**Nigeria**

The official name of Nigeria is Federal Republic of Nigeria. The capital city is Abuja. The nigerian government is federal republic, independent since 1960. The civilian constitution of the Second Republic, with a US-style president, senate and house of representatives, was suspended when the military took over on December 31, 1983.

The population is more than 100 millions of people. More than 50% of them are Christians, and less than 45% are Muslims. The official language of Negeria is English, but there also exist a variety of local languages.

The coastline, much of it bordered by mangrove swamp, is intersected by numerious creeks; the southeast coast, dominated by the Niger river delta, is the location of the offshore oil reserves. Inland lies an area of tropical rain forest nd bush. Savannah and woodland cover much of the central upland area; the Jos plateau is the watershed of hundreds of streams and rivers flowing as far as Lake Chad and the Niger and Benue rivers. The far north, bordering with Sahara, is mainly savannah. Spectacular highlands line the eastern border with Cameroon. The highest point is Vogel peak of 2040 meters, and total area is over 924000 sq km.

Democratically elected governments have so far proved unequal to the task of managing this unruly nation of more than 100 millions people; civilians have ruled for a total of only 10 years since independence in 1960. The most recent civilian government, that of President Shehu Shagari, lasted four years before the military took power again in 1983. The idealistic and rigid General Muhammadu Buhari was in turn replaced in a bloodless coup two years later by the more genial and pragmatic General Ibrahim Babangida.

Babangida’s task was made more complex by the collapse of oil prices in early 1986. Oil earnings, which accounted over 97% of export revenue, were halved to $6.1bn in just one year.

Oil production started in the late 1950s, rising steadily tp apeak of 2.4m barrels a day at the start of 1980s. Agriculture was neglected and construction boomed as the oil money flowed in. Cocoa exports were halved, cotton and groundnut exports all but ceased and the public developed a taste for new imported foods. Foreign contractors lined up to build the oil refineries, steel works and vehicle assembly lines that were to ensure Nigeria’s industrial future.

By the mid-1980s Nigeria was saddled with foreign debt of $26bn with few of its investments in industry or infrastructure starting to pay their way. The Babangida government lost little time in introducing drastic policy changes. Inessential and many essential imports were banned, agricultural marketing was put into private hands, a foreign exchange auction system was introduced, resulting in a rapid devaluation of the overvalued naira, and an extensive programme of privatization was announced. The government’s econoic measures were generally in accordance with IMF recommendations although negotiations about conditional fund loans had broken down. The realtionship between Nigeria and its creditors has been a rocky one, but many foreign aid donors have been sympathetic to its aims and large loans from bodies like the World Bank havve helped ease the path to reform.

The new policies soon started to show results. Cash-crop exports revived, as did production of traditional food crops. Industry bore the brunt of recession and the constraints of inports, and was working at barely 30% of capacity in 1988. For the Nigerian in he street, economic adjustment has meant high unemployment, rising inflation and a general decline in living standarts.

With its economic reforms under way, the Babangida government is talking of a return to civilian ruke in 1992. To this end, it has set out a complex timetable of regional and legislatie elections, from which all former politicians have been excluded.