

Zambia

Location

Located in the southern part of Africa, the Republic of Zambia has 15°00' S latitude and 30° 00' E longitude geographical co-ordinates. Zambia covers 752,614 sq. km in total area and is only slightly larger than Texas, USA. Zambia is bounded by eight other countries. The neighbors are Democratic Republic of the Congo (Zaire) on the northwest and Tanzania to the northeast, Malawi to the east, Mozambique and Zimbabwe to the southeast, Namibia to the south and Angola to the west. Zambia is a landlocked country with no maritime claims or islands. Major cities in Zambia are Lusaka, the capital, Ndola, Kitwe and Mufulira. It is divided into nine provinces. The president of the nation appoints a minister to each of the provinces for governance.

Geography

High plateaus with some hills and mountains make up the terrain of Zambia. The north east has mountains ranging up to 2,000 meters in height. The plateau is divided into five distinct topographical regions, central highlands including the copper belt and Zambezi Valley, the Rift Valley with the Zambezi Lowlands, the western plains which consist of swamps and semiarid deserts, Muchinga Uplands and northeastern Zambia which includes the Bangweulu Swamps, Lake Mweru and Lake Tanganyika.

The Zambezi, which is the principal river, has three major tributaries -Kabompo, Kafue and Luangwa. The [Zambezi](#) flows towards the west and south and its tributaries, the [Kafue](#) flows in the west, the Luangwa flows in the east; Luapula and [Chambeshi](#) tributaries flow in the north. In the northern part of Zambia, Lake Bangweulu, has vast swamps. The Kariba Dam on the Zambezi forms a large reservoir, called [Lake Kariba](#).

Climate

Due to the higher altitudes, although Zambia is in the Tropic zone, it enjoys pleasant sub-tropical climate especially in the highlands. July, the coldest month of the year, has a cool temperature of 16⁰ C (61⁰ F) and January the hottest month has an average temperature of 21⁰ C (70⁰ F) in Lusaka the capital. The climate can be divided into roughly three seasons: May to August – cool dry climate, September to November – hot dry climate and December to April – warm wet season. During this rainy season, the Northern parts has an annual rainfall of 1,300 mm (51 in) and 750 mm (30 in) southern parts of the country.

History

Nomadic herders and farmers of the Bantu tribes moved southward and settled in Zambia beginning in the 4th century AD. Different tribes arrived and occupied different regions and exercised control in their own territories throughout the 12th-18th centuries AD. The tribes developed agriculture, livestock, mining and metalworking techniques depending on their geographical location. Since these tribes were small states governed by local chiefs or kings, they were unable to resist the British colonized Zambia then called “Barotseland” in the latter half of the 19th century.

Colonization of Northern Rhodesia (now called Zambia), Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Nyasaland (now Malawi) by the British was accomplished over a series of conquests and treaties with local kings. With the discovery of copper in the late 1920s in the north, railways and smelting plants were developed. Urbanization and mining of the Northwest copper-belt continued throughout World War II causing an influx of European people for technical and administrative expertise. The small European community formed a Federation of Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1953 which was opposed by African leaders. The nationalist leaders along with Malawi, led by Kenneth Kaunda, won the freedom struggle by breaking the federation in 1963 and Zambia was formed from

Northern Rhodesia in October 1964. Progress of Zambia under Kaunda's rule was moderate with unsuccessful agriculture improvement program after nationalization of private land.

The United National Independence Party (UNIP) founded by Kaunda won all the election until the early 1990s. Multiparty voting began in 1991 where Fredrick Chiluba the candidate of the opposition Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) won the elections. The current president from MMD Levy Mwanawasa was elected in January 2002.

Important dates

Zambia's important days are as follows: *New Year's Day* – January 1, *Youth Day* on March 12 , *Easter celebrations* that fall in April 13-16, *Good Friday*, *Holy Saturday*, *Easter Sunday* and *Easter Monday*, *Labor Day* on May 1, *Africa Freedom Day* on May 25 (also the anniversary of Organization of African Unity's foundation), *Heroes Day* on July 5 and *Unity Day* on July 6, *Farmers Day* on August 6, October 24 – the *Independence Day* (also called National Day), *Christmas Day* on December 25 and interestingly, *Boxing Day* on December 26 (which is no longer a public holiday).

Important Festivals

Various provincial and ethnic festivals are celebrated in Zambia in addition to *Christmas* and *Easter*. The *N'cwala festival*, held on February 24th , is celebrated by the Ngoni tribes to commemorate their entry into Zambia in 1835. Feasts, music and dancing comprise the celebrations. The *Zambia National Fishing Competition* is held on Lake Tanganyika in early March every year. In the western province, Lozi people celebrate the *Kuomboka Festival*. The *Lwindi Festival* takes place in the Southern Province in November. The *Livingstone Cultural Festival* is celebrated in May and the *Umutomoboko* is celebrated by the Lunda tribe people at the end of July. The people of the North Western Province celebrate the *Likumbi Lya Mize* in July. During the full moon weekends in September and October, a

ceremony called *Shimunenga* is celebrated by the Ba-Ita people in the Southern Province of Maala on Kafue flats. Apart from these cultural festivals, *the Annual Agriculture, Mining and Trade Shows* are also highlights.

Population and Demographics

The census in 1990 indicated the population of Zambia to be 7,818,447. The population is estimated to be 10,462,436 in 2004 with a population density of 14 persons per sq km. The northeast and western parts of the country are sparsely inhabited. The capital city of Lusaka has a population estimate of 1,640,000 in 2004. The population growth is about 3% with a doubling time of 24 years.

Black Africans constitute nearly 99% of Zambia's population and they to more than 70 Bantu-speaking tribes. Even with this large cultural diversity, Zambians show very little tribal animosity. The largest of these ethnic groups are the Bemba, Nyanja, and Tonga tribes. The other three major ethnic minorities are Asians of Indian origin, Euro-African and Indo-African descent people and the Europeans of British origin.

Changes in the constitution in 1991 now impose that the presidential candidate must be from families settled in Zambia for at least 2 generations and the president can serve only for 2 terms.

Currency

The decimal system of currency introduced in 1968 is the Kwacha divided into 100 Ngwee. The exchange rate is \$1.00 USD = 4,750.5 Kwachaa (as on July 2, 2004). The Bank of Zambia is the Central bank and was established in 1964.

Education

Since 1964, the year of Zambia's Independence, school attendance has increased steadily and substantially. Ninety five percent of the population attends primary school (ages 6-11). However, secondary education amounts to 17% of the population and tertiary education (ages 20-24) is only about 2%. The literacy rate is high with adult literacy at 78% (female – 71% and male – 86%). The University of Zambia, established in 1965, has nine different schools including Agricultural Sciences, Humanities, Engineering and Veterinary Medicine. Studies related to Central Africa are pursued at the Institute of African Studies in the University of Zambia. The Livingstone Museum houses archaeology and natural history pertaining to Southern Africa.

Language

The official language of Zambia is English but is spoken by a small minority. However, due to all the ethnic African groups, more than 70 indigenous African languages are spoken. The Bemba, Lozi, Tonga, Nyanja and Luvale are predominant vernaculars spoken.

Religion

Christianity is a major religion that is followed by approximately 50-75% of the people and Protestants form 34%, and Roman Catholics comprise of 26% of the population. Many people follow independent churches which combine elements of Christianity and African religions. Most of the remaining population follows Hinduism and Islam (about 25-50%) and a minimum of 1% of the people follow indigenous beliefs.

Agriculture

Agriculture is a major industry in Zambia along with brewing, mining, cement, and chemicals production. Cassava, cotton, ground nuts, maize, sunflower seeds, sweet potatoes, sugarcane, and tobacco are primary agricultural products. Only 7.08% of the country's land is arable, of which only

0.03% is used to produce permanent crops. Seventy five percent of the country's population is engaged in agriculture and follows subsistence farming. Dairy cattle and beef are raised only for domestic purposes.

Underdeveloped agriculture is subject to natural hazards such as periodic drought and tropical storms between November and April. Mining has led to vast air pollution, acid rains that have adversely affected agriculture. Deforestation and desertification are also hazardous not only to agriculture but also to wildlife and ecology. The country has even seen food scarcity due to these reasons.

Trade

Zambia trades with countries like United Kingdom, United States of America, Japan and South Africa. Zambia principally exports minerals such as copper, cobalt, lead, and zinc. Zambia is one of the largest producers of cobalt and copper. Export trade partners include Japan, Saudi Arabia, India, France, and Malaysia.

Mineral fuels and lubricants, food, chemicals, manufacturing goods, machinery and transport equipment are important imports. South Africa, Zimbabwe, United Kingdom, United States of America and Japan are some of the principal import partners with Zambia.

Food

Nshima, a dish prepared by boiling ground maize or corn to make a thick mash is a staple diet in Zambia. Rice, potatoes, cassava, and yam constitute other carbohydrate meals. Vegetables with varieties of fish such as kapenta, bream, Nile perch and tiger fish are used in preparing side dishes. Meat products used comprise mainly of goat or lamb, chicken, and beef. Crocodile meat is considered a delicacy. Paw-paw, mango, lemon, bananas, groundnuts are fruits and nuts that are consumed. Sorghum, beans, millet, okra, and pumpkins also form part of the Zambian cuisine.

A popular drink called *Chibuku* (Shake-Shake) is locally brewed although many commercially brewed beers are now dominant.

Landmarks

Zambia is very rich in wildlife and natural resources including The Zambezi and Victoria Falls that are shared between Zambia and Zimbabwe. Victoria Falls, contains rich and scenic game reserves, and adventure sports such as white water rafting and glimpses of African culture which form important attraction in Zambia.

Lusaka, the capital city, has a few tourist attractions such as the Lumburma Market, Cultural Center where native artisans carve wooden souvenirs, National Assembly Building, State House, Anglican Cathedral, and the Munda Wanga Botanical and Zoological Gardens.

Livingstone, Zambia's oldest city, is named after the famous explorer – David Livingstone and is located 350 km southwest of Lusaka near the Zimbabwe border. This is just 10 km from the town of Victoria Falls. The town itself houses many museums such as the prehistory museum, Livingstone museum, the Railway Museum that displays old steam engines and Maramba Cultural Center where Zambian dance performances are held and art and crafts are displayed.

Adventure sports on the Zambezi such as white water rafting, kayaking, canoeing, even river boarding can be arranged. Cruises along the river, rock climbing, rappelling and bungee jumping near the Victoria Falls are also attractions.

Irene PV Joseph Souriraj