though it may get as low as 4 degrees C (39 F) at the top of Pico Basile. The single dry season runs from November through February. Prevailing winds from the southeast bring heavy rains to the southern end of the island, averaging 1,090 cm (429.1 in) per year. The northern end, shielded by the three peaks, is much drier with 193 cm (76.0 in) per year. Mean relative humidity along the coast is a muggy 84-90%.

Natural Resources:

Significant oil and natural gas fields. Alba, the country's largest natural gas field, contains 1.3 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of proven reserves, with probable reserves estimated at 4.4 Tcf or more. Recent production improvements at Alba resulted in average production of 50,000 bbl/d of natural gas by the end of 2004. This tropical island is one of the most beautiful and most biologically-significant places in all of Africa. It is home to Africa's greatest concentration of endangered primates and to more than fifty unique species of plants. During the dry season (November to February), butterflies gather in the rainforest and endangered marine turtles come ashore to nest on the black sand beaches. Nearly 200 species of birds fly amongst the island's three volcanic peaks. 1,105 plant species have been recorded on Bioko, 65 known mammals, and 144 birds (32% of which are endemic subspecies).

ECONOMY:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total GDP:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita GDP:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of GDP per Sector:

| Primary | Secondary | Tertiary |

% of Population Employed by Sector

| Primary | Secondary | Tertiary |

External Aid/Remittances:

Growth:

56 % realized between 1996 and 1997 for (Equatorial Guinea)

Labour Force:

Unemployment

Year: Unemployment Rate (% of pop.)

Industry:

Currently developing a $1.4 billion liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility on Bioko Island. Cacao and coffee are the leading exports

Niche Industry:

A 2,500 metric ton methanol plant with power capacity on Bioko, was established in 2001 and is intended to take methane gas from a gas field and
Tourism:
Bioko Island is a difficult place to visit. Equatorial Guinea requires visas of all visitors except USA passport holders. Obtaining a visa can be a slow process. Even American citizens are expected to have a letter of invitation from an organization within Equatorial Guinea. Hotels in Malabo do not take reservations, and the better hotels are frequently fully booked by the petroleum companies. Credit cards are not used in Equatorial Guinea. Travelers checks can be cashed at a bank, but the charges associated with the transaction are impressive. Dollars are accepted at many establishments, but the exchange rate may be considerably worse than the bank rate. Banks will change dollars into fcfa (the local currency) at a fair rate. There are no car rental agencies in Malabo. Taxis around the capital city of Malabo are plentiful, generally rather pitiful, and inexpensive (500 fcfa --- less than $1.00 --- to go anywhere in Malabo). Transport outside of Malabo can be arranged but permits are needed to get through the military roadblocks. Permits may take several days to obtain. Local people speak Spanish, sometimes French, sometimes Pidgin (understood by most English-speakers) but very little English. Health risks: malaria, schistosomiasis (bilharzia), diphtheria, tuberculosis, rabies, Giardiasis, fungal infestations, typhus.

Imports and Exports:  
Cacao and coffee are the leading exports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tot. Value of Imports</th>
<th>0.00 ()</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| From Eu: |
| Import Partners (EU): |
| Partners Outside EU: |
| Import Partners: |
| Tot. Value of Exports | () |
| To Eu: |
| Export Partners: |
| Partners Outside EU: |
| Export Partners: |

Main Imports:  
Main Exports:  

TRANSPORTATION/ACCESS  
External:  
Number of Airports: 1  
1 (Malbo)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Main Ports: 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Main Ports: Two: one of the deepest Atlantic seaports is located in Malbo (3,200 meters); however, it is severely over extended and requires extensive rehabilitation A new deep-water harbour and Freeport is under development at Luba on Bioko Island.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Internal:  
Air  
Domestic air transport is defined by the international airport of Malabo. Two aging Soviet-built aircraft are operated by one national and one private airline.

Road:  
Bioko's system of roads provides ready access to much of the lowland rain forest around Pico Basile and up to the northern side of this volcano. There is an absence of roads and settlements on the eastern, southern, and western slopes of Pico Basile, and over the southern one-third of the island.

Sea:  
Other Forms of Transportation:  
Economic Zones:  
Energy Policy:  
On both Bioko Island and the mainland, electricity is generated by a combination of thermal and hydroelectric plants. The government has plans to expand this grid by 2010. Small diesel and gasoline powered generators are widely used as a back-up source of power supply. The expansion of natural gas production at the Alba field in recent years has provided a convenient fuel source for new power generation in the country. The 10.4-MW, natural gas-fired Punta Europa plant began operation in 1999, supplying gas-fired electricity to Bioko Island. Plans to expand and regularize electrical power for Malabo and Bata are underway. Water is only available in the major towns and is not always reliable because of poor maintenance and mismanagement. Some villages and rural areas are equipped with generators and water pumps, usually owned by private individuals. Telephone services are good in the two largest cities.
Official Currency: (CFA) Franc

Banking and Insurance:
Number of Banks and Credit Unions: 1
Number of Agricultural Credit Unions:
Number of Insurance Companies:

Of the thirty banks operating in Central Africa, one operates in Malabo.

Financial Services:

Communications/E-Commerce:
A modernized telecommunications system is being expanded to far reaches of the country.

Public Ownership:

Land Use:
The natural vegetation on the island changes with altitude and, to a lesser extent, with precipitation. About half of the island has been cultivated at one time or another, usually for cocoa at the lower elevations, but now about 26% is under cultivation and another 19% has reverted to secondary forest. Because the terrain at higher altitudes is difficult and because there are relatively few large trees, logging has not been a serious threat to these forests. The natural vegetation is divided into four types: low land rainforest from 0 to 800 m above sea level (now 28% of the island's cover), montane rainforest from 800 m to 1400 m (now 19%), Schefflera forest from 1400 to 2600 m (now 10%), and heath and grassland from 2600 to 3000 m (limited to Pico Basile and less than 1%).

Agriculture/Forestry:
Some commercial logging was undertaken in the lowland forest of the southern half of the island during the early 1990's, but this has now ceased. The montane forest and alpine savannah have experienced relatively little physical disturbance aside from some cocoyam cultivation in the immediate vicinity of settlements.

Marine Activity:

Fishing:
A major fishing center, the chief catches being perch, tuna, mackerel, cod, pike, shark, and crayfish.

Marine Life:

Critical Issues:
Hunting for bushmeat is widespread and is currently considered the greatest threat to Biodiversity. The bark of the montane trees species, Prunus africana is utilized for the treatment of benign prostate hyperplasia, and has a current market value of around $130 million per annum. Recent reports have indicated that the island of Bioko is becoming of increasing importance for the supply of Prunus bark to Europe and other countries.

JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES

Capital:
Malabo

Political System:
(Equatorial Guinea) Nominally multi-party Republic with strong domination by the executive branch. Executive: President (Chief of State) and a Council of Ministers appointed by the president. Legislative—100-member Chamber of People's Representatives (members directly elected by universal suffrage to serve five-year terms). Judicial—Supreme Tribunal. (Equatorial Guinea) President Brig Gen (Ret) Teodore Obiang Nguema Mbasogo

Political Parties:
(Equatorial Guinea) The ruling party is the Partido Democratico de Guinea Ecuatorial (PDGE), formed July 30, 1987. Numerous other parties were allowed to form in the early 1990s.

Important Legislation:

Principal Taxes:

Associated Power:
Equatorial Guinea

Citizenship:

Paradiplomacy:

HUMAN RESOURCES

Percent population in agr/mining/fishing: 76% 1999 22% of 400,000 (Equatorial Guinea) = 88,000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Island</th>
<th>Area (km sq.)</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>% of Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bioko</td>
<td>2,017</td>
<td>88,000</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Resident Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Migration:
The Fang and Bubi migrated there in the 17th century and to the main island of Fernando Po (now called Bioko) in the 19th century. Threats and physical attacks on Nigerian contract workers by government forces led to the Nigerian evacuation of all its citizens from Equatorial Guinea in 1976.

Crude Birth Rate:

Life Expectancy:

Crude Death Rate:

Ethnicity:
Primarily Bubi, some Fernandinos. The Bubi constitute 15% of the population of Equatorial Guinea, are indigenous to Bioko, and is now estimated to be 5,000 of the island's 90,000 people.

Class Division:
The Bubis still live on Bioko today, oppressed as a minority tribe under the dictator-president of the larger Fang tribe. Their numbers were seriously depleted under previous dictator Francisco Macias Nguema's systematic slaughter, which began shortly after the country's independence from Spain in 1968. Tens of thousands of Bubi, an estimated two-thirds of their population, were tortured, executed, beaten to death in labor camps, or managed to escape the island. Macias Nguema was executed during a 1979 coup by his nephew, current President Teodoro Obiang Nguema. Many Bubi today who fled Macias Nguema's murderous regime live in exile in Spain. Returning home to Bioko to the abject poverty and unstable politics still wrought by President Obiang's corrupt regime is an unattractive option. Those Bubis still living on Bioko walk cautiously through the political landmines. Second-generation exile Bubis are finding their way from Spain to the United States.

Languages:
Bubi, Fang, and Pidgin English

Religion:
Nominally Christian and predominantly Roman Catholic, pagan practices

Literacy:

Education System:

| Total Pre-schools: | () |
| Total Primary Schools |  
| First Level: |  
| Second Level: |  
| Third Level: |  
| Total Secondary Schools: |  
| Total Professional Schools: |  
| Universities: |  |

Number of Schools per Island:

| Pre-school | Elementary | High-school | Prof. | University |
| Pub | Priv | 1 | 2 | 3 | Pub | Priv | Pub | Priv |

Students Enrolled:

| Year | Pre-School | Elementary | High-school | Prof. | University |

Teachers

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

Medical Services:

HISTORY AND CULTURE
History:
The Portuguese explorer, Fernando Po (Fernao do Poo), seeking a route to India, is credited with having discovered the island of Bioko in 1471. He called it Formosa ("pretty flower"), but it quickly took on the name of its European discoverer. The Portuguese retained control until 1778. From 1827 to 1843, Britain established a base on the island to combat the slave trade. The Treaty of Paris settled conflicting claims to the mainland in 1900, and periodically, the mainland territories were united administratively under Spanish rule. Spain lacked the wealth and the interest to develop an extensive economic infrastructure in what was commonly known as Spanish Guinea during the first half of this century. However, through a paternalistic system, particularly on Bioko Island, Spain developed large cacao plantations for which thousands of Nigerian workers were imported as laborers. At independence in 1968, largely as a result of this system, Equatorial Guinea had one of the highest per capita incomes in Africa. Equatorial Guinea gained independence in 1968 after 190 years of Spanish rule. In September 1968, Francisco Macías Nguema was elected first president of Equatorial Guinea, and independence was granted in October. The Macías regime was characterized by abandonment of all government functions except internal security, which was accomplished by terror; this led to the death or exile of up to one-third of the country's population. Due to pillage, ignorance, and neglect, the country's infrastructure—electrical, water, road, transportation, and health—fell into ruin. Religion was repressed, and education ceased. The private and public sectors of the economy were devastated. Nigerian contract laborers on Bioko, estimated to have been 60,000, left en masse in early 1976. The economy collapsed, and skilled citizens and foreigners left. Of course, the Macías dictatorship quickly ruined the positive economic development Guinea had experienced before 1968. With the evacuation of the Spaniards, the new republic lost much knowledge and capital. At the same time, the terror regime drained the country for the local intellectuals and capital. Most cocoa plantations (including the village cooperatives) were nationalized. However, the most fatal incident for the economy, probably was the evacuation of the Nigerian workers in 1976. The steadily deteriorating relationship with the exterior world also hindered foreign investments. The country now was without knowledge, capital and manpower to sustain an extensive cocoa production. Other industries, such as the coffee and oil palm production, livestock and logging, met the same fate. The Bubi people, which still preferred a livelihood outside the plantations, were now forcefully recruited to replace the Nigerians on the badly managed state farms. The national economy totally collapsed under these circumstances. The production of cocoa could not be sustained, and production shrank from 38,000 tons in 1968 to only 2,340 tons in 1975! Coffee production equally shrank from 8,500 tons in 1968 to 1,500 tons in 1978 and merely 400 tons in 1981. Other industries followed in line. Only logging could somehow sustain itself through enormous concessions to foreign companies (mainly French). This trend is mirrored in the GDP per capita estimations for the period, which shrank from 300 US$ in 1968 to 70 US$ in 1975.

Referenda:
Recent Significant Events:
An invasion was launched in January 1998 by the Movement for the Self-Determination of the People of Bioko (MAIB). This small group of the indigenous Bubi people of the island was formed in 1993 and advocates outright secession of Bioko Island. Corruption and a dysfunctional judicial system severely disrupted development of Equatorial Guinea's economy and society. Prime Minister Angel Serafin Seriche Dougan's government of January 1998 was appointed to rid the country of ministers who were abusing the system and has been given a mandate to end corruption and install good governance. He introduced legislation to fight corruption and calling for the immediate dismissal of crooked civil servants. Although nominally a constitutional democracy since 1991, the 1996 and 2002 presidential elections - as well as the 1999 legislative elections - were widely seen as being flawed. The president controls most opposition parties through the judicious use of patronage.

Music, Dance, Handicraft and Patrimony:
The capital island of Bioko has largely been influenced by Spanish customs and traditions during the colonial period. Bubi folklore consists of stories of the animals in the jungle that are delightful entertainment as well as interesting records of the animals that lived on the island and the Bubi's impressions of their personalities and habits. Other folk stories tell of sorcerer mischief and of witches trying to snatch children. Still others explain everyday things people might wonder about. The ballâ©© dance is performed along the coast throughout the year and on Bioko around Christmas.

Sources:

Useful Links:
IslandStudies.ca
www.upei.ca
www.google.ca

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