TONGA

INTRODUCTION
Tonga - unique among Pacific nations - never completely lost its indigenous governance. The archipelagos of “The Friendly Islands” were united into a Polynesian kingdom in 1845. Tonga became a constitutional monarchy in 1875 and a British protectorate in 1900. It withdrew from the protectorate and joined the Commonwealth of Nations in 1970. Tonga remains the only monarchy in the Pacific.

GOVERNMENT
Chief of State
King TUPOU VI
Head of Government
Prime Minister Siaosi SOVALENI
Government Type
constitutional monarchy
Capital
Nuku’alofa
Legislature
unicameral Legislative Assembly or Fale Alea (up to 30 seats)

GEOGRAPHY
Area
Total: 747 sq km
Land: 717 sq km
Water: 30 sq km
Climate
tropical; modified by trade winds; warm season (December to May), cool season (May to December)
Natural Resources
arable land, fish

ECONOMY
Economic Overview
upper middle-income Pacific island economy; enormous diaspora and remittance reliance; key tourism and agricultural sectors; major fish exporter; rapidly growing Chinese infrastructure investments; rising methamphetamine hub
GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) $667 million (2019 est.)
GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) $6,380 (2019 est.)
Industries - tourism, construction, fishing
Agricultural products - coconuts, gourds, cassava, sweet potatoes, vegetables, yams, taro, roots/tubers, plantains, lemons/limes
Exports $90 million (2020 est.)
squash, fish, fruits and nuts, antiques, coral and shells (2019)
partners: US 38%, South Korea 18%, Australia 14%, NZ 14%, Japan 6%, (2019)
Imports $300 million (2020 est.)
refined petroleum, poultry meats, audio equipment, mutton, goat meat, broadcasting equipment (2019)
partners: Fiji 29%, NZ 23%, China 14%, US 8%, Australia 6%, Japan 6% (2019)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY
Population
105,780 (July 2021 est.)
Population Growth
-0.23% (2021 est.)
Ethnicity
Tongan 97%, part-Tongan 0.8%, other 2.2%, unspecified <0.1% (2016 est.)
Language
Tongan and English 76.8%, Tongan, English, and other language 10.6%, Tongan only (official) 8.7%, English only (official) 0.7%, other 1.7%, none 2.2% (2016 est.)
Religion
Protestant 64.1%, Church of Jesus Christ 18.6%, Roman Catholic 14.2%, other 2.4%, none 0.5%, unspecified 0.1% (2016 est.)
Urbanization
urban population: 23.1% of total population (2021)
rate of urbanization: 0.99% annual rate of change (2020-25 est.)