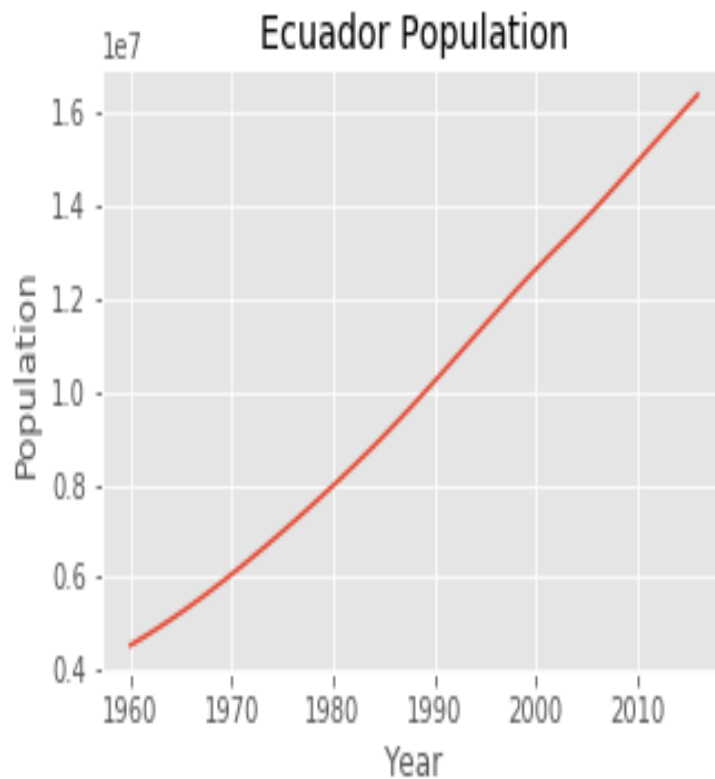


Ecuador



Coordinates: $2^{\circ}00'S$ $77^{\circ}30'W$ / $2.000^{\circ}S$ $77.500^{\circ}W$ / -2.000 ; -77.500 in South America (grey) Ecuador (/kwɔdɔr/ (listen) EK-wɔr-dor, Spanish: [ekwaˈðor]) (Quechua: Ikwadur), officially the Republic of Ecuador (Spanish: República del Ecuador, which literally translates as "Republic of the Equator"; Quechua: Ikwadur Ripuwlika), is a representative democratic republic in northwestern South America, bordered by Colombia on the north, Peru on the east and south, and the Pacific Ocean to the west. Ecuador also includes the Galápagos Islands in the Pacific, about 1,000 kilometres (620 mi) west of the mainland. The capital city is Quito, while the largest city is Guayaquil. What is now Ecuador was home to a variety of Amerindian groups that were gradually incorporated into the Inca Empire during the 15th century. The territory was colonized by Spain during the 16th century, achieving independence in 1820 as part of Gran Colombia, from which it emerged as its own sovereign state in 1830. The legacy of both empires is reflected in Ecuador's ethnically diverse population, with most of its 16.4 million people being mestizos, followed by large minorities of European, Amerindian, and African descendants. Spanish is the official language and is spoken by a majority of the population, though 13 Amerindian languages are also recognized, including Quichua and Shuar.