



## Mauritania

Basic Data in a nutshell	
Area	1,030,700 sq km
Coastline	754 km
Administrative division	12 regions and 1 capital district
Capital	Nouakchott
Population / habitat density	3,270,065 = 3 habitants / sq km
Population growth rate	2.867%
Languages	Arabic (official), Pulaar, Soninke, French, Hassaniya, Wolof
Economy	<u>Agriculture products:</u> dates, millet, sorghum, rice, corn; cattle, sheep <u>Industries:</u> fish processing, mining of iron ore and gypsum
Terrain	mostly barren, flat plains of the Sahara; some central hills
Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desert climate across northern three-fourths of country with diurnal extremes in temperatures and meager and irregular rainfall</li> <li>- During rainy season (July to September), average rainfall in far south 400 to 600 millimeters; in northern two-thirds, 0 to 100 millimeters</li> <li>- Desert winds throughout year cause frequent sandstorms</li> </ul>
Natural Resources	iron ore, gypsum, copper, phosphate, diamonds, gold, oil, fish
No Biodiversity hotspot (according to Conservation International)	
Read more:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CIA World Factbook: <a href="https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/">https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/</a></li> <li>- Human Development Reports: <a href="http://www.undp.org">www.undp.org</a></li> <li>- Library of Congress/Country Study of Mauritania: <a href="http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/mrtoc.html">http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/mrtoc.html</a></li> </ul>	



(Source: CIA World Factbook)

(Sources: CIA World Factbook; Library of Congress, Washington/USA)



Selected indicators of development status	
HDI *)	0.550 (rank 137 of 177)
Life expectancy at birth	<i>male</i> : 51.24 years <i>female</i> : 55.85 years
GDP per capita (UNDP, 2005)	2,234 US\$/year
GDP composition by sector	<p>46,00% 25,00% 29,00%</p> <p>■ agriculture ■ industry □ services</p>
Infant mortality	68.07 deaths/1,000 live births
Adult literacy rate (15 years and older)	51.2%
Population using an improved water source 1990/2004	38% / 53%
Children underweight for age (under age 5)	32%
Population below poverty line (2 US\$/day)	63.1%
Gini-Index for income distribution **)	0.39
Official Development Assistance (ODA) received	
Total amount / per capita (UNDP, 2005)	190,400,000 US\$ / 62 US\$
% of ODA in GDP 1990/2005	23.2% / 10.3%
Read more:	
- Human Development Reports: <a href="http://www.undp.org">www.undp.org</a>	
- UNDP Statistics for Mauritania: <a href="http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_MRT.html">http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_MRT.html</a>	

(Sources: UNDP Human Development Report 2007; CIA World Factbook)

\*) The Human Development Index (HDI) is a comparative index of social development status. The HDI is calculated on the basis of life expectancy, the literacy rate and real purchasing power per capita. The HDI is expressed as a value between 1 (high) and 0 (low)

\*\*\*) The Gini coefficient is a measure of personal income distribution within a country or region. It is expressed as a value between 0 (distribution fully equitable) and 1 (distribution fully inequitable)



## Biological Diversity is ...

...the diversity of ecosystems:

Ecological Zones of Mauritania:

- Saharan Zone: the northern two-thirds of the country, little vegetation, cultivation is limited to oases
  - Sahelian Zone: south of the Saharan Zone to within approximately thirty kilometers of the Senegal River, made up of steppes and savanna grasslands
  - Senegal River Valley (Chemama): a narrow belt of land that extends north of the Senegal River, comparatively abundant in flora, rainfall, combined with annual flooding of the river, provides the basis for agriculture
  - Coastal Zone / mudflat
- forest area (2005): 2,700 sq km (0.26% of the national area)
- 0% of the total land area was naturally forested
- Sand covers 40 percent of the surface of the country

...the diversity between and within species:

- 1,100 species of higher plants
  - 61 species of mammals
  - 172 species of birds
  - Habitat of endangered turtles and hatchery for about 1,000 species of fish
- One of the world's most productive marine areas owing to the upwelling cold and nutritious water as an interaction of Canary stream, trade winds and tropical sunshine
- Meager vegetation in a large part of the country because of low rainfall
- importance of the watt area for the migration of birds

## Efforts to protect Mauritanian biodiversity:

- 4 protected areas (2003) which cover 0.2% of the total land area
- X% of total land area (X sq km) are strictly protected (according to IUCN categories I and II)
- 2 Ramsar Sites (Banc d'Arguin, Chat Tboul), 1 biosphere reserves (Delta du Fleuve Sénégal) and 2 UNESCO World Heritage Sites (i.a. Banc d'Arguin National Park)

# Go 4 BioDiv

International  
Youth Summit 2008



ONE NATURE · ONE WORLD · OUR FUTURE  
COP 9 MOP 4 Bonn Germany 2008

## Read more:

- Global Environmental Outlook of the UNEP (GEO-4): [http://www.unep.org/geo/geo4/report/GEO-4\\_Report\\_Full\\_en.pdf](http://www.unep.org/geo/geo4/report/GEO-4_Report_Full_en.pdf)
- National Clearing House Mechanism (CHM): <http://bch-cbd.naturalsciences.be/mauritania/mr-eng/Default.htm>
- Biodiversity in German Development Cooperation: [www.gtz.de/biodiversity](http://www.gtz.de/biodiversity)
- WWF in Mauritania: [http://www.panda.org/about\\_wwf/where\\_we\\_work/africa/where/mauritania/index.cfm](http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/where_we_work/africa/where/mauritania/index.cfm)
- Earthtrends Country Profiles: [http://earthtrends.wri.org/country\\_profiles/](http://earthtrends.wri.org/country_profiles/)
- UNESCO World Heritage List: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>
- UNESCO Man and Biosphere: <http://www.unesco.org/mab/>
- Ramsar Sites: <http://www.ramsar.org/sitelist.pdf>
- Karl P. Kirsch-Jung und Urff, Winfried von (2008): Traditionelles und Modernes Recht für Naturschutz und Entwicklung – Staat, Viehzüchter und Fischer gestalten gemeinsam Nutzungsrechte.

(Sources: Biodiversity Hotspots of Conservation International, CBD Country Profiles, World Resources Institute – Earthtrends, UNDP 2005)

## Mauritania's current environmental challenges are:

overgrazing, deforestation, and soil erosion aggravated by drought are contributing to **desertification**

denuding of ground cover around wells

poor farming methods, expanding of agriculture to fragile regions

overpopulation

extraction of charcoal

withdrawal of water for infrastructure projects (e.g. construction of streets)

very limited natural fresh water resources away from the Senegal, which is the only perennial river

locust infestation

(Sources: CIA World Factbook; CBD Country Profiles)



## Cultural diversity in Mauritania is based on...

...different ethnic groups:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Haratin 40%</li> <li>- arabic-berberic Moors 30% (the "Whites")</li> <li>- black 30% (Soninke, Halpoular (Fulbe), Wolof, Sarakole and Bambara)</li> </ul>
...different religions:	Muslim 100%
<p>Read more:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Library of Congress/Country Study of Mauritania: <a href="http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/mrtoc.html">http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/mrtoc.html</a></li> </ul>	

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<b>Ecological Footprint</b>	1.3 global ha/person
<b>Biocapacity</b>	5.8 global ha/person

Within the global comparison, Mauritania ranges on place no. 47 - see bar chart:  
[http://globalis.gvu.unu.edu/indicator\\_detail.cfm?country=MR&indicatorid=13](http://globalis.gvu.unu.edu/indicator_detail.cfm?country=MR&indicatorid=13)

(Source: [www.footprintnetwork.org](http://www.footprintnetwork.org))