

SENEGAL OVERVIEW

DOMESTIC SITUATION

Since achieving independence in August, 1960 Senegal has experienced remarkable social and political stability. A presidential and democratic regime was consolidated by the first President, Leopold Sedar Senghor. When he left in 1981 the current President, Abdou Diouf, then Prime Minister, succeeded him. He was confirmed in his position by the elections of February 1983, triumphing over several other candidates in winning 85% of the votes.

The government has extensive popular support. The regime also derives stability from the absence of tribal rivalries and its tradition of neutrality. Freedom of association and speech still exist in Senegal. The 1983-84 insurrection of "Casamance Separatists" has been resolved, and last April 4 the President pardoned some of those detained as a result of the confrontations. This was interpreted as a gesture of appeasement and reconciliation with the former region of Casamance. With the new territorial reorganization it will be possible to better distribute resources among the 10 administrative regions.

ECONOMIC SITUATION

Senegal is a coastal Sahelian country, with a 1984 per capita GNP of US \$380. Annual economic growth of 3.8% slightly exceeded its 2.8% yearly population growth in 1984. Principal exports include fish, refined petroleum products, cotton and peanut products. Imports (US \$1 billion, 1983) are twice the value of exports and include crude oil, machinery and cereal (mainly rice). Trade financing is eased by the direct convertibility between its currency (CFA) and that of its largest trading partner, France. Three quarters of its 6.6 million people are engaged in agriculture but produce only one quarter of GDP. Industrial employment is small, but the sector is larger than those of other Sahelian countries and accounts for another quarter of the GDP, concentrating on petroleum refining and cotton processing. Services account for the remainder of GDP.