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Fact Sheet

Human Development Index

Human Development Report 2015

'Work for Human Development'

- **Major progress has been made over the last 25 years with 2 billion people lifted out of low human development levels.** Between 1990 and 2014, the number of people living in countries with very high values of human development index more than doubled from 0.5 billion to 1.2 billion people, as 34 countries moved up to this category. Likewise, the number of people living in countries with low levels of human development fell by more than 60 percent from 3.2 billion to 1.2 billion as 19 countries moved up and out of the low human development category including Congo, Ghana and Namibia.
- **Human Development as measured by the Human Development Index (HDI) continues to improve, but at a slower pace.** The HDI for developing countries grew by 1.2 percent annually between 2000 and 2010, but by only 0.7 percent annually for the period 2010-2014.
- **Economic growth does not automatically translate into higher human development.** Consider these examples: Equatorial Guinea and Chile have similar incomes but very different HDI values (0.587 and 0.832 respectively), while Gabon and Indonesia have the same HDI values despite differing income levels. Some countries achieve high HDI without high incomes, for example, New Zealand ranks 9 by HDI and 32 by Gross National Income per capita.
- **Although Sub-Saharan Africa continues to have the lowest value of human development index, 12 countries have individual HDI levels that put them in the high or medium human development group.** In alphabetical order: Botswana, Cabo Verde, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Mauritius, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, and Zambia.
- **The countries with the steepest drops in HDI rank in 2014** are Libya, which slipped 27 places and Syria, which slipped 15 places.
- **The top five countries in rank order of HDI are:** Norway [0.944], Australia [0.935], Switzerland [0.930] Denmark [0.923] and Netherlands [0.922]. There are no changes from 2014 (Table 2).
- **The bottom five countries in rank order of HDI are:** Niger [0.348], Central African Republic [0.350] Eritrea [0.391] Chad [0.392], and Burundi [0.400]. There is twice as wide a range in HDI values among the bottom five countries compared to the top five, which indicates that countries with the highest HDIs have similar human development while countries at the bottom vary much more.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

ABOUT THE HDI: The Human Development Index (HDI) was introduced in the first Human Development Report in 1990 as a composite measurement of development that challenged purely economic assessments of national progress. The HDI in the 2015 Report covers 188 countries and territories. South Sudan is a new addition (As was the case last year, the HDI could not be calculated for the People's Republic of Korea, Marshall Islands, Monaco, Nauru, San Marino, Somalia, or Tuvalu.) HDI values and rankings as presented in Table 1 of the Report's Statistical Annex are calculated using the latest internationally comparable data for health, education and income. Previous HDI values and rankings are retroactively recalculated using the same updated data sets and current methodologies, as presented in Table 2 of the Statistical Annex. The HDI rankings and values in the 2015 Human Development Report cannot therefore be compared directly to HDI rankings and values published in previous Human Development Reports.

ABOUT THIS REPORT: The Human Development Report is an editorially independent publication of the United Nations Development Programme. For free downloads of the 2015 Human Development Report, plus additional reference materials on its indices and specific regional implications, please visit: <http://hdr.undp.org>

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