

## **Republic of Tunisia**

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|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Date of Independence:                    | March 20, 1956                                                                                                                                                          |
| Capital:                                 | Tunis                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Population:                              | 6,843,000 (1983)                                                                                                                                                        |
| Head of State and President<br>for Life: | His Excellency Habib<br>Bourguiba                                                                                                                                       |
| Prime Minister:                          | His Excellency Mohamed<br>Mzali                                                                                                                                         |
| Economy:                                 | Based primarily on agricul-<br>ture, with exports of crude<br>petroleum, olive oil, phos-<br>phates and wine. Tourism is<br>also a major source of foreign<br>exchange. |

**Canada/Tunisia Relations:** Canada opened its first North African embassy in Tunis in 1966, though diplomatic relations had been established with Tunisia in 1957. Tunisia's membership in the Arab community, its participation in the institutions of La Francophonie and the historic interest of its territory have promoted the development of ties with Canada. President Bourguiba has visited to Canada twice, in 1961 and in 1968. Tunisia has been one of Canada's most important partners in Africa, with co-operation activities focussed on the construction of a dam and the development of the medical, rural and human resource sectors. Canada has a surplus trade balance with Tunisia, owing primarily to sulphur exports. Total annual trade exceeds \$100 million. The Bilateral Commission, which meets regularly, held its last session in Ottawa in October 1985.

**His Excellency Habib Bourguiba:** Born in 1903. Obtained a degree in law and political science. Co-founder of the Neo-Destour Party, which was later renamed the Destourian Socialist Party. After the country gained independence, he became President of the National Assembly, President of the Destourian Socialist Party and has been, since November 1957, the first elected President of the Republic and the Head of Government. The constitution was altered in 1975 to appoint him President for Life.