Republic of Botswana

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1. Geography and Demography

- a country located in Southern Africa
- is bordered by Zimbabwe (east), Namibia (west), Angola (north-west), Zambia (north-east) and South Africa (south)
is the world's 47th-largest country (600,370 km²)

about 1.5 million inhabitants (called „Batswana“)
capital = Gaborone
80 % of Botswana's land is desert or semi-desert
Okavango Delta = premier tourist area of Botswana because of its many species of wild animals
• east is densely populated in comparison to the west and the centre of the country

• Okavango River = principal river in Botswana

• has a sub-tropical dry continental climate
2. Politics

• the President of Botswana combines two political responsibilities: head of state and head of government (Ian Khama)
• Sir Seretse Khama = first President
• since independence: the party system has been dominated by the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP)
• is formally a multiparty constitutional democracy
• two main rival parties and a number of smaller parties
• general elections are held at least every 5 years
3. Ethnic groups

- 83 ethnic groups
- Tswana = the most famous and important ethnic group and the largest of the ethnic groups
- Khoisan people = speak languages like Khwe, Khoe and San and live on basic agriculture or farming
• life expectation = 63 years for men and 67 years for women
  → latest data shows a dramatically change
  → now: 38 years for men and 40 years for women (because of the high rate of HIV/AIDS infected people (about 25% of the population))
4. Economy

- Botswana Economy bases itself chiefly on the agricultural industry (more than 80% of the population)
- since the independence of Botswana in the year 1966: country has set new standards -> highest average growth rate in the economic sector
- currency of Botswana = Pula
- export commodities: diamonds, nickel, copper, soda ash, textiles and meat
5. Religion

- is predominantly a Christian country
- pioneer David Livingstone -> brings the religion of Botswana to Christianity
- other religions: Islam and Hinduism
- various religious places in Botswana attract local people as well as various tourists from all over the world
• Botswana religion teaches people to treat all people equally
• religion of Botswana also helps in developing a fellow feeling among the people
6. Education

- education system is divided into primary school education and secondary school education
  - 79% primary schools
  - 16% secondary schools
  - 4% teacher training colleges or schools for vocational training
- 1 university
- has much less illiterates than other African countries
7. Culture and Society

- rich tradition of art and music
- music is mostly vocal and performed without drums
- uniqueness in the food preparation of the Botswana's people
  → traditional foods of Botswana: Morama and Mopane worm
8. History

- Botswana was attacked by the Zulu in the 1820s and later that century (1870s and 1880s) by Boers from Transvaal.
- Hostilities broke out between the Shona inhabitants and the new imigrated people.
- In 1885 Britain established Botswana as a protectorate and gave it the name „Bechuanaland“.
• From now on the Northern territory was under direct administration (Botswana) and the southern area became part of the Cape Colony (part of South Africa)

• In 1910 the *Union of South Africa* was formed, but Botswana was excluded

• In 1920 two advisory councils were formed: One represented the Africans, the other the Europeans

• In 1948 apartheid was instituted

• Proclamations in 1934 regularized tribal rules and power
• In June 1964 Botswana demanded democratic self-government and Britain agreed
• The seat of government was moved from South Africa to Botswana in 1965
• The first general election took place in 1966 and Botswana became independent on 30th September 1966
• Seretse Khama became the first president of Botswana
9. Language

• 29 individual languages are spoken in Botswana
• The most important languages are English as the official language and Setswana as the national language
• Also important are the Bantu languages Ikalanga, Shekgalagadi, the Khoesan languages, especially Naro and the Non-African language Afrikaans
The Bantu Languages

Setswana (or Tswana)

- is also spoken in South Africa
- is used by about 95% of the population (75%-80% as first language, 15% as a second language)
- is very important for interethnic communication
- functions as a lingua franca because it also spoken in other African countries
• There are many different dialects of the language
  → nevertheless there is no official standard
  → Cole divides the Setswana dialect in four main groups: Central, Southern, Northern and Western Tswana dialects
Ikalanga

- People that speak Ikalanga consider themselves as Bakalanga
- The Bakalanga are probably the largest minority group in Botswana with about 11%
Shekgalagadi

- Shekgalagadi speakers are widely dispersed in Botswana
- Shekgalagadi is as well as the other languages a minority language and it has a low status
Languages of the Khoesan groups

- In all African countries there are about 30-35 Khoesan languages, which are closely related to each other
- All of them are characterized by their click sounds
Non African languages

English

- English was brought to Botswana by the British colonial power
- English became the official administrative language
  → People from Botswana had to learn the colonial language in order to follow new orders and rules
• Nevertheless English had only little impact on the national languages
  → English became a important part of the Curriculum, but the lessons were still held
    in Setswana
• In 1966 English became the official language
  → now more than 85% of the children learned English in school
• Today there are about 62,000 English speakers in Botswana

• English has a high official status
  → all official documents are written in English

• it is used to talk to foreigners and the language which is used in the media

• Most books (schoolbooks, poetry, etc.) are written in English, although they are still available in Setswana

• It is a language of high prestige and the one that is used by higher social classes
Afrikaans

- Afrikaans is brought into the country via people that settled in Botswana
- About 0.02% of the people in Botswana speak Afrikaans
The approximate distribution of languages and dialects in Botswana (Smieja 2003, p. 53)
10. Sources


Smierja, Birgit: Language Pluralism in Botswana Hope or Hurdle? Frankfurt am Main 2003.