



# MALI



**Background:** The Sudanese Republic and Senegal became independent of France in 1960 as the Mali Federation. When Senegal withdrew after only a few months, what formerly made up the Sudanese Republic was renamed Mali. Rule by dictatorship was brought to a close in 1991 with a transitional government and in 1992 when Mali's first democratic presidential election was held. After his reelection in 1997, President Alpha KONARE continued to push through political and economic reforms and to fight corruption. In keeping with Mali's two-term constitutional limit, he stepped down in 2002 and was succeeded by Amadou TOURE.

**Area:** total: 1.24 million sq km (slightly less than twice the size of Texas)

**Climate:** subtropical to arid; hot and dry February to June; rainy, humid, and mild June to November; cool and dry November to February

For more about Malian music and cultural events in the UK visit [www.friendsofmali-uk.org](http://www.friendsofmali-uk.org)

**Population:** 11,626,219 (July 2003 est.)  
**Life expectancy at birth:** 45.43 years  
**HIV/AIDS:** 1.7% (2001 est.)

**Languages:** French (official), Bambara 80%, numerous African languages

**GDP - per capita:** \$900 (2002 est.)  
**Population below poverty line:** 64% average; 30% of the total population living in urban areas; 70% of the total population living in rural areas (2001 est.)

**Economy - overview:** Mali is among the poorest countries in the world, with 65% of its land area desert or semi desert and with a highly unequal distribution of income. Economic activity is largely confined to the riverine area irrigated by the Niger. About 10% of the population is nomadic and some 80% of the labour force is engaged in farming and fishing. Industrial activity is concentrated on processing farm commodities. Mali is heavily dependent on foreign aid and vulnerable to fluctuations in world prices for cotton, its main export, along with gold. The government has continued its successful implementation of an IMF-recommended structural adjustment program that is helping the economy grow, diversify, and attract foreign investment. Mali's adherence to economic reform and the 50% devaluation of the African franc in January 1994 have pushed up economic growth to a sturdy 5% average in 1996-2002. Worker remittances and external trade routes have been jeopardized by continued unrest in neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire.