

# The colour of money

One of the most stable democracies in Africa, Senegal has a thriving gaming sector despite high unemployment and widespread poverty throughout the Western African country

The Republic of Senegal is a country south of the Senegal River in western Africa and owes its name to the river that borders it to the East and North and originates in Guinea.

It is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the west, Mauritania to the north, Mali to the east and Guinea and Guinea-Bissau to the south. Senegal itself almost completely surrounds The Gambia except for Gambia's short Atlantic Ocean coastline. The origin of the name Senegal differs. Some say it comes from *suñu gaal* which means 'our canoe' whilst others say the name is connected to that of a Berber tribe from the Sahara, the *Zenaga*.

Eastern Senegal was once part of the Empire of Ghana and Islam was the dominant religion which arrived in the 11th century. Various powers, Portugal, Netherlands and Great Britain, all competed for trade in the area from the 15th century onwards until in 1677 when France ended up in possession of what had become a minor slave trade departure point, the island of Goree, next to modern Dakar, which was used as a base to buy slaves.

The first kingdoms were created around the 7th century with various empires. It was only in the 1850s that the French began to expand into the Senegalese mainland. In 1959 the French colonies of Senegal and the French Sudan merged to form the Mali Federation which became independent in 1960. The Federation broke up after just months and Senegal joined The Gambia to form the nominal confederation of Senegambia in 1982. This integration of two countries was never actually carried out and the union was dissolved in 1989.

Meanwhile the Movement of Democratic Forces in the Casamance has led to low level separatist insurgency in southern Senegal since the 1980s and several peace deals have failed to resolve the conflict.

Leopold Senghor was Senegal's first president. He joined Prime Minister Mamadou Dia to govern the country under a parliamentary system although Senghor always feared the Prime Minister. In 1962 he accused him of an attempted coup and Dia was wrongfully convicted

of treason and jailed and Senegal adopted a new constitution that consolidated the President's power. Senghor retired in 1981 and handed over the power to Abdou Diouf who ran as president until 2000. After 40 years of socialist rule Diouf was replaced by opposition leader Abdoulaye Wade who was re-elected in 2007.

Mr. Wade has amended Senegal's constitution to increase executive power and weaken the opposition in a bid to increase autocratic governing style.

Today Senegal has been held up as one of Africa's model democracies having established a multi party system and a tradition of civilian rule. It has one of the regions most stable economies despite poverty and high unemployment.

Senegal's main industries include food processing, mining, cement, textiles and tourism. In 1994 Senegal undertook an ambitious economic reform which began with a 50 per cent devaluation of the Senegalese currency which was linked at a fixed rate to the former French franc and now the Euro.

The country's economy retracted by 2.1 per cent in 1993 but thanks to the reform programme it began to see real growth in GDP averaging five per cent between 1995 and 2008.

High unemployment continues to send illegal migrants out of Senegal to find better job opportunities in Europe. The country was also beset by an energy crisis during 2006 and 2007 which saw widespread blackouts. The phosphate industry has struggled for two years to find capital and firms from Dubai have agreed to manage and modernise Dakar's maritime port and create a new special economic zone.

In 2009 the country signed an agreement with the US Millennium Challenge Corporation which will provide \$540m in infrastructure development dealing with road construction along the northern and southern borders.

Senegal comprises mostly of rolling sandy plains of the western Sahel which rises to the foothills in the southeast. This is where the highest point is found. The



**High unemployment continues to send illegal migrants out of Senegal to find better job opportunities in Europe. The country was also beset by an energy crisis during 2006 and 2007 which saw widespread blackouts.**

capital Dakar lies on the Cap-Vert peninsula which juts out into the Atlantic Ocean. The Cape Verde islands lie some 560 kilometres off the Senegalese coast.

Senegal is divided into 14 regions – Dakar, Diourbel, Fatick, Kaffrine, Kaolack, Kedougou, Kolda, Louga, Matam, Saint-Louis, Sedhiou, Tambacounda, Thies and Ziguinchor.

The country has a population of around 14 million and Dakar is located on the western most tip of the country which has some two million residents and the second most populous city is Touba with half a million. Some 42 per cent of the population live in rural areas and there is

### SENEGAL: VITAL STATISTICS

**Capital:** Dakar  
**Population:** 12,323,252  
**Land Area:** 192,530 sq.km  
**Median age:** 17.9 years  
**Languages:**  
 French (official), Wolof, Pulaar, Jola, Mandinka  
**Currency:** CFA franc (XOF)  
**Government:**  
 Republic  
**Chief of State:**  
 President Abdoulaye Wade (since 2000)  
**Head of Government:**  
 Prime Minister Souleymane Ndene Ndiaye (since 2009)  
**Cabinet:** Council of Ministers appointed by the Prime Minister in consultation with the President. President elected by popular vote for five year term.  
**Elections:** Next election is 2012. Prime Minister appointed by the President.

**Casinos:** 5  
**Casino operators:** 2  
**Casino Slots:** 380  
**Casino Tables:** 56  
**Casino Revenue:** N/A

also a population of refugees and asylum seekers approaching 20,000 plus, with the majority from Mauritania.

Meanwhile with 700 km of coastline and 500 sandy beaches Senegal is an interesting tourism destination for both leisure and historical and cultural activities. From a relatively small industry to the first Club Med resort in the 1970s tourism has become an integral part of the economy.

After casting an envious eye at Gambia the country has worked hard to increase its figures and in 2008 the foreign tourist visitor count reached one million. The government has been working on projects

**Senegal is divided into 14 regions – Dakar, Diourbel, Fatick, Kaffrine, Kaolack, Kedougou, Kolda, Louga, Matam, Saint-Louis, Sedhiou, Tambacounda, Thies and Ziguinchor.**

to enhance the tourism industry and is building a new airport on the development of a new standard of ecotourism whilst the private sector is investing in new hotels and resorts. The government would like to attain 1.5 million tourists this year.

### THE GAMING MARKET

The casino market in Senegal is regulated by the Interior Ministry whilst inspectors check and police the industry. The laws governing the market date back to 1975.

There are five casinos in Senegal with four of these located in the large resort hotel complexes in Dakar which are controlled by two family/group operators. There is one casino outside the capital in St. Louis which houses only slot machines and in Saly there is a small Poker room. Gaming tables can only be played in the evening and casinos are only open to tourists.

Groupe ANFA is a hotel group in Africa dealing specifically with Senegal and the Ivory Coast and operates hotels, restaurants, nightclubs and casinos. The group operates the Casino de Cap Vert and Café de Rome in Dakar and the slot room in St Louis plus La Madrague hotel in Dakar and Café de Rome in Abidjan.

TerrouBi group meanwhile operates two casinos - Le Terrou Bi Casino and Casino du Port both in Dakar.

There is talk of a new casino development in Saly which is located 80km from Dakar on the Petite Cote (small coast) stretching from Bargny to the Pointe Sangomar.

The 600 hectare area in Saly was sold leasehold to SAPCO (a tourism development society) by the state. The number of tourists already visiting Saly is around 200,000 per year. The resort currently has 13 hotels from two to five stars and 22 residences with a total of 8,000 beds. The idea now is to develop the resort with further hotel construction including additional facilities such as sport fishing, open air theatre and possibly a casino.

Meanwhile the Senegalese National Lottery was set up in 1966 as a private company headed by Mr Jean Luc Defait. Eight years later it was 80 per cent owned by the state. In 1987 it was set up with a full monopoly to distribute lottery games and today offers Lotto, Lotosport, PMU and Millionaire as their flagship products. Today the national lottery of Senegal is managed by the Loterie Nationale Senegalese (LONASE) based in Dakar.

In 2006 Amitelo was awarded a license to

become Senegal's third national telecommunication provider and supply 13,000 villages with broadband and telephony services using WLAN and VOIP technology.

LONASE saw a turnover in 2008 of XOF38bn. SMS games are now operating in partnership with GSM operators. LONASE currently has 1,200 points of sale, with 1,000 terminals deployed for sales of PMU and Lotto.

### DAKAR

Dakar is the capital city and located on the Cap Vert peninsula on the Atlantic coast. It is the largest city and an advantageous departure point for trans-Atlantic and European trade.

**CAFÉ DE ROME HOTEL AND CASINO.** The casino was opened in 1998 and has 80 slots and 19 tables including two roulettes, three Blackjacks, two Texas Hold 'em and 10 poker tables in the poker club with two VIP tables. The casino is located in the hotel which offers 37 rooms. It is operated by Groupe ANFA.

**LE CASINO DU CAP VERT** is located near the ocean just 20 minutes from the administrative centre of Dakar. The Airport Hotel has 43 rooms whilst the casino is the oldest in Dakar has 60 slots and 14 gaming tables including two roulettes, two Blackjacks, two Texas Hold 'em and eight poker tables in the poker room. It was opened in 1979 and is operated by Groupe ANFA.

**LE TERROU BI CASINO** is located in the luxury four star hotel with 112 rooms of which six are suites. It is set in a bay on the Atlantic Ocean just 10 minutes from the airport and five minutes from the city centre. The casino has been opened for 10 years and is the largest gambling hall in West Africa and offers 250 sq.m of gaming space with 120 slots and 13 table games including English Roulette, Blackjack and Poker. The Dakar Poker Tour is held each January. It is operated by TerrouBi

**CASINO DU PORT** is open from noon till 4am for slots and from 8pm for table games. It has 100 slots and 10 table games and there is one restaurant. It is operated by TerrouBi.

### ST. LOUIS

Saint Louis is the capital of the Saint Louis region and in the northwest near the mouth of the Senegal River. It was the capital of the French colony of Senegal from 1673 until 1960.

**CASINO DE ST. LOUIS** has 20 slots and is run by the ANFA group. There is one restaurant