

## E-10 1<sup>st</sup> TERM COUNTRY PROFILES

### BURKINO FASO

#### General Information

<i>Official Name:</i>	Republic of Upper Volta
<i>Capital:</i>	Ouagadougou
<i>Population:</i>	15,264,735
<i>Major Languages:</i>	French
<i>Major Religions:</i>	Muslim and Indigenous Belief
<i>Regional/Economic Organizational Membership:</i>	ACCT, ACP, AfDB, AU, ECOWAS, Entente, FAO, FZ, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC, ICCT, ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, ILO, IMF, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO, ITSO, ITU, ITUC, MIGA, NAM, OIC, OIF, OPCW, PCA, UN, UNSC, UNAMID, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNITAR, UNMIS, UNOCI, UNWTO, UPU, WADB, WAEMU, WCL, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, and the WTO, etc.

#### Governmental System

Burkina Faso's government is a hybrid of democracy and parliamentary. Burkina Faso gained independence from France on August 5, 1960. Their constitution was created on June 2, 1991 and was last amended in January 2002. Burkina Faso's government is based on the French civil law system and customary law. Suffrage is universal and elections are held by popular vote every five years.

Burkina Faso has a few political parties, African Democratic Rally, Alliance for Democracy, Citizen's for Popular Rally, African Democratic Rally, Party for Democracy and Progress / Socialist Party, African Independence Party, Union for Democracy and Social Progress. There are three branches of government: Executive, Legislative, and Judicial. The current president is Blaise Compaore; the prime minister is Tertius Zongo. Other government heads are Paramanga Ernest Yonli, ambassador to the US and Michel Kafando, permanent representative to the UN. The legislative branch consists of a unicameral national assembly with 111 seats. Members are selected by popular vote to serve five year terms. The judicial system consists of the Supreme Court and appeals court.

#### Foreign Policy

Burkina Faso's foreign policy in the last decade has been dominated by regional disputes, notably concerning the bordering countries Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, and Benin. Benin had a longstanding territorial dispute with Mali, but this was resolved through the International Court

of Justice (ICJ) in the 1990s. President Blaise Compaore, president since 1987, has been accused of supporting the main rebel opposition in Cote d'Ivoire's civil war. This has strained relations between the two countries, even though Compaore has played a role in the negotiations to end the Ivoirian civil war and in petitioning the UN to send a peacekeeping force to Cote d'Ivoire.

Burkina Faso has also had strained relations with Benin and increasingly Niger. Governments of both Burkina Faso and Niger have accused each other's security forces of crossing the border between the two countries and harassing civilians. The dispute was brought before the ICJ in March 2008.

Benin and Burkina Faso have a long-standing border dispute over a 68-square kilometer region including three villages. The two countries came close to conflict in 2005 and again in 2007, but have now reached an agreement declaring that neither country shall undertake any action clearly geared to assert sovereignty over the contested area and that the countries will work jointly to develop infrastructure in the area. (UN Integrated Regional Information Networks 2008) The dispute is expected to be submitted to the ICJ for adjudication.

Outside of a regional context, Burkina Faso's foreign policy has focused on gaining favorable markets for its agricultural exports, especially cotton, and on receiving development aid. Burkina Faso was one of the countries that benefited from the World Trade Organization's (WTO) ruling that the United States' cotton subsidies created an unfair advantage in international competition. Burkina Faso is a country that stands to gain much if the current Doha round of WTO talks succeeds in reducing protectionist measures in agricultural trade policy in the developed world. However, this is not a cause of overt antagonism – Burkina Faso has received development aid from USAID and the European Union as well as loans from the World Bank.

## **Issues Summary**

Issue 1: Arms Proliferation → Burkina Faso is a regional hub for the transportation of small arms. The Burkinabe government has taken an active stance against the proliferation of arms in a regional context, intercepting numerous illegal arms shipments.

Issue 2: Illegal Goods → Burkina Faso has played a role as a regional stop point in the shipment of drugs from West Africa, though the government has played no role in this process. The government has taken steps to prevent the shipment of drugs through Burkina Faso and has, like the smuggling of small arms, used the UN General Assembly as a forum for raising international attention to the issue. The government of Burkina Faso has faced allegations that it aided in the smuggling of conflict diamonds from Sierra Leone during the civil war there in the late 1990s.

Issue 3: Peacekeeping → Burkina Faso is highly supportive of United Nations peacekeeping missions as a mechanism to control and help resolve conflict. Burkina Faso was one of the leading voices in the United Nations calling for a UN mission to replace the overwhelmed regional ECOWAS (Economic Community of West Africa) peacekeeping force in Cote d'Ivoire. While Burkina Faso values highly the contributions of ECOWAS and the AU to peace and stability in Africa, especially vis-a-vis peacekeeping operations, but the Burkinabe government also recognizes that these organizations do not always have the ability to commit the resources

necessary to control regional conflicts.

Issue 4: Security Council Reform → Burkina Faso supports reform of the Security Council, especially the allocation of more permanent seats on the Council. Burkina Faso, like much of Africa, especially supports the proposal to allocate two permanent seats in the Security Council to African states.

### **Relationship with the United Nations**

Burkina Faso became a permanent member of the United Nations on September 20, 1960. Its status as one of the poorest countries in the world has largely prevented the country from taking an active lead in most of the United Nations' various agencies. Instead, Burkina Faso has typically been the focus of various United Nations developmental and humanitarian programs. The United Nations Division for Sustainable Development (UNSD), the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have all been highly involved in Burkina Faso. Although it has not played an active role on many of the United Nations' larger committees, it has actively participated in the General Assembly (GA) and been a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) since June 1995. The nation has also contributed to smaller committees such as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Burkina Faso has also served functions on committees where regional seats are rotated such as the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD). These seats allow Burkina Faso to have a more prominent voice in world affairs for both their region and their nation. The most prominent example of this is its inclusion as a non-permanent member on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in January 2008. It will serve on this council for the next two years.

### **Relationships with other United Nations Security Council Members**

China: Burkina does not have a relationship other than trade with China because the Burkinabe government has recognized and received aid from Taiwan.

Vietnam: Relations are good.

Indonesia: Relations are good.

France: Burkina Faso and France are very friendly for historical and cultural reasons, including in particular the French language. Ministers from both countries deal with one another on a common basis. Recently France aided Burkinabe efforts to end civil war in the Côte d'Ivoire crisis. The two countries work for a stable Africa, an AU lead Africa, a Fight against poverty, and most importantly fight the economic woes of the country.

United Kingdom: Burkina Faso and United Kingdom relations are very minimal. There is no bilateral assistance program. Burkina Faso works with the United Kingdom through multilateral channels, mainly the EU.

Italy: Burkina Faso and Italy have minor relations. Mainly involved together through the EU

aid to Burkina Faso

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya: Burkina Faso and Libya share ties through the AU. The two countries remain focused on African unity.

South Africa: Burkina Faso and South Africa are AU members and concentrate on humanitarian aid and bringing stability to Africa. The two countries work together economically and are on great terms. South Africa has many gold mines in Burkina Faso.

Russian Federation: There is no Russian embassy in Burkina Faso. No relationship.

Belgium: Relations with this French speaking country are good. Burkina Faso receives a small portion of its trade from Belgium.

Croatia: Relations are unknown.

United States: Burkina Faso relations with the U.S. are excellent. In the past, bilateral relations were subject to strains because of the Compaore government's involvement in arms trading and other sanctions-breaking activity. In addition to regional peace and stability, The U.S. continues to support peace, stability, and democratization of the region. Burkina Faso and the U.S. find a greater respect for human rights and to encourage sustainable economic development. Burkina Faso exports \$1 million worth of goods, and the U.S. exports \$18.1 million in goods in 2006, which is extremely small. Investment possibilities exist, especially in the mining and communications sectors.

Panama: Relations are unknown.

Costa Rica: Relations are unknown.