

Uganda



KEY FACTS

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|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Joined Commonwealth: | 1962 |
| Population: | 32,710,000 (2009) |
| GDP p.c. growth: | 3.6% p.a. 1990–2009 |
| UN HDI 2010: | world ranking 143 |
| Official languages: | English, Kiswahili |
| Time: | GMT plus 3hr |
| Currency: | Uganda shilling (USh) |

Geography

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|------------|---------------|
| Area: | 236,000 sq km |
| Coastline: | none |
| Capital: | Kampala |

Uganda is a landlocked East African country lying astride the equator. It is bordered (clockwise from north) by Sudan, Kenya, United Republic of Tanzania, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Area: 236,000 sq km including 36,330 sq km of inland water.

Main towns: Kampala (capital, pop. 1.56m in 2009), Gulu (208,300), Lira (174,600), Mukono (111,100), Jinja (101,600), Mbarara (94,000), Kasese (91,900), Mbale (84,200), Kitgum (83,200), Njeru (75,400), Arua (71,200), Masaka (70,300), Entebbe (70,100), Koboko (59,400), Kabale (58,300), Iganga (56,100), Tororo (55,400), Hoima (52,700) and Mityana (50,600).

Topography: Water, with swampland, covers nearly 20% of the surface area. The largest lakes include Lake George, Lake Kyoga, and parts of Lakes Victoria, Albert and Edward. From its source in Lake Victoria, the White Nile flows northwards through the country. Mountains include the high Rwenzori range in the west (Margherita Peak on Mount Stanley is 5,110m) and Mount Elgon (4,253m) in the east.

Climate: Equatorial, tempered with breezes and showers. Cooler in the higher areas. Heavy rain from March to May, and in October and November. Little rainfall in the north-east; though north-east parts of the country experienced unusually heavy rainfall in the latter part of 2007 with heavy flooding displacing tens of thousands of people.

Environment: The most significant issues are: draining of wetlands for agricultural use; overgrazing, soil erosion and deforestation; water hyacinth infestation in Lake Victoria; and poaching.

did you know?

Samuel Kavuma of Uganda was appointed to the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group in 2010; the group will make recommendations for reform in the Commonwealth, to be presented to Commonwealth leaders at CHOGM in Australia in October 2011.

Ugandans won the Commonwealth Essay Competition in 1989 and 2007.

Doreen Baingana was a regional winner in the Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 2006.

Dorcas Inzikuru took the Commonwealth Games Women's 3,000 Metres Steeplechase record in the Melbourne Games in 2006.

Vegetation: Much of the country, being so well-watered, is richly fertile; there is arid semi-desert in the north-east. Most of the country's vegetation is savannah with tropical forests in areas of high rainfall. Drought-resistant bush, grasses and succulents grow in the north-east. Forest covers 18% of the land area, having declined at 2.3% p.a. 2000–07. Arable land comprises 28% and permanent cropland 11% of the total land area.

Wildlife: Uganda has 7,200 sq km of national parks and game reserves, reflecting the extraordinary diversity of the country which comprises lakes, swamps, dense grassland, woodland, rolling plains, forests and mountains. There is a rich variety of wildlife, including elephants, Uganda kob, buffaloes, lions, rhinos, mountain gorillas and chimpanzees – 338 species of mammals and 830 species of birds.

Transport: Some 70,750km of roads radiate from Kampala, 23% of which are paved. The railway network extends over 260km. At the end of 1993, passenger services between Kampala and Kenya were resumed after a break of 15 years. Entebbe International Airport is 35km south-west of Kampala.

Society

KEY FACTS 2009

Population per sq km: 139
Life expectancy: 53 years
Net primary enrolment: 82%

Population: 32,710,000 (2009); 13% lives in urban areas and 5% in urban agglomerations of more than 1 million people; growth 3.6% p.a. 1990–2009; birth rate 46 per 1,000 people (49 in 1970); life expectancy 53 years (50 in 1970 and 48 in 1990). The rural population predominates, with most settlement concentrated around Lake Victoria.

The majority of the population consists of Bantu peoples (Baganda 17%, Banyankore 10%, Basoga 8%, Bakiga 7%, Bagisu 5%, Bunyoro 3%) in the west, south and east; and most of the rest of Nilotic peoples (Iteso 7%, Langi 6%, Acholi 5%, Lugbara 4%, Alur, Karimojong and Kakwa) in the north and parts of the east; with minorities of Asians and refugees from neighbouring countries (2002 census).

Language: The official languages are English and Kiswahili; Kiswahili and Luganda are widely spoken and there are several other African languages.

Religion: Mainly Christians (Roman Catholics 42%, Anglicans 36%, Pentecostals 5%), Muslims 12%, and most of the rest holding traditional beliefs, which often coexist with other religions (2002 census).

Media: English-language dailies include *The New Vision* (state-owned) and *Daily Monitor*; *The EastAfrican* and *The Observer* are published weekly.

Uganda Broadcasting Corporation operates public radio and TV services and, since liberalisation of the media in 1993, many private radio stations and TV channels have been launched.

Some 6% of households have TV sets (2007). There are 17 personal computers (2006) and 98 internet users (2009) per 1,000 people.

Education: Public spending on education was 3.2% of GDP in 2009. Education is not compulsory. There are seven years of primary education starting at age six, followed by six years of secondary, with cycles of four and two years. The government phased in free primary schooling from 1997 and free secondary from 2007. Some 32% of pupils complete primary school (2006). The school year starts in February.

Makerere University (1922) and Mbarara University of Science and Technology (1989) are the longest-established public universities. Kyambogo University (2003), Gulu University (2004) and Busitema University (2007) were founded in the 2000s. The principal private universities include Busoga University (1999), Islamic University in Uganda (1988), Kampala International University (2001), Uganda Christian University (1997) and Uganda Martyrs University (1993). The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 80:100 (2008). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 87% (2008).

Health: Trained medical assistants (many of whom practise privately) make up (to some extent) for the lack of doctors. Formal health facilities, which are adequate everywhere except in the north of the country, are mostly provided by non-governmental organisations. 67% of the population uses an improved drinking water source and 48% of people have access to adequate sanitation facilities (2009). Infant mortality was 79 per 1,000 live births in 2009 (133 in 1960).

The chief causes of death among adults are AIDS-related illnesses, tuberculosis, malaria and illnesses related to maternity; among children, malaria, pneumonia, diarrhoea. Uganda was the first African country openly to confront the menace of AIDS; the government runs a comprehensive information campaign directed at the general public. In 2009, 6.5% of people aged 15–49 were HIV positive.

Communications: Country code 256; internet domain '.ug'. There are public phones in most towns and mobile phone coverage extends to all main towns; internet cafes are found in most large towns.

There are 7 main telephone lines and 287 mobile phone subscriptions per 1,000 people (2009).

Public holidays: New Year's Day, Liberation Day (26 January), International Women's Day (8 March), Labour Day (1 May), Uganda Martyrs' Day (3 June), National Heroes' Day (9 June), Independence Day (9 October), Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

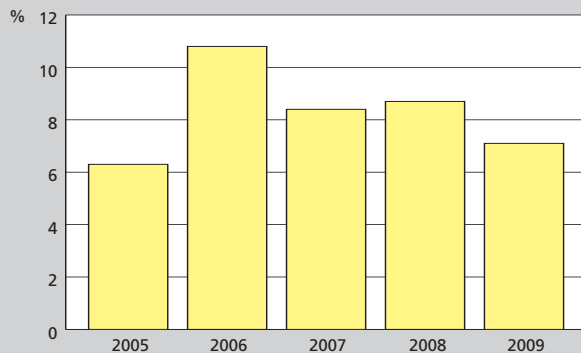
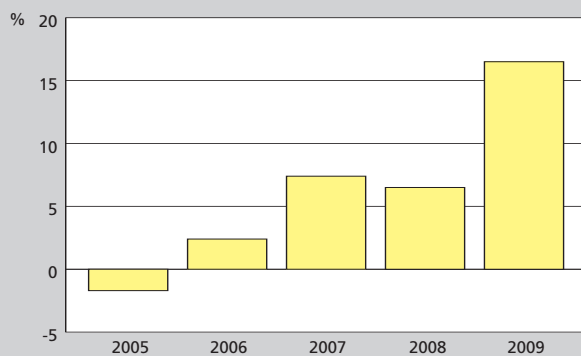
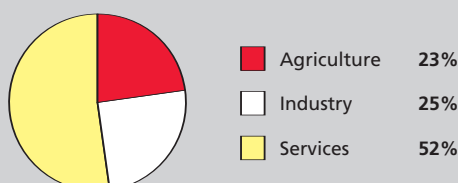
Religious festivals whose dates vary from year to year include Good Friday, Easter Monday, Eid al-Fitr (End of Ramadan) and Eid al-Adha (Feast of the Sacrifice).

Economy

KEY FACTS 2009

GNI: US\$15.2bn
GNI p.c.: US\$460
GDP growth: 8.2% p.a. 2005–09
Inflation: 6.0% p.a. 2005–09

Overview: During the years of civil war and instability, GDP declined dramatically, falling by 14.8% a year between 1978 and 1980, and the economy declined not only in size but also in sophistication. It grew by only 2.9% p.a. 1980–90, and by 1988 it had only recovered to close to 1972 levels.

Real Growth in GDP**Inflation****GDP by Sector (2009)**

When it came to power in 1986, the National Resistance Movement inherited a dreadful legacy. It embarked on a programme of structural adjustment and during the following decade the economy grew at an average 6.5% p.a. Tight fiscal and monetary discipline has been accompanied by trade liberalisation and a programme of privatisation. By 2004 about two-thirds of some 140 public enterprises had been transferred into private hands. Strong growth was achieved with relatively low inflation (in single figures from the early 1990s), greatly reduced budget deficits and a relatively stable exchange rate. Manufacturing output grew by 12.3% p.a. 1990–2004.

However, this economic performance has not been sufficiently broad-based to raise living standards and quality of life for the majority of the people, and by 2000 the government had refocused its policy on poverty eradication.

Uganda was the first country to qualify for and benefit from the IMF/World Bank Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (in April 1998) with debt relief of US\$700 million. In 2000, Uganda

qualified for further debt relief under the Enhanced HIPC Initiative, ensuring a further US\$1.3 billion reduction of its external debt.

Oil has been discovered in the basin of Lake Albert in the west of the country. By 2010 estimated reserves of 2.0bn barrels had been reported, confirming that Uganda was to become a significant oil-exporter in the early 2010s.

The economy continued to grow at generally more than 5% p.a. in the 2000s, more strongly from 2005: 10.8% in 2006, 8.4% in 2007 and 8.7% in 2008, in part due to strong agricultural production. In spite of the onset of the world economic downturn in 2008, and weakening demand for Uganda's exports, GDP growth remained vigorous in 2009 (7.1%), and moderated only slightly in 2010.

Trade: Exports of goods and services account for 16% of GDP (2008). Coffee is the most significant export, accounting for more than one-third of export revenue. Other important exports are fish and fish products (freshwater fish), gold, cotton, tobacco and tea.

Constitution

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Status: | Republic with executive president |
| Legislature: | Parliament |
| Independence: | 9 October 1962 |

The present constitution was promulgated in October 1995, completing a process begun in 1989. It provided that until 2000, elections were to be held under the 'movement system' (introduced in 1986), whereby candidates stand as individuals to be elected on personal merit, and not as members of a political party. The 'movement system' ended in 2005 when the people voted in a constitutional referendum in favour of introduction of a multiparty political system.

The constitution provides for a unitary republic, an executive president directly elected every five years by universal adult suffrage and Parliament which comprises 375 elected members, 238 directly elected every five years by universal adult suffrage and the rest elected from special interest groups by electoral colleges: women (112 members), the defence forces (10 members), youth (5), disabled people (5) and workers (5). The president appoints the cabinet. Since 2005 there has been no limit on the number of terms a president may serve.

Politics

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|----------------------------|--|
| Last elections: | February 2011 (presidential and parliamentary) |
| Next elections: | 2016 (presidential and parliamentary) |
| Head of state: | President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni |
| Head of government: | the president |
| Ruling party: | National Resistance Movement |

Elections under the 'movement system' (see 'Constitution') were held in May and June 1996 (presidential and parliamentary) and June 1998 (local government). Yoweri Kaguta Museveni was returned as president with 75% of the votes. The national assembly of 276 members, sitting as individuals (although many of them with known political affiliations), was formed in July 1996.



History

Uganda has a long history, but few records of early settlement, although the country seems to have been inhabited very early. Bantu peoples were engaged in agriculture from 1000 BC and working in iron can be traced back to about AD 1000.

In the fertile south and west, powerful social and political orders developed, including the Bunyoro, Buganda, Busoga, Ankole and Toro kingdoms. In the 17th and 18th centuries, they formed profitable links with the Sudanese slave trade (which dominated the regional economy) and formed alliances among themselves. By the 19th century, the Buganda Kingdom, which was allied to the powerful Shirazis of Zanzibar, gained the ascendancy. Buganda was ruled by *Kabaka* (traditional kings) whose power was circumscribed by a council of nobles. Buganda's standing army and well-developed agriculture allowed the kingdom to survive the decline of the slave trade.

Various Europeans appeared during the 19th century. English Protestant and French Catholic missionaries came at the request of Kabaka Mutesa I, and Baganda loyalties split into 'Franza', 'Inglesa' and Muslim parties. In 1888 the Imperial British East Africa Company set up in Buganda with the Kabaka's permission, and in 1894 Buganda was declared a British Protectorate. In 1896, protectorate control was extended to Bunyoro, Ankole and Toro, and the British extended Buganda's administrative system to these societies. Cotton-growing for export, by smallholders, began in 1904.

Although control of the country passed to the British Colonial Office in 1905, Uganda was never fully colonised, as non-Africans were not allowed to acquire freeholds. By 1913, with the completion of the Busoga Railway the cotton industry was well established, though it suffered from the First World War and the Great Depression of 1932–33. In the 1920s, commercial production of coffee and sugar began. After the Second World War, high prices of coffee and cotton brought an economic boom.

The gradual transfer of power to the local people began in 1921, when a legislative and an executive council were set up. By 1955, half the membership of the legislative council were Africans, a party political system was developing and the executive council was developed into a ministerial system. In 1961 a general election returned Benedicto Kiwanuka's Democratic Party. In 1962 Uganda became internally self-governing, with Kiwanuka as first prime minister. However, the general election of April 1962 returned Milton Obote's Uganda People's Congress (UPC).

Uganda became fully independent in October 1962 and joined the Commonwealth. The Kabaka of Buganda, Sir Edward Mutesa (Kabaka Mutesa II), became the first (non-executive) president in 1963.

Milton Obote abrogated the 1962 constitution in 1966 and in 1967 the country became a unitary republic. The kingdoms were abolished and the president became head of the executive as well as head of state. (The kingdoms were restored in 1993, and the 1995 constitution has a provision on traditional leaders.)

Obote remained in power until January 1971, when a military coup was staged by former paratroop sergeant Idi Amin Dada. At first very popular, Amin moved quickly into a brutal authoritarianism. Under his orders, the authorities expelled Uganda's Asian community in 1972 and seized their property; they expropriated the property of the Jewish community, and terrorised intellectuals, destroying such symbols of 'intellectual' status as possession of books, spectacles and chess sets. Public order rapidly deteriorated, and murder, destruction of property, looting and rape became hallmarks of the regime. Amin declared himself president-for-life and, in 1978, invaded the United Republic of Tanzania's northern territories. Tanzania, which had long opposed Amin's regime, took this for a declaration of war.

Supported by the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF, exiled Ugandans), the United Republic of Tanzania army marched into Uganda. Kampala was taken in April 1979, but Amin escaped and fled the country. Professor Yusuf Lule, a former Commonwealth Assistant Secretary-General and Chairman of UNLF, became president for two months, and was then replaced by Godfrey Binaisa who was himself replaced a year later in 1980 by a Military Commission led by Paulo Muwanga, which organised elections in December that year. Commonwealth and other observers were present.

The elections returned Dr Obote's UPC and were disputed. Obote was unable to restore economic and political stability to the devastated country, and the government became bogged down in fighting the National Resistance Army (NRA), led by Yoweri Museveni. The NRA had launched a protracted bush struggle in 1981 after accusing the government of rigging the 1980 elections.

Obote was overthrown by his own Uganda National Liberation Army in a coup led by General Tito Lutwa Okello in July 1985, who then became president. However, this did not satisfy the NRA and its allies.

The NRA occupied Kampala in January 1986. Okello's government was ousted and Museveni became president, with Dr Samson Kisekka as prime minister and a broad-based cabinet of civilians. Civil war continued in the north, and the first three years of the new regime were dogged by continuing instability in the region.

Museveni and the National Resistance Movement (NRM) took over a country in which conflict had resulted in 1 million deaths, 2 million refugees, more than 500,000 seriously injured people, and ruin of the economy and physical infrastructure.

The NRM governed the country through a National Resistance Council (NRC) which functioned as a parliament. After elections in 1989 based on universal adult suffrage, 8,096 village resistance councils were set up. Museveni sought democratic structures based on a non-party democracy, rather than a multiparty system, to avoid reviving the ethnic divisions which had so prolonged the civil war. Political party activities were suspended, though party structures were not made illegal.

In June 2000, as required by the constitution, a referendum was held on the movement system and 91% of voters supported its continuation; voter turnout was 47%.

In the presidential election in March 2001, Museveni took 69% of the votes to win a further five-year term. Though the result was decisive, the election had been vigorously contested between Museveni and a former National Resistance Movement (NRM) colleague, Dr Kizza Besigye (28%).

In the parliamentary elections in June 2001, more than 50 members were defeated – including ten cabinet ministers. There were allegations from one monitoring group that the NRM endorsed and campaigned on behalf of individual candidates.

Amid growing support for political pluralism, from within and without the NRM, a law enacted in June 2002 restricted party political activities to Kampala, barred civil servants and members of the security forces from joining parties other than NRM, and gave parties six months to register as a company, which the main parties immediately refused to do.

However, during 2003 Museveni publicly committed himself to the reintroduction of multiparty politics before the elections due in 2006, subject to a referendum in July 2005, in which, with the opposition calling for a boycott, fewer than 50% of voters turned out to vote overwhelmingly in favour.

In 2004 Museveni announced that he had retired from the army, while remaining army commander-in-chief. This opened the way for him to participate in multiparty politics. During 2005 the government proposed substantial change to the constitution including lifting the limit of two presidential terms. In November 2005 Museveni said he would stand in the 2006 election, and his main rival Besigye was charged with treason and terrorism and taken into custody. Besigye was then released on bail in January 2006 and held some political rallies.

In the first multiparty elections for 25 years, held in February 2006, Museveni (with 59.3% of the votes) defeated Besigye (37.4%) in a turnout of 69%. The ruling NRM also won the parliamentary elections, although several ministers from the previous administration lost their seats. The Commonwealth observer group present, led by former President of Botswana Sir Ketumile Masire, believed that the election had enabled the will of the people to be expressed and that the result reflected the wishes of those who were able to vote.

After 20 years of conflict along the country's northern border, abduction of more than 20,000 children and displacement of some two million people, a ceasefire between the Uganda Government and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) – a rebel group led by Joseph Kony – came into force on 29 August 2006. The truce opened the way for peace talks in Juba, Sudan, and mediated by the Government of Southern Sudan. With only intermittent minor skirmishes the ceasefire was maintained until June 2007, when the Uganda Government reached agreement with the LRA on a roadmap for long-term peace, reconciliation and accountability.

Museveni won the February 2011 presidential election with 68.4% of the votes cast and his main rival, Besigye, secured 26.0%. The concurrent parliamentary elections were won by the ruling NRM, with a total of 250 of the 375 seats in the enlarged Parliament. A

Commonwealth observer group led by Dame Billie Miller, the former deputy prime minister of Barbados, was present at the elections.

International relations

Uganda is a member of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, African Union, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, East African Community, Non-Aligned Movement, Organisation of the Islamic Conference, United Nations and World Trade Organization.

Uganda was a member, with Kenya and United Republic of Tanzania, of the East African Community, which from 1967 had a common market and many shared services but collapsed in 1977. The three countries again embarked on developing regional co-operation in 1993, bringing about progressive harmonisation of standards and policies across a wide range of activities, and launching a new East African Community in January 2001 and East African Customs Union in January 2005. The Community was enlarged in July 2007 when Burundi and Rwanda became members.

Uganda is also a member of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, which was established in 1986 by the six countries in the Horn of Africa to combat drought and desertification and promote food security in the region.

Traveller information

Local laws and conventions: Photographing airports or military installations is prohibited and commercial photographers should consult the Ministry of Information for a permit. Penalties for possession, use or trafficking of illegal drugs are severe, and convicted offenders can expect jail sentences and heavy fines.

Shaking hands is the usual form of greeting and casual dress is generally acceptable for most occasions. Ugandans operate a smart dress code for business. Business appointments must always be made, and English is widely used. Conference facilities are available in Kampala, which has an international conference centre. Office hours are Mon–Fri 0800–1300 and 1400–1700.

Immigration and customs: Passports must be valid for at least six months beyond the intended length of stay. Visas are required for visitors from all countries except Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Burundi, Comoros, Cyprus, Eritrea, Fiji, The Gambia, Grenada, Ireland, Italy (diplomatic passport holders only), Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Malta, Mauritius, Rwanda, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tonga, Vanuatu, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Visitors should keep a copy of the relevant pages of their passport and visa on them at all times, while storing the originals in a safe place.

A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required by all those arriving from infected areas.

A special permit is needed to export game trophies.

Travel within the country: Traffic drives on the left and visitors will need an international driving permit. National speed limits are 100kph on highways and 80kph elsewhere. Car hire is available in

Kampala, though those without experience of driving in the country are advised to organise a vehicle with a driver.

Bus services run throughout Uganda; visitors can also use the Post Bus, which is run by the Ugandan Post Office and is recommended when travelling between towns in Uganda.

In urban areas, there is an extensive network of *Matatas*, or minibuses, which are a quick and convenient method of transport. Taxis, identifiable by their black and white stripes, are widely available but are more expensive.

Travel health: Visitors should ensure they have comprehensive health insurance which includes air evacuation in case of serious accident or illness.

Visitors will need protection against malaria, which is widespread, as well as insect repellent and suitable clothing to protect against mosquito bites.

Water should be boiled or sterilised before use.

Money: The local currency is the Uganda shilling (USh). Foreign currency can be exchanged at banks and exchange bureaux. Credit cards and travellers cheques are not widely accepted outside of Kampala. The US dollar is traditionally the hard currency of preference, but euros and pounds sterling can also be used. Banking hours are Mon–Fri 0830–1400 and Sat 0900–1200.

There were 844,000 tourist arrivals in 2008.

Further information

My Uganda Portal: www.myuganda.co.ug

Commonwealth Secretariat: www.thecommonwealth.org

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