

AFRICA

Work prospects (paying) for semi-skilled foreigners are limited in most of Africa. Much of the continent is in serious financial debt and civil wars, droughts and disease have left their mark on economies that have generally been mismanaged since most of the African countries achieved independence. Corruption is endemic and the economic situation has led to political instability, although democracy is making a tentative reappearance in some countries. On Independence, the former colonial powers left behind their own democratic institutions, but these have often failed to take root, and the map of Africa does not really correspond to the various ethnic and national affiliations. The colonial past of much of Africa has meant there are many cultural links with Western Europe and North America. Africans often speak English or French and have a greater understanding than in some Asian countries of Britain and other European countries. Emigration has meant that many are familiar with life in Europe or the USA – at first, second or third hand. While the formal job market may be unpromising for Western jobseekers (and dependent on ‘primary’ areas of development and infrastructure) there are informal opportunities for those with the right skills, or for the more adventurous who are willing to fund their own trip and living costs.

Macroeconomic structures – to lay the foundation for industrial and commercial development and the long process of nation building – are the lynchpin of international work in sub-Saharan Africa. Environmentalists and agriculturalists, and those working in related industries such as food processing and distribution, as well as health-care workers, engineers, and those who can train and act as advisers in these fields, are most in demand. The difficulties must not be overlooked, but there are also opportunities for work, in tourism for example, or in the exploitation of mineral and energy resources – which are already sources of employment for international jobseekers in countries like the Gambia, Nigeria, Senegal and Zimbabwe. There are likely to be jobs for many of those experienced enough in the local conditions and who are looking for work while living or travelling in Africa. Otherwise, the international recruitment press, and publications like *African Business* (IC Publications, 7 Coldbath Square, London EC1R 4LQ; ☎020-7713 7711; fax 020-7713 7898; e-mail icpubs@africasia.com; www.africasia.com), can be sources of direct and indirect job opportunities in this region.

Skillshare Africa (126 New Walk, Leicester LE1 7JA; ☎0116-254 1862; fax 0116-254 2614; e-mail info@skillshare.org; www.skillshare.org) is a charity which recruits qualified volunteers and workers in construction, civil engineering, auto mechanics and other technical areas, in Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique and Swaziland. Offices in Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, and Tanzania. (There is more about voluntary and development work in Africa in the *Voluntary Work* chapter). Other jobs and careers which involve working in Africa can be found in the chapters on the *United Nations*, *International Organisations*, *Teaching and Transport and Tourism*.

A knowledge of French will in many cases be an advantage. There are vacancies in the often more affluent French-speaking parts of West Africa, for instance, which are generally advertised in the French press. The recruitment pages of the major French newspapers like *Le Monde* (www.mondediplo.com/) and *Le Figaro* (www.lefigaro.fr/) can be a useful way of finding jobs in countries which have strong French connections. Portuguese is also spoken in Angola and Mozambique. English is, however, the most widely known and fastest growing medium of communication in the domains of business and international trade throughout Africa.

South Africa, with its greater expat population, and more developed economy, is a separate case and is dealt with below.

South Africa

- **South African High Commission**, South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 5DP; ☎ 020-7451 7299; fax 020-7451 7283; e-mail general@southafricahouse.com; www.southafricahouse.com
- **South African Embassy**, 3051 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington DC 20008; ☎ 202-232-4400; www.saembassy.org
- **Currency**: 1 Rand = 100 cents (R or ZAR)
- **Rate of Exchange**: £1 = R12; \$1 = R7; €1 = R8.88
- **Country Code**: +27

South Africa has made a successful transition to a majority elected democratic government, which at present includes all sections of the population. This has led to the raising of sanctions, and increased trade and employment opportunities (although unemployment is a problem, especially at the unskilled end of the job market, across all sections of its ethnically and culturally diverse communities). At the southern end of the African continent, South Africa has the largest economy in the region. Agriculture is strong enough to make it self-sufficient in most food products and an exporter of some, such as fruit and wine. The foundation of its economy is the mining of valuable metals like chromium, manganese, vanadium and platinum, as well as gold and diamonds. There was a slowdown in the 1980s, in part due to sanctions (which were a factor in the transition to a democratic majority government) and the country's priority is currently to ease its considerable foreign debt. A Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was aimed at reducing some of its social inequalities. Manufacturing contributes 32 per cent to its Gross National Product, agriculture four per cent, and service industries 64 per cent.

The underlying strengths of the South African economy can be gauged from its relatively successful survival in the troubled global environment of 1998. In that year depressed commodity prices, including gold, and problems in world markets from Asia to Russia, provided a difficult trading background. Much has changed since then, however, growth has not been strong enough to cut into the 27 per cent unemployment, and daunting economic problems remain from the apartheid era, especially the problems of poverty and lack of economic empowerment among the disadvantaged groups. Existing levels of unemployment, lack of meaningful job creation, and a very serious crime problem are fundamental problems facing the government today. The spectre of AIDS, as in other countries in Africa, is also a major area of concern both in social and economic terms.

Britons still represent the largest group of immigrants to South Africa, with about 1,000 settling there every year. These range, according to the South African High Commission, from pensioners wishing to spend their retirement there to 'young professionals seeking to advance their careers.' A larger number of white South Africans are emigrating every year to countries like Australia, Britain and New Zealand.

GENERAL FACTS

POPULATION

South Africa has a population of 44.1 million. In terms of migration, the majority of newcomers come from the UK, Europe and Zimbabwe. Some of its own citizens have emigrated to Britain and the USA more recently, though. The Republic covers 450,000 square miles (1.2 million sq. km or one-eighth the size of the USA) and is divided into nine regions: Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Northern Province, North West Province, Northern Cape, Free State, KwaZulu Natal, Eastern Cape, and Western Cape.

CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY

The country is divided into three main geographical regions: plateau, mountains, and the coastal belt. The vegetation is generally grassland, changing to bush in the Northern Province, and approaching dry, desert conditions in the northwest. The climate is broadly temperate, but the summer heat can be oppressive and often exceeds 86 deg F (30 deg C). Winter temperatures average 62 to 66 deg F (17 to 19 deg C) and during these months the interior is renowned for its clear, sunny skies. The average daily sunshine varies from 7.5 to 9.5 hours.

RELIGION, SPORT & CULTURE

South Africa is a predominantly Christian country (68 per cent). The largest grouping is the Black Independent Church movement, while the largest of the established churches is the Dutch Reformed Church (*Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk*). An estimated five million people follow traditional religions to a greater or lesser extent. The other major religions are Hinduism, Islam and Judaism.

Sport is a driving force in South African life. One major factor in bringing about political change in the 1970s and 80s was the severing of international sporting links, in cricket, rugby, and athletics in particular, which are especially popular among the white population. Soccer is mainly popular in the townships, and is the most widely played game in terms of number of participants. Other pastimes include tennis, golf and a host of water sports – in all of which South Africans have excelled.

South Africa possesses as rich a cultural mix as anywhere in the world. The major cities can offer theatres, cinemas, music and other arts, and a cultural life that is a mixture of European and African influences.

FACTORS INFLUENCING EMPLOYMENT

IMMIGRATION

EU, US, Canadian and Australian citizens do not require a visa for holiday and business visits to South Africa. Anyone considering studying or working must, however, obtain the appropriate residence or work permit, and the South African Consular Section (15 Whitehall, London SW1A 2DD; ☎ 020-7925 8910) can advise on this. Work permits are only issued to individuals who are in possession of a firm written offer or contract of employment from a South African employer. The number of visas is limited, and applicants must meet strict criteria, the most important of which is whether or not a person already in South Africa can fill the position offered. If they can, then you will be refused a work permit.

Citizenship: A migrant can apply for citizenship after a five-year period of permanent residence. No requirement exists for individuals to relinquish their original nationality or citizenship. New migrants are allowed to change their occupation within the first three

years of residence only with permission from the Department of Home Affairs. A holder of a permanent residence visa who does not wish to become a South African citizen after the designated five-year period relinquishes the right to both residence and citizenship.

LANGUAGES

There are 11 official languages existing side by side in South Africa: Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, Sesotho sa Leboa, Sesotho siSwati, Xitsonga, Setswana, Tshivenda, isiXhosa and isiZulu. The majority of South Africans speak English, and signposts, government literature and telephone directories are printed in this language. In general, newspapers and the broadcasting media operate in separate languages, the main ones being English and Afrikaans.

COST AND STANDARD OF LIVING

Although prices are lower than in the UK or USA, so are the salaries. Costs vary from region to region and in the case of fresh foodstuffs, also differ according to the season. The previously disproportionately high standard of living of the white population of mainly Dutch and British descent has diminished somewhat, and there is a new black middle class. All sections of society have suffered from an incomplete recovery from the recession of the 1980s, however. Housing for expats, which typically have swimming pools and tennis courts, is still luxurious by most standards. The excellent climate and superb scenery are major attractions for prospective expats.

HEALTH

The system of healthcare is presently under strain; and private insurance is recommended. One of the first priorities of the national Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) has been to bring together the various services as one national health system.

EMBASSIES AND CONSULATES

British High Commission, 255 Hill Street, Arcadia, Pretoria, 0002; ☎ 12-421 7500; fax 12-421 7555; www.britain.org.za.

There are consulates also in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London, and Durban.

US Embassy, PO Box 9536, 877 Pretorius Street, Pretoria; ☎ 12-431 4000; fax 12-342 2299; <http://pretoria.usembassy.gov/>.

Consulates in Cape Town, Durban, and Johannesburg.

TOURIST OFFICES

South African Tourism (SATOUR), 6 Alt Grove, London SW19 4DZ; ☎ 020-8971 9364; fax 020-8944 6705; www.southafrica.net.

South African Tourist Board (SATOUR), Suite 2040, 20th Floor, 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10110; ☎ 212-730 2929; fax 212-764 1980; www.southafrica.net.

CONDITIONS OF WORK

WAGES

A system of industrial councils oversees collective bargaining. Minimum wage levels differ from industry to industry and from region to region. By law, a minimum of two weeks' sick leave is payable. Wages are generally lower than in the UK or the USA.

HOURS

The normal working week is 40 hours, and does not exceed 46 hours. Some industries shut down annually for three weeks from the middle of December.

EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS

South Africa generally requires migrants with certain specific skills, in particular in computers, medicine, engineering (including petrochemicals), financial management, business consultancy, accountancy and sales.

NEWSPAPERS

The monthly newspaper for potential migrants, *South Africa News*, is available from some travel agents in the UK, or by subscription from Outbound Publishing, 1 Commercial Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 3XQ; ☎01323-726040; e-mail info@outbound-newspapers.com; www.outboundpublishing.com. *The Powers Turner Group*, Gordon House, Greencoat Lane, London SW1P 1PH; ☎020-7592 8300; fax 020-7592 8301; e-mail ppn-london@publicitas.com; www.publicitas.com, represents the largest circulation newspaper, the *Sunday Times*. Advertisements in South African newspapers can also be placed through their offices in South Africa. One of the major South African newspaper groups is *Independent Newspapers* (☎21-481 6200; www.iol.co.za), who publish the *Cape Argus*, *Cape Times*, *Daily News*, *Pretoria News*, *The Star*, *The Mercury*, *Sunday Independent*, *Sunday Tribune*, and *The Independent on Saturday* among others.

SPECIFIC CONTACTS

EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

A selection of agencies is given below:

Kelly Staffing Experts: Gauteng; ☎11-722 8300; fax 11-722 8194; e-mail headoffice@kelly.co.za; www.kelly.co.za. Branches throughout South Africa.

Drake International: 1st Floor, Silver Oaks Centre, 14-36 Si, Durban 4001, KwaZulu Natal; ☎31-2013156; fax 31-201 6013; www.drakeintl.com.

Prostaff: 5 Morris Street, Rivonia, Fourways, Gauteng; ☎11-807 6066; www.prostaff.co.za.

Equity Personnel: 63 Craighall Estates, Alexandra Road, Waterfall Avenue, Craighall, Gauteng; tel/fax 11-442 6871; e-mail equitypersonnel@netactive.co.za.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Professional organisations are quick to point out they do not act as employment agencies. However, they can often prove a useful source of general information on career prospects and offer possible contacts to job hunters. A selection is given below:

The South African Institute of Architects, Bouhof (ground floor), 31 Robin Hood Road, Robindale, Randburg; ☎11-782 1315; fax 11-782 8771; e-mail admin.gifa@saia.org.za; www.saia.org.za.

The South African Medical Association, PO Box 74789, Lynnwood Ridge, Pretoria 0040; ☎12-481 2000; fax 12-481 2100; www.samedical.org.

The South African Dental Association, 31 Princess of Wales Terrace, Houghton 2193, Gauteng; ☎12-345 4307; www.sada.co.za.

The South African Nursing Council, PO Box 1123, Pretoria 0001, Gauteng; ☎12-420 1000; fax 12-343 5400; e-mail registrar@sanc.co.za; www.sanc.co.za.

The South African Pharmacy Council, PO Box 40040, Arcadia 0007, Gauteng; ☎12-319 8500; ☎12-321 1492; www.pharmcouncil.co.za.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

General Information on South Africa, listings of companies, commercial and development projects, trade fairs, can be obtained from *UK Trade and Investment*, Kingsgate House, 66-

74 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6SW; ☎ 020-7215 8000; www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk.

The *United Nations Development Programme* (see the chapter *International Organisations*) has a field office in South Africa, mail address: PO Box 6541, Pretoria 0001; ☎ 12-338 5063; www.unctad.org.

Other Countries in Africa

IMMIGRATION AND WORK PERMITS

The procedures for immigration vary from one African country to another. The respective embassies in London (with the exception of those listed under *Government Agencies* in the *Getting the Job* chapter) are unlikely to assist in either issuing/processing work permits or arranging work. Tourist offices may be able to offer useful information and advice about the country in question, for medical and travel purposes for example. Applications generally involve a great deal of paperwork, and may take months to process.

NAMIBIA

For those who really want to get away from it all, Namibia could be an ideal destination, with a population of 1.4 million spread out over an area four times the size of Great Britain. This very scenic and unspoilt land only gained its independence from South Africa in March 1990, after years of bitter struggle. The main economic activities are mining and agriculture, as well as tourism. Tourists from Britain and the USA do not require an entry visa for stays of up to three months; business visitors should provide a letter of introduction. Because of very high unemployment, the government has had to clamp down on foreign workers and it is now necessary for potential employers to look for local workers first. Residence and work permits must be arranged in advance with the Ministry of Home Affairs. For further information contact: *Namibian High Commission* at 6 Chandos Street, London W1G 9LU; ☎ 020-7636 6244; fax 020-7637 5694; e-mail Namibia.hicom@btconnect.com; and the *Namibian Embassy*, 1605 New Hampshire Avenue, NW, Washington DC 20009; ☎ 202-986-0540; fax 202-986 0443; www.namibianembassyusa.org.

NIGERIA

A brief circular from the Nigerian High Commission in London states bluntly: 'There are no employment opportunities in Nigeria'. The majority of jobs in Nigeria are for skilled personnel who are recruited by multinational companies or the government. These are usually in connection with the oil industry, which accounts for up to 90 per cent of Nigeria's export earnings. English language teachers are often in short supply and jobs are usually available on the spot rather than through UK adverts. GDP rose strongly in 2005, based largely on increased oil exports and high global crude prices. Enquiries to the *Nigerian High Commission* which is at 9 Northumberland Avenue, London WC2 5BX; ☎ 020-7839 1244; fax 020-7839 8746; www.nigeriahc.org.uk; and at 3519 International Court NW, Washington DC 20008; ☎ 202-986 8400; fax 202-775 1385; www.nigeriaembassyusa.org.

The rest of Africa offers very few employment opportunities. The positions that are available tend to be with aid agencies and multinational organisations (see chapters on *Voluntary Work*, *United Nations* and *International Organisations* in particular). The Embassies and High Commissions listed below can provide information on immigration, but are unlikely to offer much advice on work prospects.

Botswana High Commission, 6 Stratford Place, London W1C 1AY; ☎020-7499 0031; fax 020-7495 8595.

Botswana Embassy, 1531-3 New Hampshire Avenue, NW Washington 20036, ☎202-244 4990; www.botswanaembassy.org.

Ethiopian Embassy, 17 Prince's Gate, London SW7 1PZ; ☎020-7589 7212; fax 020-7584 7054; e-mail info@ethioembassy.org.uk; www.ethioembassy.org.uk.

Ethiopian Embassy, 3506 International Drive NW, Washington, DC 20008; ☎202-364 1200; e-mail info@ethiopianembassy.org; www.ethiopianembassy.org.

The Gambia High Commission, 57 Kensington Court, London W8 5DG; ☎020-7937 6316-8; fax 020-7937 9095; e-mail gambia@gamhighcom.wanadoo.co.uk.

The Gambia Embassy, Suite 1000, 1155 15th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005; ☎202-785 1399; www.gambiaembassy.us.

Ghana High Commission, 13 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PN; ☎020-7235 4142; fax 020-7245 9552; www.ghana-com.co.uk.

Ghanaian Embassy, 3512 International Drive, NW, Washington, DC 20008; ☎202-686 4520; fax 202-686 4527; www.ghana-embassy.org.

Kenya High Commission, 45 Portland Place, London W1N 4AS; ☎020-7636 2371; fax 020-7323 6717.

Kenya Embassy, 2249 R Street, NW, Washington, DC 20008; ☎202-387 6101; fax 202-462 3829; www.kenyaembassy.com.

Senegal Embassy, 39 Marloes Road, London W8 6LA; ☎020-7937 7237; fax 020-7938 2546; e-mail mail@senegalembassy.co.uk; www.senegalembassy.co.uk.

Senegal Embassy, 2112 Wyoming Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20008; ☎202-234 0540; www.senegalembassy-us.org.

Sudan Embassy, 3 Cleveland Row, St James's, London SW1A 1DD; ☎020-7839 8080; fax 020-7839 7560; e-mail admin@sudanembassy.co.uk; www.sudan-embassy.co.uk.

Sudan Embassy, 2210 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20008; ☎202-338 8565; fax 202-667 2406; www.sudanembassy.org.

Tanzania High Commission, 3 Stratford Place, London W1C 1AS; ☎020-7569 1470; fax 020-7491 3710; www.tanzania-online.gov.uk.

Tanzanian Embassy, 2139 R Street, NW, Washington, DC 20008; ☎202-884 1080; fax 202-797 7408; www.tanzaniaembassy-us.org.

Zambian High Commission, 2 Palace Gate, Kensington, London W8 5NG; ☎020-7589 6655; fax 020-7581 1353; www.zhcl.org.uk.

Zambian Embassy, 2419 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20008; ☎202-265 9717; www.zambiaembassy.org.

Embassy of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe House, 429 Strand, London WC2R 0JR, ☎020-7836 7755; fax 020-7379 1167.

Zimbabwe Embassy, 1608 New Hampshire Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20009; ☎202-3327100; fax 202-483 9326.