

REPUBLIC OF ARGENTINA

THE COUNTRY

GEOGRAPHY AND POPULATION

Argentina covers 2.8 million kilometres in the Southern Cone of South America. It is the second largest country in South America and the eighth largest in the world. The country's topography is highly varied, ranging from plains and lowlands in the center and east, foothills rising to mountains from the center to the west, and a semi-arid zone in the south. The majority of the country lies in the temperate zone, although there is a significant sub-tropical area in the extreme north.

Census data from 1991 shows a total population of 32.6 million, 86 percent of whom live in urban areas. The country's largest city is the capital of Buenos Aires, with a metropolitan area of 11 million. Other major cities include Córdoba with 1.2 million inhabitants and Rosario with one million.

Education has always been given a high priority by Argentine society, as revealed in a literacy rate of 95.3 percent. Total enrolment in primary and secondary education represents 96 percent of the cohort age group. There are 29.1 scientists and technicians per 1000 persons and 370 inhabitants for each physician.

HISTORICAL ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

1. From 1870 to 1930, Argentina developed in a climate of political stability under the democratic rule of its Constitution of 1853.

Although Argentina did not actively participate in the world order, it successfully developed within the international framework of that era by utilizing the opportunities for trade and advantageously channeling the international capital that entered the local market. Major investments were made in the areas of infrastructure (railroads and ports) and agriculture. The government strongly promoted investment in infrastructure, education, health and the judicial system but its involvement in productive activities was almost negligible.