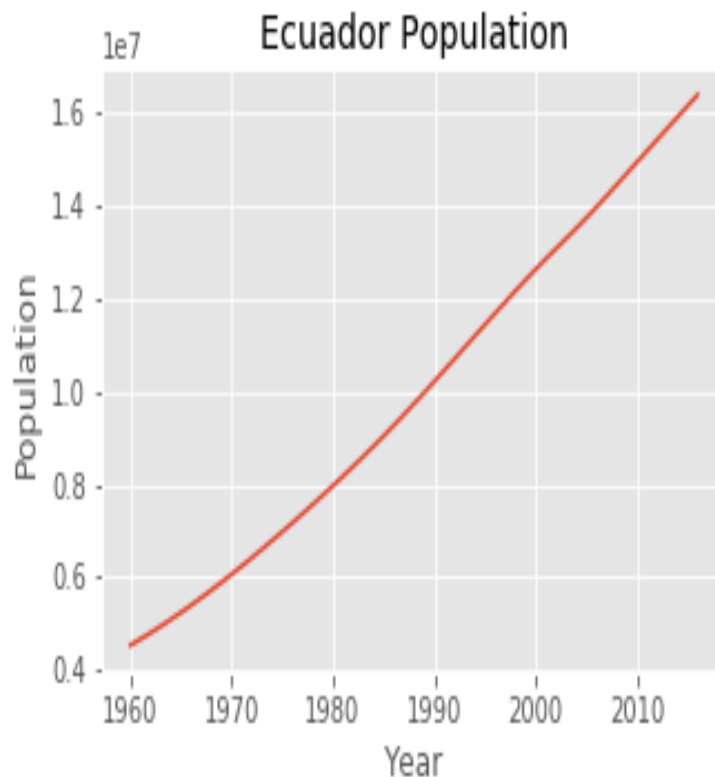


# Ecuador



Ecuador ( ( listen) EK-w $\blacksquare$ -dor, Spanish: [ekwa $\blacksquare$ ðor]) (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. Ecuador is a middle-income country, with a developing economy that is highly dependent on commodities, namely petroleum and agricultural products. It is governed as a democratic presidential republic. One of 17 megadiverse countries in the world, Ecuador hosts many endemic plants and animals, such as those of the Galápagos Islands. In recognition of its unique ecological heritage, the new constitution of 2008 is the first in the world to recognize legally enforceable Rights of Nature, or ecosystem rights.

== History ==

=== Pre-Inca era ===

Various peoples had settled in the area of the future Ecuador before the arrival of the Incas. The archeological evidence suggests that the Paleo-Indians' first dispersal into the Americas occurred near the end of the last glacial period, around 16,500–13,000 years ago. The first Indians who reached Ecuador may have journeyed by land from North and Central America or by boat down the Pacific Ocean coastline. Much later migrations to Ecuador may have come via the Amazon tributaries, others descended from northern South America, and others ascended from the southern part of South America through the Andes. They developed different languages while emerging as unique ethnic

groups. Even though their languages were unrelated, these groups developed similar groups of cultures, each based in different environments. The people of the coast developed a fishing, hunting, and gathering culture; the people of the highland Andes developed a sedentary agricultural way of life; and the people of the Amazon basin developed a nomadic hunting-and-gathering mode of existence. Over time these groups began to interact and intermingle with each other so that groups of families in one area became one community or tribe, with a similar language and culture. Many civilizations arose in Ecuador, such as the Valdivia Culture and Machalilla Culture on the coast, the Quitus (near present-day Quito), and the Cañari (near present-day Cuenca). Each civilization developed its own distinctive architecture, pottery, and religious interests. In the highland Andes mountains, where life was more sedentary, groups of tribes cooperated and formed villages; thus the first nations based on agricultural resources and the domestication of animals formed. Eventually, through wars and marriage alliances of their leaders, a group of nations formed confederations. One region consolidated under a confederation called the Shyris, which exercised organized trading and bartering between the different regions. Its political and military power came under the rule of the Duchicela blood-line. === Inca era === When the Incas arrived, they found that these confederations were so developed that it took the Incas two generations of rulers – Topa Inca Yupanqui and Huayna Capac – to absorb them into the Inca Empire. The native confederations that gave them the most problems were deported to distant areas of Peru, Bolivia, and north Argentina. Similarly, a number of loyal Inca subjects from Peru and Bolivia were brought to Ecuador to prevent rebellion. Thus, the region of highland Ecuador became part of the Inca Empire in 1463 sharing the same language. In contrast, when the Incas made incursions into coastal Ecuador and the eastern Amazon jungles of Ecuador, they found both the environment and indigenous people more hostile. Moreover, when the Incas tried to subdue them, these indigenous people withdrew to the interior and resorted to guerrilla tactics. As a result, Inca expansion into the Amazon basin and the Pacific coast of Ecuador was hampered. The indigenous people of the Amazon jungle and coastal Ecuador remained relatively autonomous until the Spanish soldiers and missionaries arrived in force. The Amazonian people and the Cayapas of Coastal Ecuador were the only groups to resist Inca and Spanish domination, maintaining their language and culture well into the 21st century. Before the arrival of the Spaniards, the Inca Empire was involved in a civil war. The untimely death of both the heir Ninan Cuchi and the Emperor Huayna Capac, from a European disease that spread into Ecuador, created a power vacuum between two factions. The northern faction headed by Atahualpa claims that Huayna Capac gave a verbal decree before his death about how the empire should be divided. He gave the territories pertaining to present-day Ecuador and northern Peru to his favorite son Atahualpa, who was to rule from Quito; and he gave the rest to Huáscar, who was to rule from Cuzco. He willed that his heart be buried in Quito, his favorite city, and the rest of his body be buried with his ancestors in Cuzco. Huáscar did not recognize his father's will, since it did not follow Inca traditions of naming an Inca through the priests. Huáscar ordered Atahualpa to attend their father's burial in Cuzco and pay homage to him as the new Inca ruler. Atahualpa, with a large number of his father's veteran soldiers, decided to ignore Huáscar, and a civil war ensued. A number of bloody battles took place until finally Huáscar was captured. Atahualpa marched south to Cuzco and massacred the royal family associated with his brother. A small band of Spaniards headed by Francisco Pizarro landed in Tumbes and marched over the Andes Mountains until they reached Cajamarca, where the new Inca Atahualpa was to hold an interview with them. Valverde, the priest, tried to convince Atahualpa that he should join the Catholic Church and declare himself a vassal of Spain. This infuriated Atahualpa so much that he threw the Bible to the ground. At this point the enraged Spaniards, with orders from Valverde, attacked and massacred unarmed escorts of the Inca and captured Atahualpa. Pizarro promised to release Atahualpa if he made good his promise of filling a room full of gold. But, after a mock trial, the Spaniards executed Atahualpa by strangulation. === Spanish rule === New infectious diseases, endemic to the Europeans, caused high fatalities among the Amerindian population during the first decades of Spanish rule, as they had no immunity. At the same time, the natives were forced into the encomienda labor system for the Spanish. In 1563, Quito became the seat of a real audiencia (administrative district) of Spain and part of the Viceroyalty of Peru and later the Viceroyalty of New Granada. After nearly 300 years of Spanish rule, Quito was still a small city numbering 10,000 inhabitants. On August 10, 1809, the city's criollos called for independence from Spain (first among the peoples of Latin America). They were led by Juan Pío Montúfar, Quiroga, Salinas, and Bishop Cuero y Caicedo. Quito's nickname, "Luz de América" ("Light of America"), is based on its leading role in trying to secure an independent, local government. Although the new government lasted no more than two months, it had important repercussions and was an inspiration for the independence movement of the

rest of Spanish America. all brigantine, the San Pedro. === Independence === On October 9, 1820, Guayaquil became the first city in Ecuador to gain its independence from Spain. The people were very happy about the independence and celebrated, which is now Ecuador's independence day, officially on May 24, 1822. The rest of Ecuador gained its independence after Antonio José de Sucre defeated the Spanish Royalist forces at the Battle of Pichincha, near Quito. Following the battle, Ecuador joined Simón Bolívar's Republic of Gran Colombia, also including modern-day Colombia, Venezuela and Panama. In 1830 Ecuador separated from Gran Colombia and became an independent republic. The 19th century was marked by instability for Ecuador with a rapid succession of rulers. The first president of Ecuador was the Venezuelan-born Juan José Flores, who was ultimately deposed, followed by several authoritarian leaders, such as Vicente Rocafuerte; José Joaquín de Olmedo; José María Urbina; Diego Noboa; Pedro José de Arteta; Manuel de Ascásubi; and Flores's own son, Antonio Flores Jijón, among others. The conservative Gabriel García Moreno unified the country in the 1860s with the support of the Roman Catholic Church. In the late 19th century, world demand for cocoa tied the economy to commodity exports and led to migrations from the highlands to the agricultural frontier on the coast. Ecuador abolished slavery and freed its black slaves in 1851. === Liberal Revolution === The Liberal Revolution of 1895 under Eloy Alfaro reduced the power of the clergy and the conservative land owners. This liberal wing retained power until the military "Julian Revolution" of 1925. The 1930s and 1940s were marked by instability and emergence of populist politicians, such as five-time President José María Velasco Ibarra. === Loss of claimed territories since 1830 === ===== President Juan José Flores de jure territorial claims ===== Since Ecuador's separation from Colombia in May 13, 1830, its first President, General Juan José Flores, laid claim to the territory that was called the Real Audiencia of Quito, also referred to as the Presidencia of Quito. He supported his claims with Spanish Royal decrees or Real Cédulas, that delineated the borders of Spain's former overseas colonies. In the case of Ecuador, Flores-based Ecuador's de jure claims on the following cédulas - Real Cédula of 1563, 1739, and 1740; with modifications in the Amazon Basin and Andes Mountains that were introduced through the Treaty of Guayaquil (1829) which Peru reluctantly signed, after the overwhelmingly outnumbered Gran Colombian force led by Antonio José de Sucre defeated President and General La Mar's Peruvian invasion force in the Battle of Tarqui. In addition, Ecuador's eastern border with the Portuguese colony of Brazil in the Amazon Basin was modified before the wars of Independence by the First Treaty of San Ildefonso (1777) between the Spanish Empire and the Portuguese Empire. Moreover, to add legitimacy to his claims, on February 16, 1840, Flores signed a treaty with Spain, whereby Flores convinced Spain to officially recognize Ecuadorian independence and its sole rights to colonial titles over Spain's former colonial territory known anciently to Spain as the Kingdom and Presidency of Quito. Ecuador during its long and turbulent history has lost most of its contested territories to each of its more powerful neighbors, such as Colombia in 1832 and 1916, Brazil in 1904 through a series of peaceful treaties, and Peru after a short war in which the Protocol of Rio de Janeiro was signed in 1942. ===== Struggle for independence ===== During the struggle for independence, before Peru or Ecuador became independent nations, a few areas of the former Vice Royalty of New Granada - Guayaquil, Tumbes, and Jaén - declared themselves independent from Spain. A few months later, a part of the Peruvian liberation army of San Martín decided to occupy the independent cities of Tumbes and Jaén with the intention of using these towns as springboards to occupy the independent city of Guayaquil and then to liberate the rest of the Audiencia de Quito (Ecuador). It was common knowledge among the top officers of the liberation army from the south that their leader San Martín wished to liberate present-day Ecuador and add it to the future republic of Peru, since it had been part of the Inca Empire before the Spaniards conquered it. However, Bolívar's intention was to form a new republic known as the Gran Colombia, out of the liberated Spanish territory of New Granada which consisted of Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador. San Martín's plans were thwarted when Bolívar, with the help of Marshal Antonio José de Sucre and the Gran Colombian liberation force, descended from the Andes mountains and occupied Guayaquil; they also annexed the newly liberated Audiencia de Quito to the Republic of Gran Colombia. This happened a few days before San Martín's Peruvian forces could arrive and occupy Guayaquil, with the intention of annexing Guayaquil to the rest of Audiencia of Quito (Ecuador) and to the future republic of Peru. Historic documents repeatedly stated that San Martín told Bolívar he came to Guayaquil to liberate the land of the Incas from Spain. Bolívar countered by sending a message from Guayaquil welcoming San Martín and his troops to Colombian soil. ===== Peruvian occupation of Jaén, Tumbes, and Guayaquil ===== In the south, Ecuador had de jure claims to a small piece of land beside the Pacific Ocean known as Tumbes which lay between the Zarumilla and Tumbes rivers. In Ecuador's southern Andes Mountain region where the Marañón cuts

across, Ecuador had de jure claims to an area it called Jaén de Bracamoros. These areas were included as part of the territory of Gran Colombia by Bolívar in December 17, 1819, during the Congress of Angostura when the Republic of Gran Colombia was created. Tumbes declared itself independent from Spain on January 17, 1821, and Jaén de Bracamoros on June 17, 1821, without any outside help from revolutionary armies. However, that same year, 1821, Peruvian forces participating in the Trujillo revolution occupied both Jaén and Tumbes. Some Peruvian generals, without any legal titles backing them up and with Ecuador still federated with the Gran Colombia, had the desire to annex Ecuador to the Republic of Peru at the expense of the Gran Colombia, feeling that Ecuador was once part of the Inca Empire. On July 28, 1821, Peruvian independence was proclaimed in Lima by the Liberator San Martín and Tumbes and Jaén which were included as part of the revolution of Trujillo by the Peruvian occupying force, had the whole region swear allegiance to the new Peruvian flag and incorporated itself into Peru, even though Peru was not completely liberated from Spain. After Peru was completely liberated from Spain by the patriot armies led by Bolívar and Antonio José de Sucre at the Battle of Ayacucho dated December 9, 1824, there was a strong desire by some Peruvians to resurrect the Inca Empire and to include Bolivia and Ecuador. One of these Peruvian Generals was the Ecuadorian-born José de La Mar, who became one of Peru's presidents after Bolívar resigned as dictator of Peru and returned to Colombia. Gran Colombia had always protested Peru for the return of Jaén and Tumbes for almost a decade, then finally Bolívar after long and futile discussion over the return of Jaén, Tumbes, and part of Mainas, declared war. President and General José de La Mar, who was born in Ecuador, believing his opportunity had come to annex the District of Ecuador to Peru, personally, with a Peruvian force, invaded and occupied Guayaquil and a few cities in the Loja region of southern Ecuador on November 28, 1828. The war ended when a triumphant heavily outnumbered southern Gran Colombian army at Battle of Tarqui dated February 27, 1829, led by Antonio José de Sucre, defeated the Peruvian invasion force led by President La Mar. This defeat led to the signing of the Treaty of Guayaquil dated September 22, 1829, whereby Peru and its Congress recognized Gran Colombian rights over Tumbes, Jaén, and Maynas. Through protocolized meetings between representatives of Peru and Gran Colombia, the border was set as Tumbes river in the west and in the east the Marañón and Amazon rivers were to be followed toward Brazil as the most natural borders between them. However, what was pending was whether the new border around the Jaén region should follow the Chinchipe river or the Huancabamba river. According to the peace negotiations Peru agreed to return Guayaquil, Tumbes, and Jaén; despite this, Peru returned Guayaquil, but failed to return Tumbes and Jaén, alleging that it was not obligated to follow the agreements, since the Gran Colombia ceased to exist when it divided itself into three different nations - Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela. ===== The dissolution of Gran Colombia ===== The Central District of the Gran Colombia, known as Cundinamarca or New Granada (modern Colombia) with its capital in Bogotá, did not recognize the separation of the Southern District of the Gran Colombia, with its capital in Quito, from the Gran Colombian federation on May 13, 1830. After Ecuador's separation, the Department of Cauca voluntarily decided to unite itself with Ecuador due to instability in the central government of Bogotá. President Juan José Flores with the approval of the Ecuadorian congress annexed the Department of Cauca on December 20, 1830, since the government of Cauca had called for union with the District of the South as far back as April 1830. Moreover, the Cauca region throughout its long history had very strong economic and cultural ties with the people of Ecuador. Also, the Cauca region which included such cities as Pasto, Popayán, and Buenaventura had always been dependent on the Presidencia or Audiencia of Quito. Fruitless negotiations continued between the governments of Bogotá and Quito, where the government of Bogotá did not recognize the separation of Ecuador or that of Cauca from the Gran Colombia until war broke out in May 1832. In five months, New Granada defeated Ecuador due to the fact that the majority of the Ecuadorian Armed Forces were composed of rebellious angry unpaid veterans from Venezuela and Colombia that did not want to fight against their fellow countrymen. Seeing that his officers were rebelling, mutinying, and changing sides, President Flores had no option but to reluctantly make peace with New Granada. The Treaty of Pasto of 1832 was signed by which the Department of Cauca was turned over to New Granada (modern Colombia), the government of Bogotá recognized Ecuador as an independent country and the border was to follow the Ley de División Territorial de la República de Colombia (Law of the Division of Territory of the Gran Colombia) passed on June 25, 1824. This law set the border at the river Carchi and the eastern border that stretched to Brazil at the Caquetá river. Later, Ecuador contended that the Republic of Colombia, while reorganizing its government, unlawfully made its eastern border provisional and that Colombia extended its claims south to the Napo River because it said that the Government of Popayán extended its control all the

way to the Napo River. ===== Struggle for possession of the Amazon Basin ===== When Ecuador seceded from the Gran Colombia, Peru decided not to follow the treaty of Guayaquil of 1829 or the protocolled agreements made. Peru contested Ecuador's claims with the newly discovered Real Cedula of 1802, by which Peru claims the King of Spain had transferred these lands from the Viceroyalty of New Granada to the Viceroyalty of Peru. During colonial times this was to halt the ever-expanding Portuguese settlements into Spanish domains, which were left vacant and in disorder after the expulsion of Jesuit missionaries from their bases along the Amazon Basin. Ecuador countered by labeling the Cedula of 1802 an ecclesiastical instrument, which had nothing to do with political borders. Peru began its de facto occupation of disputed Amazonian territories, after it signed a secret 1851 peace treaty in favor of Brazil. This treaty disregarded Spanish rights that were confirmed during colonial times by a Spanish-Portuguese treaty over the Amazon regarding territories held by illegal Portuguese settlers. Peru began occupying the defenseless missionary villages in the Mainas or Maynas region which it began calling Loreto with its capital in Iquitos. During its negotiations with Brazil, Peru stated that based on the royal cedula of 1802, it claimed Amazonian Basin territories up to Caqueta River in the north and toward the Andes Mountain range, depriving Ecuador and Colombia of all their claims to the Amazon Basin. Colombia protested stating that its claims extended south toward the Napo and Amazon Rivers. Ecuador protested that it claimed the Amazon Basin between the Caqueta river and the Marañon-Amazon river. Peru ignored these protests and created the Department of Loreto in 1853 with its capital in Iquitos which it had recently invaded and systematically began to occupy using the river systems in all the territories claimed by both Colombia and Ecuador. Peru briefly occupied Guayaquil again in 1860, since Peru thought that Ecuador was selling some of the disputed land for development to British bond holders, but returned Guayaquil after a few months. The border dispute was then submitted to Spain for arbitration from 1880 to 1910, but to no avail. In the early part of the 20th century Ecuador made an effort to peacefully define its eastern Amazonian borders with its neighbours through negotiation. On May 6, 1904, Ecuador signed the Tobar-Rio Branco Treaty recognizing Brazil's claims to the Amazon in recognition of Ecuador's claim to be an Amazonian country to counter Peru's earlier Treaty with Brazil back in October 23, 1851. Then after a few meetings with the Colombian government's representatives an agreement was reached and the Muñoz Vernaza-Suarez Treaty was signed July 15, 1916, in which Colombian rights to the Putumayo river were recognized as well as Ecuador's rights to the Napo river and the new border was a line that ran midpoint between those two rivers. In this way Ecuador gave up the claims it had to the Amazonian territories between the Caquetá River and Napo River to Colombia, thus cutting itself off from Brazil. Later a brief war erupted between Colombia and Peru, over Peru's claims to the Caquetá region, which ended with the Peru reluctantly signing the Salomon-Lozano Treaty on March 24, 1922. Ecuador protested this secret treaty, since Colombia gave away Ecuadorian claimed land to Peru that Ecuador had given to Colombia in 1916. In July 21, 1924 the Ponce-Castro Oyanguren Protocol was signed between Ecuador and Peru where both agreed to hold direct negotiations and to resolve the dispute in an equitable manner and to submit the differing points of the dispute to the United States for arbitration. Negotiations between the Ecuadorian and Peruvian representatives began in Washington on September 30, 1935. These negotiations were long and tiresome. Both sides logically presented their cases, but no one seemed to give up their claims. Then on February 6, 1937, Ecuador presented a transactional line which Peru rejected the next day. The negotiations turned into intense arguments during the next 7 months and finally on September 29, 1937 the Peruvian representatives decided to break off the negotiations without submitting the dispute to arbitration because the direct negotiations were going nowhere. Four years later in 1941, amid fast-growing tensions within disputed territories around the Zarumilla River, war broke out with Peru. Peru claimed that Ecuador's military presence in Peruvian-claimed territory was an invasion; Ecuador, for its part, claimed that Peru had recently invaded Ecuador around the Zarumilla River and that Peru since Ecuador's independence from Spain has systematically occupied Tumbes, Jaen, and most of the disputed territories in the Amazonian Basin between the Putumayo and Marañon Rivers. In July 1941, troops were mobilized in both countries. Peru had an army of 11,681 troops who faced a poorly supplied and inadequately armed Ecuadorian force of 2,300, of which only 1,300 were deployed in the southern provinces. Hostilities erupted on July 5, 1941, when Peruvian forces crossed the Zarumilla river at several locations, testing the strength and resolve of the Ecuadorian border troops. Finally, on July 23, 1941, the Peruvians launched a major invasion, crossing the Zarumilla river in force and advancing into the Ecuadorian province of El Oro. During the course of the Ecuadorian-Peruvian War, Peru gained control over part of the disputed territory and some parts of the province of El Oro, and some parts of the province of Loja, demanding

that the Ecuadorian government give up its territorial claims. The Peruvian Navy blocked the port of Guayaquil, almost cutting all supplies to the Ecuadorian troops. After a few weeks of war and under pressure by the United States and several Latin American nations, all fighting came to a stop. Ecuador and Peru came to an accord formalized in the Rio Protocol, signed on January 29, 1942, in favor of hemispheric unity against the Axis Powers in World War II favouring Peru with the territory they occupied at the time the war came to an end. The 1944 Glorious May Revolution followed a military-civilian rebellion and a subsequent civic strike which successfully removed Carlos Arroyo del Río as a dictator from Ecuador's government. However, a post-Second World War recession and popular unrest led to a return to populist politics and domestic military interventions in the 1960s, while foreign companies developed oil resources in the Ecuadorian Amazon. In 1972, construction of the Andean pipeline was completed. The pipeline brought oil from the east side of the Andes to the coast, making Ecuador South America's second largest oil exporter. The pipeline in southern Ecuador did nothing to resolve tensions between Ecuador and Peru, however. The Rio Protocol failed to precisely resolve the border along a little river in the remote Cordillera del Cóndor region in southern Ecuador. This caused a long-simmering dispute between Ecuador and Peru, which ultimately led to fighting between the two countries; first a border skirmish in January–February 1981 known as the Paquisha Incident, and ultimately full-scale warfare in January 1995 where the Ecuadorian military shot down Peruvian aircraft and helicopters and Peruvian infantry marched into southern Ecuador. Each country blamed the other for the onset of hostilities, known as the Cenepa War. Sixto Durán Ballén, the Ecuadorian president, famously declared that he would not give up a single centimeter of Ecuador. Popular sentiment in Ecuador became strongly nationalistic against Peru: graffiti could be seen on the walls of Quito referring to Peru as the "Cain de Latinoamérica", a reference to the murder of Abel by his brother Cain in the Book of Genesis. Ecuador and Peru signed the Brasilia Presidential Act peace agreement on October 26, 1998, which ended hostilities, and effectively put an end to the Western Hemisphere's longest running territorial dispute. The Guarantors of the Rio Protocol (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and the United States of America) ruled that the border of the undelineated zone was to be set at the line of the Cordillera del Cóndor. While Ecuador had to give up its decades-old territorial claims to the eastern slopes of the Cordillera, as well as to the entire western area of Cenepa headwaters, Peru was compelled to give to Ecuador, in perpetual lease but without sovereignty, 1 km<sup>2</sup> of its territory, in the area where the Ecuadorian base of Tiwinza – focal point of the war – had been located within Peruvian soil and which the Ecuadorian Army held during the conflict. The final border demarcation came into effect on May 13, 1999 and the multi-national MOMEF (Military Observer Mission for Ecuador and Peru) troop deployment withdrew on June 17, 1999. === Military governments (1972–79) === In 1972, a "revolutionary and nationalist" military junta overthrew the government of Velasco Ibarra. The coup d'état was led by General Guillermo Rodríguez and executed by navy commander Jorge Queirolo G. The new president exiled José María Velasco to Argentina. He remained in power until 1976, when he was removed by another military government. That military junta was led by Admiral Alfredo Poveda, who was declared chairman of the Supreme Council. The Supreme Council included two other members: General Guillermo Durán Arcentales and General Luis Leoro Franco. The civil society more and more insistently called for democratic elections. Colonel Richelieu Levoyer, Government Minister, proposed and implemented a Plan to return to the constitutional system through universal elections. This plan enabled the new democratically elected president to assume the duties of the executive office. === Return to democracy === Elections were held on April 29, 1979, under a new constitution. Jaime Roldós Aguilera was elected president, garnering over one million votes, the most in Ecuadorian history. He took office on August 10, as the first constitutionally elected president after nearly a decade of civilian and military dictatorships. In 1980, he founded the Partido Pueblo, Cambio y Democracia (People, Change, and Democracy Party) after withdrawing from the Concentración de Fuerzas Populares (Popular Forces Concentration) and governed until May 24, 1981, when he died along with his wife and the minister of defense, Marco Subia Martínez, when his Air Force plane crashed in heavy rain near the Peruvian border. Many people believe that he was assassinated by the CIA, given the multiple death threats leveled against him because of his reformist agenda, deaths in automobile crashes of two key witnesses before they could testify during the investigation, and the sometimes contradictory accounts of the incident. Roldós was immediately succeeded by Vice President Osvaldo Hurtado, who was followed in 1984 by León Febres Cordero from the Social Christian Party. Rodrigo Borja Cevallos of the Democratic Left (Izquierda Democrática, or ID) party won the presidency in 1988, running in the runoff election against Abdalá Bucaram (brother in law of Jaime Roldós and founder of the Ecuadorian Roldosist Party). His government was committed to improving

human rights protection and carried out some reforms, notably an opening of Ecuador to foreign trade. The Borja government concluded an accord leading to the disbanding of the small terrorist group, "¡Alfaro Vive, Carajo!" ("Alfaro Lives, Dammit!"), named after Eloy Alfaro. However, continuing economic problems undermined the popularity of the ID, and opposition parties gained control of Congress in 1999. The emergence of the Amerindian population as an active constituency has added to the democratic volatility of the country in recent years. The population has been motivated by government failures to deliver on promises of land reform, lower unemployment and provision of social services, and historical exploitation by the land-holding elite. Their movement, along with the continuing destabilizing efforts by both the elite and leftist movements, has led to a deterioration of the executive office. The populace and the other branches of government give the president very little political capital, as illustrated by the most recent removal of President Lucio Gutiérrez from office by Congress in April 2005. Vice President Alfredo Palacio took his place and remained in office until the presidential election of 2006, in which Rafael Correa gained the presidency. In December 2008, president Correa declared Ecuador's national debt illegitimate, based on the argument that it was odious debt contracted by corrupt and despotic prior regimes. He announced that the country would default on over \$3 billion worth of bonds; he then pledged to fight creditors in international courts and succeeded in reducing the price of outstanding bonds by more than 60%. He brought Ecuador into the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas in June 2009. To date, Correa's administration has succeeded in reducing the high levels of poverty and unemployment in Ecuador.

== Government and politics ==

The Ecuadorian State consists of five branches of government: the Executive Branch, the Legislative Branch, the Judicial Branch, the Electoral Branch, and Transparency and Social Control. Ecuador is governed by a democratically elected President, for a four-year term. The current president of Ecuador, Lenin Moreno, exercises his power from the presidential Palacio de Carondelet in Quito. The current constitution was written by the Ecuadorian Constituent Assembly elected in 2007, and was approved by referendum in 2008. Since 1936, voting is compulsory for all literate persons aged 18–65, optional for all other citizens. The executive branch includes 23 ministries. Provincial governors and councilors (mayors, aldermen, and parish boards) are directly elected. The National Assembly of Ecuador meets throughout the year except for recesses in July and December. There are thirteen permanent committees. Members of the National Court of Justice are appointed by the National Judicial Council for nine-year terms.

=== Executive branch ===

The executive branch is led by the president, an office currently held by Lenin Moreno. He is accompanied by the vice-president, currently Jorge Glas, elected for four years (with the ability to be re-elected only once). As head of state and chief government official, he is responsible for public administration including the appointing of national coordinators, ministers, ministers of State and public servants. The executive branch defines foreign policy, appoints the Chancellor of the Republic, as well as ambassadors and consuls, being the ultimate authority over the Armed Forces of Ecuador, National Police of Ecuador, and appointing authorities. The acting president's wife receives the title of First Lady of Ecuador.

=== Legislative branch ===

The legislative branch is embodied by the National Assembly, which is headquartered in the city of Quito in the Legislative Palace, and consists of 137 assemblymen, divided into ten committees and elected for a four-year term. Fifteen national constituency elected assembly, two Assembly members elected from each province and one for every 100,000 inhabitants or fraction exceeding 150,000, according to the latest national population census. In addition, statute determines the election of assembly of regions, and metropolitan districts.

=== Judicial branch ===

Ecuador's judiciary has as its main body the Judicial Council, and also includes the National Court of Justice, provincial courts, and lower courts. Legal representation is made by the Judicial Council. The National Court of Justice is composed of 21 judges elected for a term of nine years. Judges are renewed by thirds every three years pursuant to the Judicial Code. These are elected by the Judicial Council on the basis of opposition proceedings and merits. The justice system is buttressed by the independent offices of public prosecutor and the public defender. Auxiliary organs are as follows: notaries, court auctioneers, and court receivers. Also there is a special legal regime for Amerindians.

=== Electoral branch ===

The electoral system functions by authorities which enter only every four years or when elections or referendums occur. Its main functions are to organize, control elections, and punish the infringement of electoral rules. Its main body is the National Electoral Council, which is based in the city of Quito, and consists of seven members of the political parties most voted, enjoying complete financial and administrative autonomy. This body, along with the electoral court, forms the Electoral Branch which is one of Ecuador's five branches of government.

=== Transparency and social control branch ===

The Transparency and Social Control consists of the Council of Citizen Participation and Social Control, an ombudsman, the Comptroller General of the State, and the

superintendents. Branch members hold office for five years. This branch is responsible for promoting transparency and control plans publicly, as well as plans to design mechanisms to combat corruption, as also designate certain authorities, and be the regulatory mechanism of accountability in the country.

=== Human rights === UN's Human Rights Council's (HRC) Universal Periodic Review (UPR) has treated the restrictions on freedom of expression and efforts to control NGOs and recommended that Ecuador should stop the criminal sanctions for the expression of opinions, and delay in implementing judicial reforms. Ecuador rejected the recommendation on decriminalization of libel. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW) President Correa has intimidated journalists and subjected them to "public denunciation and retaliatory litigation". The sentences to journalists have been years of imprisonment and millions of dollars of compensation, even though defendants have been pardoned. Correa has stated he was only seeking a retraction for slanderous statements. According to HRW, Correa's government has weakened the freedom of press and independence of the judicial system. In Ecuador's current judicial system, judges are selected in a contest of merits, rather than government appointments. However, the process of selection has been criticized as biased and subjective. In particular, the final interview is said to be given "excessive weighing." Judges and prosecutors that have made decisions in favor of Correa in his lawsuits have received permanent posts, while others with better assessment grades have been rejected. The laws also forbid articles and media messages that could favor or disfavor some political message or candidate. In the first half of 2012, twenty private TV or radio stations were closed down. In July 2012 the officials warned the judges that they would be sanctioned and possibly dismissed if they allowed the citizens to appeal to the protection of their constitutional rights against the state. People engaging in public protests against environmental and other issues are prosecuted for "terrorism and sabotage", which may lead to an eight-year prison sentence.

=== Foreign affairs === Ecuador's principal foreign policy objectives have traditionally included defense of its territory from external aggression and support for the objectives of the United Nations and the OAS. Ecuador's membership in the OPEC in the 1970s and 1980s allowed Ecuadorian leaders to exercise somewhat greater foreign policy autonomy. In Antarctica, Ecuador has maintained a peaceful research station for scientific study as a member nation of the Antarctica Treaty. Ecuador has often placed great emphasis on multilateral approaches to international issues. Ecuador is a member of the United Nations (and most of its specialized agencies) and a member of many regional groups, including the Rio Group, the Latin American Economic System, the Latin American Energy Organization, the Latin American Integration Association, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, the Andean Community of Nations, the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), and The Bank of the South (Spanish: Banco del Sur or BancoSur).

== Administrative divisions == Ecuador is divided into 24 provinces (Spanish: provincias), each with its own administrative capital: The provinces are divided into cantons and further subdivided into parishes (parroquias).

=== Regions and planning areas === Regionalization, or zoning, is the union of two or more adjoining provinces in order to decentralize the administrative functions of the capital Quito. In Ecuador there are seven regions or zones, each shaped by the following provinces: Region 1 (42,126 km<sup>2</sup>, or 16,265 mi<sup>2</sup>): Esmeraldas, Carchi, Imbabura, and Sucumbios. Administrative city: Ibarra Region 2 (43,498 km<sup>2</sup>, or 16,795 mi<sup>2</sup>): Pichincha, Napo, and Orellana. Administrative city: Tena Region 3 (44,710 km<sup>2</sup>, or 17,263 mi<sup>2</sup>): Chimborazo, Tungurahua, Pastaza, and Cotopaxi. Administrative city: Riobamba Region 4 (22,257 km<sup>2</sup>, or 8,594 mi<sup>2</sup>): Manabí and Santo Domingo de los Tsachilas. Administrative city: Ciudad Alfaro Region 5 (38,420 km<sup>2</sup>, or 14,834 mi<sup>2</sup>): Santa Elena, Guayas, Los Ríos, Galápagos, and Bolívar. Administrative city: Milagro Region 6 (38,237 km<sup>2</sup>, or 14,763 mi<sup>2</sup>): Cañar, Azuay, and Morona Santiago. Administrative city: Cuenca Region 7 (27,571 km<sup>2</sup>, or 10,645 mi<sup>2</sup>): El Oro, Loja, and Zamora Chinchipe. Administrative city: Loja Quito and Guayaquil are Metropolitan Districts. Galápagos, despite being included within Region 5, is also under a special unit.

== Military == The Ecuadorian Armed Forces (Fuerzas Armadas del Ecuador), consists of the Army, Air Force, and Navy and have the stated responsibility for the preservation of the integrity and national sovereignty of the national territory. The military tradition starts in Gran Colombia, where a sizable army was stationed in Ecuador due to border disputes with Peru, which claimed territories under its political control when it was a Spanish vice-royalty. Once Gran Colombia was dissolved after the death of Simón Bolívar in 1830, Ecuador inherited the same border disputes and had the need of creating its own professional military force. So influential was the military in Ecuador in the early republican period that its first decade was under the control of General Juan Jose Flores, first president of Ecuador of Venezuelan origin. General Jose Ma. Urbina and General Robles are examples of military figures who became presidents of the country in the early republican period. Due to the continuous border disputes with Peru, finally settled in the early



2000s, and due to the ongoing problem with the Colombian guerrilla insurgency infiltrating Amazonian provinces, the Ecuadorian Armed Forces has gone through a series of changes. In 2009, the new administration at the Defense Ministry launched a deep restructuring within the forces, increasing spending budget to \$1,691,776,803, an increase of 25%. The icons of the Ecuadorian military forces are the Marshall Antonio José de Sucre and General Eloy Alfaro. The Military Academy General Eloy Alfaro (c. 1838) graduates the army officers and is located in Quito. The Ecuadorian Navy Academy (c. 1837), located in Salinas graduates the navy officers, and the Air Academy "Cosme Rennella (c. 1920), also located in Salinas, graduates the air force officers. Other training academies for different military specialties are found across the country. == Geography == Ecuador has a total area of 283,561 km<sup>2</sup> (109,484 sq mi), including the Galápagos Islands. Of this, 276,841 km<sup>2</sup> (106,889 sq mi) is land and 6,720 km<sup>2</sup> (2,595 sq mi) water. Ecuador is bigger than Uruguay, Suriname, Guyana and French Guyana in South America. Ecuador lies between latitudes 2°N and 5°S, bounded on the west by the Pacific Ocean, and has 2,337 km (1,452 mi) of coastline. It has 2,010 km (1,250 mi) of land boundaries, with Colombia in the north 590 km (367 mi) border and Peru in the east and south 1,420 km (882 mi) border. It is the westernmost country that lies on the equator. The country has four main geographic regions: La Costa, or "the coast": The coastal region consists of the provinces to the West of the Andean range – Esmeraldas, Guayas, Los Ríos, Manabí, El Oro, Santa Elena. It is the country's most fertile and productive land, and is the seat of the large banana exportation plantations of the companies Dole and Chiquita. This region is also where most of Ecuador's rice crop is grown. The truly coastal provinces have active fisheries. The largest coastal city is Guayaquil. La Sierra, or "the highlands": The sierra consists of the Andean and Interandean highland provinces – Azuay, Cañar, Carchi, Chimborazo, Imbabura, Loja, Pichincha, and Tungurahua. This land contains most of Ecuador's volcanoes and all of its snow-capped peaks. Agriculture is focused on the traditional crops of potato, maize, and quinua and the population is predominantly Amerindian Kichua. The largest Sierran city is Quito. La Amazonía, also known as El Oriente, or "the east": The oriente consists of the Amazon jungle provinces – Morona Santiago, Napo, Orellana, Pastaza, Sucumbíos, and Zamora-Chinchiipe. This region is primarily made up of the huge Amazon national parks and Amerindian untouchable zones, which are vast stretches of land set aside for the Amazon Amerindian tribes to continue living traditionally. It is also the area with the largest reserves of petroleum in Ecuador, and parts of the upper Amazon here have been extensively exploited by petroleum companies. The population is primarily mixed Amerindian Shuar, Huaorani and Kichua, although there are numerous tribes in the deep jungle which are little-contacted. The largest city in the Oriente is probably Lago Agrio in Sucumbíos, although Macas in Morona Santiago runs a close second. La Región Insular is the region comprising the Galápagos Islands, some 1,000 kilometres (620 mi) west of the mainland in the Pacific Ocean. Ecuador's capital is Quito, which is in the province of Pichincha in the Sierra region. Its largest city is Guayaquil, in the Guayas Province. Cotopaxi, just south of Quito, is one of the world's highest active volcanoes. The top of Mount Chimborazo (6,268 m, or 20,560 ft, above sea level), Ecuador's tallest mountain, is the most distant point from the center of the Earth on the Earth's surface because of the ellipsoid shape of the planet. === Climate === There is great variety in the climate, largely determined by altitude. It is mild year-round in the mountain valleys, with a humid subtropical climate in coastal areas and rainforest in lowlands. The Pacific coastal area has a tropical climate with a severe rainy season. The climate in the Andean highlands is temperate and relatively dry, and the Amazon basin on the eastern side of the mountains shares the climate of other rainforest zones. Because of its location at the equator, Ecuador experiences little variation in daylight hours during the course of a year. Both sunrise and sunset occur each day at the two six o'clock hours. === Hydrology === The Andes is the watershed divisor between the Amazon watershed, which runs to the east, and the Pacific, including the north–south rivers Mataje, Santiago, Esmeraldas, Chone, Guayas, Jubones, and Puyango-Tumbes. Almost all of the rivers in Ecuador form in the La Sierra region and flow east toward the Amazon River or west toward the Pacific Ocean. The rivers rise from snowmelt at the edges of the snowcapped peaks or from the abundant precipitation that falls at higher elevations. In the La Sierra region, the streams and rivers are narrow and flow rapidly over precipitous slopes. Rivers may slow and widen as they cross the hoyas yet become rapid again as they flow from the heights of the Andes to the lower elevations of the other regions. The highland rivers broaden as they enter the more level areas of the Costa and the Oriente. In the Costa, the external coast has mostly intermittent rivers that are fed by constant rains from December through May and become empty riverbeds during the dry season. The few exceptions are the longer, perennial rivers that flow throughout the external coast from the internal coast and La Sierra on their way to the Pacific Ocean. The internal coast, by contrast, is crossed by

perennial rivers that may flood during the rainy season, sometimes forming swamps. Major rivers in the Oriente include the Pastaza, Napo, and Putumayo. The Pastaza is formed by the confluence of the Chambo and the Patate rivers, both of which rise in the Sierra. The Pastaza includes the Agoyan waterfall, which at sixty-one meters (200 feet) is the highest waterfall in Ecuador. The Napo rises near Mount Cotopaxi and is the major river used for transport in the eastern lowlands. The Napo ranges in width from 500 to 1,800 m (1,600 to 5,900 ft). In its upper reaches, the Napo flows rapidly until the confluence with one of its major tributaries, the Coca River, where it slows and levels off. The Putumayo forms part of the border with Colombia. All of these rivers flow into the Amazon River. The Galápagos Islands have no significant rivers. Several of the larger islands, however, have freshwater springs although they are surrounded by the Pacific Ocean. === Biodiversity === Ecuador is one of seventeen megadiverse countries in the world according to Conservation International, and it has the most biodiversity per square kilometer of any nation. Ecuador has 1,600 bird species (15% of the world's known bird species) in the continental area and 38 more endemic in the Galápagos. In addition to over 16,000 species of plants, the country has 106 endemic reptiles, 138 endemic amphibians, and 6,000 species of butterfly. The Galápagos Islands are well known as a region of distinct fauna, famous as the place of birth of Darwin's Theory of Evolution and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Ecuador has the first constitution to recognize the rights of nature. The protection of the nation's biodiversity is an explicit national priority as stated in the National Plan of "Buen Vivir", or good living, Objective 4, "Guarantee the rights of nature", Policy 1: "Sustainably conserve and manage the natural heritage, including its land and marine biodiversity, which is considered a strategic sector". As of the writing of the Plan in 2008, 19% of Ecuador's land area was in a protected area; however, the Plan also states that 32% of the land must be protected in order to truly preserve the nation's biodiversity. Current protected areas include 11 national parks, 10 wildlife refuges, 9 ecological reserves, and other areas. A program begun in 2008, Sociobosque, is preserving another 2.3% of total land area (6,295 km<sup>2</sup>, or 629,500 ha) by paying private landowners or community landowners (such as Amerindian tribes) incentives to maintain their land as native ecosystems such as native forests or grasslands. Eligibility and subsidy rates for this program are determined based on the poverty in the region, the number of hectares that will be protected, and the type of ecosystem of the land to be protected, among other factors. Despite being on the UNESCO list, the Galápagos are endangered by a range of negative environmental effects, threatening the existence of this exotic ecosystem. Additionally, oil exploitation of the Amazon rainforest has led to the release of billions of gallons of untreated wastes, gas, and crude oil into the environment, contaminating ecosystems and causing detrimental health effects to Amerindian peoples. == Economy == Ecuador has a developing economy that is highly dependent on commodities, namely petroleum and agricultural products. The country is classified as an upper-middle-income country. Ecuador's economy is the eighth largest in Latin America and experienced an average growth of 4.6% between 2000 and 2006. From 2007 to 2012 Ecuador's GDP grew at an annual average of 4.3 percent, above the average for Latin America and the Caribbean, which was 3.5%, according to the United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Ecuador was able to maintain relatively superior growth during the crisis. In January 2009 the Central Bank of Ecuador (BCE) put the 2010 growth forecast at 6.88%. In 2011 its GDP grew at 8% and ranked 3rd highest in Latin America, behind Argentina (2nd) and Panama (1st). Between 1999 and 2007, GDP doubled, reaching \$65,490 million according to BCE. Inflation rate up to January 2008 was located about 1.14%, the highest recorded in the last year, according to the government. The monthly unemployment rate remained at about 6 and 8 percent from December 2007 until September 2008; however, it went up to about 9 percent in October and dropped again in November 2008 to 8 percent. Unemployment mean annual rate for 2009 in Ecuador was 8.5% because the global economic crisis continued to affect the Latin American economies. From this point unemployment rates started a downward trend: 7.6% in 2010, 6.0% in 2011, and 4.8% in 2012. The extreme poverty rate has declined significantly between 1999 and 2010. In 2001 it was estimated at 40% of the population, while by 2011 the figure dropped to 17.4% of the total population. This is explained to an extent by emigration and the economic stability achieved after adopting the U.S. dollar as official means of transaction. However, starting in 2008 with the bad economic performance of the nations where most Ecuadorian emigrants work, the reduction of poverty has been realized through social spending mainly in education and health. Oil accounts for 40% of exports and contributes to maintaining a positive trade balance. Since the late 1960s, the exploitation of oil increased production, and proven reserves are estimated at 6.51 billion barrels as of 2011. The overall trade balance for August 2012 was a surplus of almost \$390 million for the first six months of 2012, a huge figure

compared with that of 2007, which reached only \$5.7 million; the surplus had risen by about \$425 million compared to 2006. The oil trade balance positive had revenues of \$3.295 million in 2008, while non-oil was negative, amounting to \$2.842 million. The trade balance with the United States, Chile, the European Union, Bolivia, Peru, Brazil, and Mexico is positive. The trade balance with Argentina, Colombia, and Asia is negative. In the agricultural sector, Ecuador is a major exporter of bananas (first place worldwide in production and export), flowers, and the seventh largest producer of cocoa. Ecuador also produces coffee, rice, potatoes, cassava (manioc, tapioca), plantains and sugarcane; cattle, sheep, pigs, beef, pork and dairy products; fish, and shrimp; and balsa wood. The country's vast resources include large amounts of timber across the country, like eucalyptus and mangroves. Pines and cedars are planted in the region of La Sierra and walnuts, rosemary, and balsa wood in the Guayas River Basin. The industry is concentrated mainly in Guayaquil, the largest industrial center, and in Quito, where in recent years the industry has grown considerably. This city is also the largest business center of the country. Industrial production is directed primarily to the domestic market. Despite this, there is limited export of products produced or processed industrially. These include canned foods, liquor, jewelry, furniture, and more. A minor industrial activity is also concentrated in Cuenca. The incomes due to the tourism have been increasing during the last years because of the efforts of the Government of showing the variety of climates and the biodiversity in Ecuador. Ecuador has negotiated bilateral treaties with other countries, besides belonging to the Andean Community of Nations, and an associate member of Mercosur. It also serves on the World Trade Organization (WTO), in addition to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Corporación Andina de Fomento (CAF) and other multilateral agencies. In April 2007, Ecuador paid off its debt to the IMF, thus ending an era of interventionism of the Agency in the country. The public finance of Ecuador consists of the Central Bank of Ecuador (BCE), the National Development Bank (BNF), the State Bank.

=== Tourism === The Ministry of Information and Tourism was created on August 10, 1992, at the beginning of the government of Sixto Durán Ballén, who viewed tourism as a fundamental activity for the economic and social development of the peoples. Faced with the growth of the tourism sector, in June 1994, the decision was taken to separate tourism from information, so that it is exclusively dedicated to promoting and strengthening this activity. Ecuador is a country with vast natural wealth. The diversity of its four regions has given rise to thousands of species of flora and fauna. It has around 1640 kinds of birds. The species of butterflies border the 4,500, the reptiles 345, the amphibians 358 and the mammals 258, among others. Not in vain, Ecuador is considered one of the 17 countries where the planet's highest biodiversity is concentrated, being also the largest country with diversity per km<sup>2</sup> in the world. Most of its fauna and flora lives in 26 protected areas by the State. Also, it has a huge culture spectrum. Since 2007, with the government of Rafael Correa, the tourism brand "Ecuador Ama la Vida" has been transformed, with which the nation's tourism promotion would be sold. Focused on considering it as a country friendly and respectful of the nature, natural biodiversity and cultural diversity of the peoples. And for this, means of exploiting them are developed along with the private economy. The country has two cities UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Quito and Cuenca, as well as two natural UNESCO World Heritage Sites: the Galapagos Islands and Sangay National Park in addition to one World Biosphere Reserve, such as the Cajas massif. Culturally, the Toquilla straw hat and the culture of the Zapara indigenous people are recognized. The most popular sites for national and foreign tourists have different nuances due to the various tourist activities offered by the country. Among the main tourist destinations are: Nature attractions: Galapagos Islands, Yasuni National Park, El Cajas National Park, Sangay National Park, Podocarpus National Park, Vilcabamba, Baños de Agua Santa. Cultural attractions: Historic center of Quito, Ciudad Mitad del Mundo, Ingapirca, Historic center of Cuenca, Latacunga and its Mama Negra festival. Snowy mountains: Antisana volcano, Cayambe volcano, Chimborazo volcano, Cotopaxi volcano, Illinizas volcanoes. Beaches: Crucita, Atacames, Bahía de Caráquez, Esmeraldas, Manta, Salinas, Montañita == Transport == The rehabilitation and reopening of the Ecuadorian railroad and use of it as a tourist attraction is one of the recent developments in transportation matters. The roads of Ecuador in recent years have undergone important improvement. The major routes are Pan American (under enhancement from four to six lanes from Rumichaca to Ambato, the conclusion of 4 lanes on the entire stretch of Ambato and Riobamba and running via Riobamba to Loja). In the absence of the section between Loja and the border with Peru, there are the Route Espondilus and/or Ruta del Sol (oriented to travel along the Ecuadorian coastline) and the Amazon backbone (which crosses from north to south along the Ecuadorian Amazon, linking most and more major cities of it). Another major project is developing the road Manta – Tena, the highway Guayaquil – Salinas Highway Aloag Santo Domingo, Riobamba – Macas (which

crosses Sangay National Park). Other new developments include the National Unity bridge complex in Guayaquil, the bridge over the Napo river in Francisco de Orellana, the Esmeraldas River Bridge in the city of the same name, and, perhaps the most remarkable of all, the Bahia – San Vicente Bridge, being the largest on the Latin American Pacific coast. The Mariscal Sucre International Airport in Quito and the José Joaquín de Olmedo International Airport in Guayaquil have experienced a high increase in demand and have required modernization. In the case of Guayaquil it involved a new air terminal, once considered the best in South America and the best in Latin America and in Quito where an entire new airport has been built in Tababela and was inaugurated in February 2013, with Canadian assistance. However, the main road leading from Quito city centre to the new airport will only be finished in late 2014, making current travelling from the airport to downtown Quito as long as two hours during rush hour. Quito's old city-centre airport is being turned into parkland, with some light industrial use.

== Electrical power outlets == Electrical power outlets in Ecuador are the same as in the US (110v).

== Mobile (cellular) phone frequencies == Mobile (cellular) phone frequencies in Ecuador are 850 MHz, 1900 MHz, and 1700/2100 MHz (LTE).

== Demographics == Ecuador's population is ethnically diverse and the 2016 estimates put Ecuador's population at 16,385,068. The largest ethnic group (as of 2010) is the Mestizos, who are the descendants of Spanish colonists that interbred with Amerindian peoples, and constitute about 71% of the population. The White Ecuadorians (White Latin American) account for 6.1% of the population of Ecuador and can be found throughout all of Ecuador primarily around the urban areas. Even though Ecuador's white population during its colonial era were mainly descendants from Spain, today Ecuador's white population is a result of a mixture of European immigrants, predominantly from Spain with people from Italy, France, Germany, and Switzerland who have settled in the early 20th century. Ecuador also has people of middle eastern extraction that have also joined the ranks of the white minority. These include economically well off immigrants of Lebanese and Palestinian descent, who are either Christian or Muslim (Islam in Ecuador). In addition, there is a small European Jewish (Ecuadorian Jews) population, which is based mainly in Quito and to a lesser extent in Guayaquil. Amerindians account for 7% of the current population. The mostly rural Montubio population of the coastal provinces of Ecuador, who might be classified as Pardo account for 7.4% of the population. The Afro-Ecuadorians is a minority population (7%) in Ecuador, that includes the Mulattos and zambos, and are largely based in the Esmeraldas province and to a lesser degree in the predominantly Mestizo provinces of Coastal Ecuador - Guayas and Manabi. In the Highland Andes where a predominantly Mestizo, white and Amerindian population exist, the African presence is almost non-existent except for a small community in the province of Imbabura called Chota Valley.

=== Religion === According to the Ecuadorian National Institute of Statistics and Census, 91.95% of the country's population have a religion, 7.94% are atheists and 0.11% are agnostics. Among the people that have a religion, 80.44% are Roman Catholic Latin Rite (see List of Roman Catholic dioceses in Ecuador), 11.30% are Evangelical Protestants, 1.29% are Jehovah's Witnesses and 6.97% other (mainly Jewish, Buddhists and Latter-day Saints). In the rural parts of Ecuador, Amerindian beliefs and Catholicism are sometimes syncretized. Most festivals and annual parades are based on religious celebrations, many incorporating a mixture of rites and icons. There is a small number of Eastern Orthodox Christians, Amerindian religions, Muslims (see Islam in Ecuador), Buddhists and Bahá'í. According to their own estimates, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints accounts for about 1.4% of the population, or 211,165 members at the end of 2012. According to their own sources, in 2012 there were 77,323 Jehovah's Witnesses in the country. The first Jews arrived in Ecuador in the 16th and 17th centuries. Most of them are Sephardic Anusim (Crypto-Jews) and many still speak Judaeo-Spanish (Ladino) language. Today the Jewish Community of Ecuador (Comunidad Judía del Ecuador) has its seat in Quito and has approximately 200 members. Nevertheless, this number is declining because young people leave the country for the United States or Israel. The Community has a Jewish Center with a synagogue, a country club, and a cemetery. It supports the "Albert Einstein School", where Jewish history, religion, and Hebrew classes are offered. There are very small communities in Cuenca. The "Comunidad de Culto Israelita" reunites the Jews of Guayaquil. This community works independently from the "Jewish Community of Ecuador" and is composed of only 30 people.

=== Nations === The Ecuadorian constitution recognizes the "pluri-nationality" of those who want to exercise their affiliation with their native ethnic groups. Thus, in addition to criollos, mestizos, and Afro-Ecuadorians, some people belong to the Amerindian nations scattered in a few places in the coast, Quechua Andean villages, and the Amazonian jungle.

=== Population genetics === According to a 2015 genealogical DNA testing, the average Ecuadorian is estimated to be 52.96% Native American, 41.77% European, and 5.26% Sub-Saharan African overall.

=== Population density === The majority

of Ecuadorians live in the central provinces, the Andes mountains, or along the Pacific coast. The tropical forest region to the east of the mountains (El Oriente) remains sparsely populated and contains only about 3% of the population. Birth rate is 2-1 for each death. Marriages are usually from 14 and above using parental consent. About 12.4% of the population is married in the ages 15–19. Divorce rates are moderate. Population cities (2010) Status According to the 2010 Census === Immigration and emigration === A small east Asian Latino community, estimated at 2,500, mainly consists of those of Japanese and Chinese descent, whose ancestors arrived as miners, farmhands and fishermen in the late 19th century. In the early years of World War II, Ecuador still admitted a certain number of immigrants, and in 1939, when several South American countries refused to accept 165 Jewish refugees from Germany aboard the ship Koenigstein, Ecuador granted them entry permits. In recent years, Ecuador has grown in popularity among North American expatriates. They're drawn there by the authentic cultural experience and beautiful natural surroundings. Also, Ecuador's favorable residency options make for an easy transition for those who decide to settle there indefinitely. Another perk that draws many expats to Ecuador is its low cost of living. Since everything from gas to groceries costs far less than in North America, it's a popular choice for those who are looking to make the most of their retirement budget. Even real estate in Ecuador is much less than its tropical counterparts. However, as more and more North Americans are discovering Ecuador's potential, property prices are beginning to rise from where they were a decade ago, particularly in the areas that are popular among expats and tourists. == Culture == Ecuador's mainstream culture is defined by its Hispanic mestizo majority, and, like their ancestry, it is traditionally of Spanish heritage, influenced in different degrees by Amerindian traditions and in some cases by African elements. The first and most substantial wave of modern immigration to Ecuador consisted of Spanish colonists, following the arrival of Europeans in 1499. A lower number of other Europeans and North Americans migrated to the country in the late 19th and early twentieth centuries and, in smaller numbers, Poles, Lithuanians, English, Irish, and Croats during and after the Second World War. Since African slavery was not the workforce of the Spanish colonies in the Andes Mountains, given the subjugation of the Amerindian people through proselytization and encomiendas, the minority population of African descent is mostly found in the coastal northern province of Esmeraldas. This is largely owing to the 17th-century shipwreck of a slave-trading galleon off the northern coast of Ecuador. The few black African survivors swam to the shore and penetrated the then-thick jungle under the leadership of Anton, the chief of the group, where they remained as free men maintaining their original culture, not influenced by the typical elements found in other provinces of the coast or in the Andean region. A little later, freed slaves from Colombia known as cimarrones joined them. In the small Chota Valley of the province of Imbabura exists a small community of Africans among the province's predominantly mestizo population. These blacks are descendants of Africans, who were brought over from Colombia by Jesuits to work their colonial sugar plantations as slaves. As a general rule, small elements of zambos and mulattoes coexisted among the overwhelming mestizo population of coastal Ecuador throughout its history as gold miners in Loja, Zaruma, and Zamora and as shipbuilders and plantation workers around the city of Guayaquil. Today you can find a small community of Africans in the Catamayo valley of the predominantly mestizo population of Loja. Ecuador's Amerindian communities are integrated into the mainstream culture to varying degrees, but some may also practice their own native cultures, particularly the more remote Amerindian communities of the Amazon basin. Spanish is spoken as the first language by more than 90% of the population and as a first or second language by more than 98%. Part of Ecuador's population can speak Amerindian languages, in some cases as a second language. Two percent of the population speak only Amerindian languages. === Language === Most Ecuadorians speak Spanish, though many speak Amerindian language, such as Kichwa (also spelt Quichua), which is one of the Quechuan languages and is spoken by approximately 2.5 million people in Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru. Other Amerindian languages spoken in Ecuador include Awapit (spoken by the Awá), A'ingae (spoken by the Cofan), Shuar Chicham (spoken by the Shuar), Achuar-Shiwiari (spoken by the Achuar and the Shiwiari), Cha'palaachi (spoken by the Chachi), Tsafiki (spoken by the Tsáchila), Paicoca (spoken by the Siona and Secoya), and Wao Tededeo (spoken by the Waorani). Though most features of Ecuadorian Spanish are those universal to the Spanish-speaking world, there are several idiosyncrasies. === Music === The music of Ecuador has a long history. Pasillo is a genre of indigenous Latin music. In Ecuador it is the "national genre of music". Through the years, many cultures have brought their influences together to create new types of music. There are also different kinds of traditional music like albazo, pasacalle, fox incaico, tonada, capishca, Bomba (highly established in Afro-Ecuadorian societies), and so on. TecnoCumbia and Rockola are clear examples of the influence

of foreign cultures. One of the most traditional forms of dancing in Ecuador is Sanjuanito. It's originally from northern Ecuador (Otavalo-Imbabura). Sanjuanito is a type of dance music played during festivities by the mestizo and Amerindian communities. According to the Ecuadorian musicologist Segundo Luis Moreno, Sanjuanito was danced by Amerindian people during San Juan Bautista's birthday. This important date was established by the Spaniards on June 24, coincidentally the same date when Amerindian people celebrated their rituals of Inti Raymi. === Cuisine === Ecuadorian cuisine is diverse, varying with the altitude and associated agricultural conditions. Most regions in Ecuador follow the traditional three course meal of soup, a course that includes rice and a protein, and then dessert and coffee to finish. Supper is usually lighter and sometimes consists only of coffee or herbal tea with bread. In the highland region, pork, chicken, beef, and cuy (guinea pig) are popular and are served with a variety of grains (especially rice and corn) or potatoes. In the coastal region, seafood is very popular, with fish, shrimp, and ceviche being key parts of the diet. Generally, ceviches are served with fried plantain (chifles y patacones), popcorn, or tostado. Plantain- and peanut-based dishes are the basis of most coastal meals. Encocados (dishes that contain a coconut sauce) are also very popular. Churrasco is a staple food of the coastal region, especially Guayaquil. Arroz con menestra y carne asada (rice with beans and grilled beef) is one of the traditional dishes of Guayaquil, as is fried plantain, which is often served with it. This region is a leading producer of bananas, Cocoa beans (to make chocolate), shrimp, tilapia, mango, and passion fruit, among other products. In the Amazon region, a dietary staple is the yuca, elsewhere called cassava. Many fruits are available in this region, including bananas, tree grapes, and peach palms. === Literature === Early literature in colonial Ecuador, as in the rest of Spanish America, was influenced by the Spanish Golden Age. One of the earliest examples is Jacinto Collahuazo, an Amerindian chief of a northern village in today's Ibarra, born in the late 1600s. Despite the early repression and discrimination of the native people by the Spanish, Collahuazo learned to read and write in Castilian, but his work was written in Quechua. The use of Quipu was banned by the Spanish, and in order to preserve their work, many Inca poets had to resort to the use of the Latin alphabet to write in their native Quechua language. The history behind the Inca drama "Ollantay", the oldest literary piece in existence for any Amerindian language in America, shares some similarities with the work of Collahuazo. Collahuazo was imprisoned and all of his work burned. The existence of his literary work came to light many centuries later, when a crew of masons was restoring the walls of a colonial church in Quito and found a hidden manuscript. The salvaged fragment is a Spanish translation from Quechua of the "Elegy to the Dead of Atahualpa", a poem written by Collahuazo, which describes the sadness and impotence of the Inca people of having lost their king Atahualpa. Other early Ecuadorian writers include the Jesuits Juan Bautista Aguirre, born in Daule in 1725, and Father Juan de Velasco, born in Riobamba in 1727. De Velasco wrote about the nations and chiefdoms that had existed in the Kingdom of Quito (today Ecuador) before the arrival of the Spanish. His historical accounts are nationalistic, featuring a romantic perspective of precolonial history. Famous authors from the late colonial and early republic period include Eugenio Espejo, a printer and main author of the first newspaper in Ecuadorian colonial times; Jose Joaquin de Olmedo (born in Guayaquil), famous for his ode to Simón Bolívar titled Victoria de Junin; Juan Montalvo, a prominent essayist and novelist; Juan Leon Mera, famous for his work "Cumanda" or "Tragedy among Savages" and the Ecuadorian National Anthem; Juan A. Martinez with A la Costa'; Dolores Veintimilla; and others. Contemporary Ecuadorian writers include the novelist Jorge Enrique Adoum; the poet Jorge Carrera Andrade; the essayist Benjamín Carrión; the poets Medardo Angel Silva, Jorge Carrera Andrade, and Luis Alberto Costales; the novelist Enrique Gil Gilbert; the novelist Jorge Icaza (author of the novel Huasipungo, translated to many languages); the short story author Pablo Palacio; and the novelist Alicia Yanez Cossio. In spite of Ecuador's considerable mystique, it is rarely featured as a setting in contemporary western literature. One exception is "The Ecuadorian Deception," a murder mystery/thriller authored by American Bear Mills. In it, George d'Hout, a website designer from the United States is lured under false pretenses to Guayaquil. A corrupt American archaeologist is behind the plot, believing d'Hout holds the keys to locating a treasure hidden by a buccaneer ancestor. The story is based on a real pirate by the name of George d'Hout who terrorized Guayaquil in the 16th Century. === Art === The best known art styles from Ecuador belonged to the Escuela Quiteña (Quito School), which developed from the 16th to 18th centuries, examples of which are on display in various old churches in Quito. Ecuadorian painters include Eduardo Kingman, Oswaldo Guayasamín, and Camilo Egas from the Indiginist Movement; Manuel Rendon, Jaime Zapata, Enrique Tábara, Aníbal Villacís, Theo Constanté, Luis Molinari, Araceli Gilbert, Judith Gutierrez, Felix Arauz, and Estuardo Maldonado from the Informalist Movement; Teddy Cobeña from expressionism and figurative style and

Luis Burgos Flor with his abstract, futuristic style. The Amerindian people of Tigua, Ecuador, are also world-renowned for their traditional paintings. === Sports === The most popular sport in Ecuador, as in most South American countries, is football. Its best known professional teams include Liga De Quito from Quito; Emelec from Guayaquil; Deportivo Quito, and El Nacional from Quito; Olmedo from Riobamba; and Deportivo Cuenca from Cuenca. Currently the most successful football team in Ecuador is LDU Quito, and it is the only Ecuadorian team that has won the Copa Libertadores, the Copa Sudamericana, and the Recopa Sudamericana; they were also runners-up in the 2008 FIFA Club World Cup. The matches of the Ecuadorian national team are the most-watched sporting events in the country. Ecuador has qualified for the final rounds of the 2002, the 2006, & the 2014 FIFA World Cups. The 2002 FIFA World Cup qualifying campaign was considered a huge success for the country and its inhabitants. The unusually high elevation of the home stadium in Quito often affects the performance of visiting teams. Ecuador finished in 2nd place in the CONMEBOL qualifiers behind Argentina and above the team that would become World Champions, Brazil. In the 2006 FIFA World Cup, Ecuador finished ahead of Poland and Costa Rica finishing second behind Germany in Group A in the 2006 World Cup. They were defeated by England in the second round. Ecuador has won only two medals in the Olympic Games, both gained by 20-km (12 mi) racewalker Jefferson Pérez, who took gold in the 1996 games and silver 12 years later. Pérez also set a world best in the 2003 World Championships of 1:17:21 for the 20-km (12 mi) distance. == Health == The current structure of the Ecuadorian public health care system dates back to 1967. The Ministry of the Public Health (Ministerio de Salud Pública del Ecuador) is the responsible entity of the regulation and creation of the public health policies and health care plans. The Minister of Public Health is appointed directly by the President of the Republic. The current minister, or Ecuadorian general surgeon, is Margarita Guevara. The philosophy of the Ministry of Public Health is the social support and service to the most vulnerable population, and its main plan of action lies around communitarian health and preventive medicine. The public healthcare system allows patients to be treated without an appointment in public general hospitals by general practitioners and specialists in the outpatient clinic (Consulta Externa) at no cost. This is done in the four basic specialties of pediatric, gynecology, clinic medicine, and surgery. There are also public hospitals specialized to treat chronic diseases, target a particular group of the population, or provide better treatment in some medical specialties. Some examples in this group are the Gynecologic Hospitals, or Maternities, Children Hospitals, Geriatric Hospitals, and Oncology Institutes. Although well-equipped general hospitals are found in the major cities or capitals of provinces, there are basic hospitals in the smaller towns and canton cities for family care consultation and treatments in pediatrics, gynecology, clinical medicine, and surgery. Community health care centers (Centros de Salud) are found inside metropolitan areas of cities and in rural areas. These are day hospitals that provide treatment to patients whose hospitalization is under 24 hours. The doctors assigned to rural communities, where the Amerindian population can be substantial, have small clinics under their responsibility for the treatment of patients in the same fashion as the day hospitals in the major cities. The treatment in this case respects the culture of the community. The public healthcare system should not be confused with the Ecuadorian Social Security healthcare service, which is dedicated to individuals with formal employment and who are affiliated obligatorily through their employers. Citizens with no formal employment may still contribute to the social security system voluntarily and have access to the medical services rendered by the social security system. The Ecuadorian Institute of Social Security (IESS) has several major hospitals and medical sub-centers under its administration across the nation. Ecuador currently ranks 20, in most efficient health care countries, compared to 111 back in the year 2000. Ecuadorians have a life expectancy of 75.6 years. The infant mortality rate is 13 per 1,000 live births, a major improvement from approximately 76 in the early 1980s and 140 in 1950. 23% of children under five are chronically malnourished. Population in some rural areas have no access to potable water, and its supply is provided by mean of water tankers. There are 686 malaria cases per 100,000 people. Basic health care, including doctor's visits, basic surgeries, and basic medications, has been provided free since 2008. However, some public hospitals are in poor condition and often lack necessary supplies to attend the high demand of patients. Private hospitals and clinics are well equipped but still expensive for the majority of the population. == Education == The Ecuadorian Constitution requires that all children attend school until they achieve a "basic level of education", which is estimated at nine school years. In 1996, the net primary enrollment rate was 96.9%, and 71.8% of children stayed in school until the fifth grade. The cost of primary and secondary education is borne by the government, but families often face significant additional expenses such as fees and transportation costs. Provision of public schools falls far below the levels needed, and class sizes are often very large,

and families of limited means often find it necessary to pay for education. In rural areas, only 10% of the children go on to high school. The Ministry of Education states that the mean number of years completed is 6.7. Ecuador has 61 universities, many of which still confer terminal degrees according to the traditional Spanish education system, honoring a long tradition of having some of the oldest universities in the Americas: University of San Fulgencio, founded in 1586 by the Augustines; San Gregorio Magno University, founded in 1651 by the Jesuits; and University of Santo Tomás of Aquino, founded in 1681 by the Dominican order. Among the traditional conferred terminal degrees can be noted the doctorate for medicine and law schools or engineering, physics, chemistry, or mathematics for polytechnic or technology institutes. These terminal degrees, as in the case of the PhD in other countries, were the main requirement for an individual to be accepted in academia as a professor or researcher. In the professional realm, a terminal degree granted by an accredited institution automatically provides a professional license to the individual. However, in 2004, the National Council of Higher Education (CONESUP), started the reorganization of all the degree-granting schemes of the accredited universities in order to pair them with foreign counterparts. The new structure of some careers caused the dropping of subjects, credits, or even the name of the previously conferred diplomas. The terminal degree in law, previously known as JD Juris Doctor (Doctor en Jurisprudencia) was replaced by the one of abogado (attorney) with the exception of the modification of the number of credits to equate it to an undergraduate degree. In the same fashion for medical school, the required time of education was considerably reduced from nine years (the minimum needed to obtain the title of MD in Medicine and Surgery) to almost five, with the provision that the diploma is not terminal anymore, and it is given with the title of médico (medic). Therefore, an MD or PhD in medicine is only to be obtained overseas until the universities adjust themselves to granting schemes and curriculum as in foreign counterparts. Nonetheless, a "médico" can start a career as family practitioner or general medicine physician. This new reorganization, although very ambitious, lacked the proper path to the homologation of diplomas for highly educated professionals graduated in the country or even for the ones graduated in foreign institutions. One of the points of conflict was the imposition of obtaining foreign degrees to current academicians. As today, a master's degree is a requirement to keep an academic position and at least a foreign PhD to attain or retain the status of rector (president of a university) or decano (dean). For Ecuadorian researchers and many academicians trained in the country, these regulations sounded illogical, disappointing, and unlawful since it appeared a question of a title name conflict rather than specialization or science advancement. A debate to modify this and other reforms, especially the one which granted control of the Higher Education System by the government, was practically passed with consensus by the multi-partisan National Assembly on August 4, 2010, but vetoed by President Rafael Correa, who wanted to keep the law strictly as it was originally redacted by his political party and SENPLADES (National Secretary of Planning and Development). Due to this change, there are many highly educated professionals and academicians under the old structure but estimated that only 87% of the faculty in public universities have already obtained a master's degree, and fewer than 5% have a PhD (although many of them already have Ecuadorian-granted doctorate degrees). About 300 institutes of higher education offer two to three years of post-secondary vocational or technical training. == Sciences and research == Ecuador is currently placed in 96th position of innovation in technology. The most notable icons in Ecuadorian sciences are the mathematician and cartographer Pedro Vicente Maldonado, born in Riobamba in 1707, and the printer, independence precursor, and medical pioneer Eugenio Espejo, born in 1747 in Quito. Among other notable Ecuadorian scientists and engineers are Lieutenant Jose Rodriguez Lavandera, a pioneer who built the first submarine in Latin America in 1837; Reinaldo Espinosa Aguilar (1898–1950), a botanist and biologist of Andean flora; and José Aurelio Dueñas (1880–1961), a chemist and inventor of a method of textile serigraphy. The major areas of scientific research in Ecuador have been in the medical fields, tropical and infectious diseases treatments, agricultural engineering, pharmaceutical research, and bioengineering. Being a small country and a consumer of foreign technology, Ecuador has favored research supported by entrepreneurship in information technology. The antivirus program Checkprogram, banking protection system MdLock, and Core Banking Software Cobis are products of Ecuadorian development. The scientific production in hard sciences has been limited due to lack of funding but focused around physics, statistics, and partial differential equations in mathematics. In the case of engineering fields, the majority of scientific production comes from the top three polytechnic institutions: Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral - ESPOL, Universidad de Las Fuerzas Armadas - ESPE, and Escuela Politécnica Nacional EPN. The Center for Research and Technology Development in Ecuador is an autonomous center for research



and technology development funded by Senecyt. EPN is known for research and education in the applied science, astronomy, atmospheric physics, engineering and physical sciences. The Geophysics Institute monitors over the country's volcanoes in the Andes Mountains of Ecuador and in the Galápagos Islands, all of which is part of the Ring of Fire. EPN adopted the polytechnic university model that stresses laboratory instruction in applied science and engineering. The oldest observatory in South America is the Quito Astronomical Observatory and is located in Quito, Ecuador. The Quito Astronomical Observatory, which gives the global community of a Virtual Telescope System that is connected via the Internet and allows the world to watch by streaming, is managed by EPN. Contemporary Ecuadorian scientists who have been recognized by international institutions are Eugenia del Pino (born 1945), the first Ecuadorian to be elected to the United States National Academy of Science, and Arturo Villavicencio, who was part of the working group of the IPCC, which shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with Al Gore for their dissemination of the effects of climate change. Currently, the politics of research and investigation are managed by the National Secretary of Higher Education, Science, and Technology (Senescyt).

== See also ==

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