
Benin

Date of Independence:
August 1, 1960

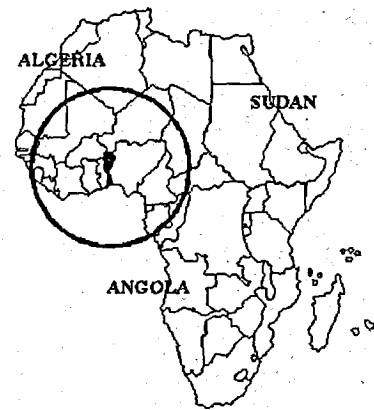
Capitals: Porto Novo (official)
Cotonou (administrative)

Population: 4.8 million

Head of State and Government:
His Excellency Nicéphore Soglo

Foreign Minister: Théodore Holo

Economy: Essentially an agricultural country that obtains most of its income from tax revenues derived from trade with Nigeria.



Canada-Benin Relations: Relations between Canada and Benin are good. Before he became President, Nicéphore Soglo visited Canada in May 1987 and November 1990. The Honourable Monique Vézina, Minister of External Relations, visited Benin in May 1993. Our relations with Benin are geared primarily to co-operation and support for the democratization process. Trade between the two countries is limited.

Canadian Aid: Canada has just signed agreements for two projects, one in the area of community health and the other for the development of a co-operative network. They are valued at \$7 million for the next four years. In 1991-92, bilateral assistance stood at \$500 000.

Political Authorities: His Excellency Nicéphore Soglo, President: Born in 1934, he spent his career in domestic and international financial institutions. He was Minister of Economics and Finance in 1978 and an executive member of the World Bank from 1979 to 1988. He was appointed Prime Minister by the National Conference of Benin in 1990, and was elected President of the Republic in democratic elections in March 1991.

Théodore Holo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation: Born in 1948. Trained in the law. Professor at l'École nationale d'Administration and the Faculté des sciences juridiques, économiques et politiques du Bénin (FASJEP). During the transition period (1990-1991) Mr. Holo was Assistant Secretary-General of the Haut conseil de la République and a member of the Constitutional Commission. Minister of Foreign Affairs since July 29, 1991.

Bulgaria

Last Legislative Elections:
October 13, 1991

Capital: Sofia

Population: 8.9 million

Head of State: Zhelyu Zhelev

Head of Government:
Lyuben Berov

Foreign Minister:
Stanislav Daskalov



Canada-Bulgaria Relations: Relations are good, although limited. The country's serious economic difficulties are detrimental to bilateral trade relations. Bulgaria is making the transition from socialism to democracy and a market economy with difficulty. A modest program of support for the creation of Bulgarian-Canadian co-ventures has been in place since the fall of 1992.

Political Authorities: Zhelyu Zhelev, President: Born in 1935. He studied philosophy. Mr. Zhelev was one of the founders of the club to support "glasnost" and "perestroika," and has presided over the Union of Democratic Forces since July 1990.

Stanislav Daskalov, Minister of Foreign Affairs: He is an economist who was formerly adviser in the finance ministry.