



## Venezuela

| Basic Data in a nutshell  |   |
|---|---|
| Area  | 912,050 sq km   |
| Coastline   | 2,800 km  |
| Administrative division   | 23 states (estados), 1 capital district (distrito capital), and 1 federal dependency (dependencia federal)  |
| Capital   | Caracas   |
| Population / habitat density  | 26,023,528 = 28,5 habitants / sq km   |
| Population growth rate  | 1.486%  |
| Languages   | Spanish (official), numerous indigenous dialects  |
| Economy   | <u>Agriculture products:</u> corn, sorghum, sugarcane, rice, bananas, vegetables, coffee; beef, pork, milk, eggs; fish<br><u>Industries:</u> petroleum, construction materials, food processing, textiles; iron ore mining, steel, aluminum; motor vehicle assembly |
| Terrain   | Andes Mountains and Maracaibo Lowlands in northwest; central plains (llanos); Guiana Highlands in southeast   |
| Climate   | - tropical hot, humid; more moderate in highlands<br>- two distinct seasons: rainy (June–October) and dry (November–May)  |
| Natural Resources   | petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, gold, bauxite, other minerals, hydropower, diamonds   |
| Biodiversity hotspot (according to Conservation International)  | Tropical Andes  |
| Read more:  |   |
| - CIA World Factbook: <a href="https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/">https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/</a> |   |
| - Human Development Reports: <a href="http://www.undp.org">www.undp.org</a>   |   |
| - Library of Congress/Country Study of Venezuela: <a href="http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/vetoc.html">http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/vetoc.html</a>               |   |



(Source: CIA World Factbook)



(Sources: CIA World Factbook; Biodiversity hotspots of Conservation International; Library of Congress, Washington/USA)



| Selected indicators of development status  |   |
|--|---|
| HDI *)   | 0.792 (rank 74 of 177)  |
| Life expectancy at birth   | <i>male</i> : 70.24 years<br><i>female</i> : 76.48 years              |
| GDP per capita (UNDP, 2005)  | 6,632 US\$/year   |
| GDP composition by sector  | <p>56,50% 3,50% 40,00%</p> <p>■ agriculture ■ industry □ services</p> |
| Infant mortality   | 22.52 deaths/1,000 live births  |
| Adult literacy rate (15 years and older)   | 93.0%   |
| Population using an improved water source 1990/2004  | 83% (2004, no data available for 1990)                                |
| Children underweight for age (under age 5)   | 5%  |
| Population below poverty line (2 US\$/day)   | 40.1%   |
| Gini-Index for income distribution **)   | 0.482   |
| Official Development Assistance (ODA) received   |   |
| Total amount / per capita (UNDP, 2005)   | 48,700,000 US\$ / 1.8 US\$  |
| % of ODA in GDP 1990/2005  | 0.2% (1990, no data available for 2005)                               |
| Read more:   |   |
| - Human Development Reports: <a href="http://www.undp.org">www.undp.org</a>  |   |
| - UNDP Statistics for Venezuela: <a href="http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_VEN.html">http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_VEN.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 in Venezuela is ...

...the diversity of ecosystems:

Geographical Regions of Venezuela:

- Maritime region: desert landscapes and mangroves make up the 311 islands, keys, and islets bordering the Caribbean and Atlantic Coast
- Coastal mountain range: dominated by forests
- Maracaibo lowlands in the northwest: remarkably flat with only a gentle slope toward the centre and away from the mountains that border the region; Lago de Maracaibo occupies much of the lower-lying territory
- Andes cordillera in the west: characterized by páramo vegetation
- central Orinoco plains (llanos): the area slopes gradually away from the highland areas that surround it; elevations in the llanos never exceed 200 meters
- Guiana highlands in southeast: One of the oldest land forms in South America and composed of savannahs, gallery forests, palm dominated wetlands; consist primarily of plateau areas scored by swiftly running tributaries of the Orinoco; the most conspicuous topographical feature of the region is the Gran Sabana, a large, deeply eroded high plateau; above the rolling surface of this massive, flat-topped bluffs emerge (= tepuis) → the most famous tepui contains Angel Falls (Salto del Angel = 965m), the world's highest waterfall

Regions of Venezuela according to the National Report:

Marine Region – Insular Region – Continental coastal Region – Depression of Lake Maracaibo – Lara-Falcón Hill System – Cordillera of the coast – Cordillera of the central coast – Cordillera of the eastern coast – the Andes – Mérida Cordillera – The Plains – The Deltaic Plain of the Orinoco River and Swampy Coastal of the San Juan River – The Casiquiare Peneplain of the High Orinoco – The Guiana Massif Mountains

- forest area (2005): 477,100 sq km (52.31% of the national area)
- 75% of the total land area were naturally covered by forests

...the diversity between and within species:

- 650 vegetation types with 15,000 superior plant species approximately
  - 332 reptile, 113 amphibian, 1,183 fish (exceeding in number all known in North America), 1,348 bird, 100,000 insect species and 328 mammal species
  - 23% of the flora is endemic
  - The spectacular table-mountains - the tepuis - offer unique habitats and are home to many endemic plants and animals, due to their geographical isolation over long periods of time
- ranks among the top 10 of the world's most ecologically diverse countries; this condition of a megadiverse country arises largely from the convergence of four important biogeographical regions such as the Amazonian, the Andean, the Caribbean, and the Guianese Shield



### Efforts to protect Venezuelan biodiversity:

- 216 protected areas (2003) which cover 70.3% of the total land area → although this is an extremely high percentage, it must be pointed out that part of the venezuelan ABRAE (areas under special administration schemes) serve as forest and plantation areas, as hydrological reserves or agricultural production zones)
- 13.7% of total land area (124,620 sq km) are strictly protected (according to IUCN categories I and II)
- The national park system is composed by 43 national parks and 21 natural monuments; the National Parks Institute (INPARQUES) is in charge of the management and administration of these protected areas
- 5 Ramsar Sites (Archipiélago Los Roques, Ciénaga de Los Olivitos, Cuare, Laguna de la Restinga, Laguna de Tacarigua), 1 biosphere reserve (Alto Orinoco-Casiquiare) and 3 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, one of which is a natural site: Canaima National Park, featuring the “tepuí” table mountains.

#### Read more:

- biodiversity hotspots: <http://www.biodiversityhotspots.org/xp/hotspots/Pages/default.aspx>
- 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)
- Ministerio del Ambiente y de los Recursos Naturales Renovables (MARNR): <http://www.marnr.gov.ve/>
- Instituto Nacional de Parques INPARQUE: <http://www.inparques.gob.ve/>
- First National Report on the CBD (2000): <http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/ve/ve-nr-01-es.pdf>
- National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan NBSAB (2001): <http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/ve/ve-nbsap-01-es.pdf>
- Statistic of venezuelan forests: [http://www.unep-wcmc.org/forest/data/country/ven\\_stats.htm](http://www.unep-wcmc.org/forest/data/country/ven_stats.htm)
- The Venezuelan EcoPortal: <http://ecoportal1.tripod.com/parks.htm>
- Parkswatch Venezuela: <http://www.parkswatch.org/main.php?l=eng&p=country&p2=ven>
- Biodiversity in German Development Cooperation: [www.gtz.de/biodiversity](http://www.gtz.de/biodiversity)
- 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>

(Sources: Biodiversity hotspots of Conservation International; CBD Country Profiles; World Resources Institute – Earthtrends; UNDP 2005; Library of Congress, Washington/USA; First National Report of Venezuela to the CBD; Parkswatch Venezuela)

### Venezuelas' current environmental challenges are:

- Deforestation, soil degradation
- urban and industrial pollution, especially along the Caribbean coast
- sewage pollution into Lago de Valencia
- oil and urban pollution of Lago de Maracaibo
- irresponsible mining operations that endanger the rain-forest ecosystem and indigenous peoples
- the State imposes a development model that particularly affects areas of high fragility and ecological value

(Sources: CIA World Factbook; CBD Country Profiles; Library of Congress, Washington/USA; WWF in Venezuela)



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

|  |  |
|--|--|
| ...different ethnic groups:  | Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Arab, German, African, indigenous people<br><br>→ 30 ethnic groups of indigenous people reaching 315,000 individuals (1992 Census) distributed mainly in Zulia State, Amazonas State, Bolívar State and Anzoátegui State |
| ...different religions:  | - Roman Catholic 96%<br>- Protestant 2%<br>- other 2%  |
| Read more:<br>- Library of Congress/Country Study of Venezuela: <a href="http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/vetoc.html">http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/vetoc.html</a><br>- First National Report to the CBD: <a href="http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/ve/ve-nr-01-es.pdf">http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/ve/ve-nr-01-es.pdf</a> |  |

(Sources: CIA World Factbook; First National Report of Venezuela to the CBD)

|                             |                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Ecological Footprint</b> | 2,2 global ha/person |
| <b>Biocapacity</b>          | 2,4 global ha/person |

Within the global comparison, Venezuela ranges on place no. 34 - see bar chart, [http://globalis.gvu.unu.edu/indicator\\_detail.cfm?country=VE&indicatorid=13](http://globalis.gvu.unu.edu/indicator_detail.cfm?country=VE&indicatorid=13)

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