

NEWS RELEASE

'Wellbeing of Nations' report concludes 37 countries close to sustainable development **Report ranks 180 countries on sustainable development: Sweden in 1st place, Canada 7th, Germany 13th, Australia 18th, Japan 24th, and the USA 27th**

Gland, Switzerland, 11 October, 2001 (IUCN) - Thirty-seven countries are close to striking a good balance between a healthy population and a healthy environment, reports The Wellbeing of Nations, a new analysis of the state of the world launched today in Washington DC. But to truly achieve this balance, even these 37 countries must greatly improve their environmental efforts.

The Wellbeing of Nations is a survey that [ranks 180 countries](#) by measuring human development and environmental conservation. The report shows that all countries enjoying high standards of living are placing undue pressure on the environment. The best performing country is Sweden, which earned the survey's top ranking, even though the report considers it an "ecosystem deficit" country: it obtains an advanced standard of living through environmental damage.

Germany ranks 13th, Australia 18th, Japan 24th and the United States 27th. In more than 140 nations, ecosystem stress is higher than human wellbeing - evidence that most people's efforts to improve their lot are inefficient and overexploit the environment.

"The report suggests that a high standard of living is possible without ruining the environment by changing the way that development is pursued," says Achim Steiner, Director General of IUCN - The World Conservation Union. "The report therefore sends a clear message to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg next year. All countries need to recommit themselves to sustainable development and find practical ways to combine human development with the protection of ecosystems".

"The key conditions for combining high human wellbeing and low ecosystem stress are freedom, good governance, and education", says the author of the report, Canadian Robert Prescott-Allen, who also co-wrote the World Conservation Strategy 'Caring for the Earth'.

The Wellbeing of Nations is intended to raise awareness on the necessity of planning and management for human development and ecosystem protection simultaneously. Prescott-Allen says: "Human development is intimately entwined with the sustainable use of nature and its resources. Commitment to human and ecosystem wellbeing should be every nation's goal and to achieve this, regular assessments can help build support, analyse how to achieve it and track progress."

Wellbeing Assessment, the method used in The Wellbeing of Nations, was developed with the support of the IDRC and IUCN - the World Conservation Union. It is unique in giving equal weight to people and the environment, covering a wider scope of human and ecological factors than more traditional yardsticks such as the Gross Domestic Product, the Human Development Index, or the Environmental Sustainability Index.

The measures of human development used in the 'Wellbeing of Nations' include indicators of wealth and education as well as measures on freedom, governance, peace, order, education, communication infrastructure and basic services to give a much better yardstick of human wellbeing. Similarly, measures on the broad themes of land, water, air, biodiversity and resource use are combined to give a much sharper picture of the state of the environment.

Using these measures, the study finds that 4 billion people live in countries with a poor or bad level of human development. Less than one billion people live in countries with a fair or good standard of living. The disparity between the best and worst off is huge. Comparison shows that Sweden is 19 times more efficient in increasing wellbeing than Somalia without increasing the damage to the environment.

The Wellbeing of Nations is published by the International Development Research Centre and Island Press in cooperation with IUCN - The World Conservation Union, International Institute for Environment and Development, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Map Maker Ltd., and UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre.

Please consult the backgrounder "The Wellbeing of Nations at a Glance" and the Country Ranking at http://www.iucn.org/en/news/archive/2001_2005/press/wonback.doc.

Presentation of the report

The report will be launched today on 11 October (noon, local time; 5:00 pm GMT) at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington D.C. (US). To arrange an interview with the author or for more information, contact:

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IUCN - The World Conservation Union was founded in 1948 and brings together 79 states, 112 government agencies, 760 NGOs, 37 affiliates, and some 10,000 scientists and experts from 181 countries in a unique worldwide partnership. Its mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. Within the framework of global conventions, IUCN has helped over 75 countries to prepare and implement national conservation and biodiversity strategies. IUCN has approximately 1000 staff, most of who are located in its 42 regional and country offices while 100 work at its Headquarters in Gland, Switzerland.

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Countries ranked by Wellbeing Index

The Wellbeing Index (WI) is the point on the Barometer of Sustainability where the Human Wellbeing Index (HWI) and Ecosystem Wellbeing Index (EWI) intersect. It is expressed here as the average of the HWI and the EWI. Sustainability would be an average of 81.0 or higher. *Countries in italics were rated on less than two-thirds of the human or ecosystem subelements (indicator groups).*

		WI	HWI	EWI
1	Sweden	64.0	79	49
2	Finland	62.5	81	44
3	Norway	62.5	82	43
4	Iceland	61.5	80	43
5	Austria	61.0	80	42
6	<i>Dominica</i>	<i>60.5</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>65</i>
7=	Canada	60.5	78	43
7=	Switzerland	60.5	78	43
9	Belize	57.0	50	64
10	Guyana	57.0	51	63
11	Uruguay	56.5	61	52
12	Germany	56.5	77	36
13	Denmark	56.0	81	31
14	New Zealand	55.5	73	38
15	Suriname	55.0	52	58
16	Latvia	54.0	62	46
17	Ireland	54.0	76	32
18	Australia	53.5	79	28
19	Peru	53.0	44	62
20	Slovenia	53.0	71	35
21	<i>St Kitts & Nevis</i>	<i>52.5</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>53</i>
22	Lithuania	52.5	61	44
23	Cyprus	52.5	67	38
24	Japan	52.5	80	25
25	<i>St Lucia</i>	<i>52.0</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>51</i>
26	<i>Grenada</i>	<i>52.0</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>49</i>
27	United States	52.0	73	31
28	Italy	52.0	74	30
29	France	52.0	75	29
30=	Czech R.	51.5	70	33
30=	Greece	51.5	70	33
32	Portugal	51.5	72	31
33	United Kingdom	51.5	73	30
34	Belgium	51.5	80	23
35	Botswana	51.0	34	68
36	Slovakia	50.5	61	40
37	Luxembourg	50.5	77	24
38=	Armenia	50.0	45	55
38=	Netherlands	50.0	78	22
40	<i>Seychelles</i>	<i>49.5</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>49</i>
41	Ecuador	49.5	43	56
42	Mongolia	49.5	39	60
43	Singapore	49.0	66	32
44	Hungary	49.0	65	33
45	Mauritius	49.0	54	44
46	<i>Solomon Is</i>	<i>49.0</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>61</i>
47	Benin	49.0	27	71
48	Costa Rica	48.5	56	41
49	Sri Lanka	48.5	40	57
50	Bolivia	48.5	34	63
51	Estonia	48.0	62	34
52	Fiji	48.0	50	46
53	Belarus	48.0	46	50
54	Poland	47.5	65	30
55	Argentina	47.5	55	40
56	Dominican R.	47.5	49	46
57	<i>St Vincent & Grenadines</i>	<i>47.5</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>54</i>
58	Korea, R.	47.0	67	27
59	Barbados	47.0	62	32
60	Cape Verde	47.0	47	47
61	Spain	46.5	73	20

		WI	HWI	EWI
62	Samoa	46.5	43	50
63	Nepal	46.0	28	64
64	Croatia	45.0	57	33
65	Russian Federation	45.0	48	42
66	Gabon	45.0	28	62
67	Bulgaria	44.5	58	31
68	Jamaica	44.5	54	35
69	Panama	44.5	52	37
70	Antigua & Barbuda	44.5	49	40
71	Georgia	44.5	48	41
72	Brunei Darussalam	44.5	47	42
73	Venezuela	44.5	43	46
74	Macedonia, FYR	44.0	46	42
75	Namibia	44.0	34	54
76	Togo	43.5	21	66
77	Congo, R.	43.5	15	72
78	Bahamas	43.0	54	32
79	Chile	42.5	55	30
80	Trinidad & Tobago	42.5	53	32
81	Colombia	42.5	43	42
82	Cuba	42.5	40	45
83	Vanuatu	42.5	35	50
84	Malta	42.0	70	14
85	Israel	42.0	59	25
86	Albania	42.0	38	46
87	Indonesia	42.0	36	48
88	Malawi	42.0	22	62
89	Egypt	41.0	39	43
90	El Salvador	41.0	36	46
91	Central African R.	41.0	16	66
92	Brazil	40.5	45	36
93	Paraguay	40.5	35	46
94	Lesotho	40.5	24	57
95	Guinea	40.5	15	66
96	Bhutan	40.5	14	67
97	Romania	40.0	50	30
98	Kyrgyzstan	40.0	38	42
99	Malaysia	39.5	46	33
100	Yugoslavia	39.5	42	37
101	Cameroon	39.5	15	64
102	Guinea-Bissau	39.5	13	66
103	Honduras	39.0	33	45
104	Swaziland	39.0	24	54
105	Zimbabwe	39.0	23	55
106	Djibouti	39.0	18	60
107	Gambia	39.0	16	62
108	Lao PDR	39.0	15	63
109	Lebanon	38.5	40	37
110=	Nicaragua	38.5	28	49
110=	Viet Nam	38.5	28	49
112=	Cambodia	38.5	20	57
112=	Côte d'Ivoire	38.5	20	57
114	Equatorial Guinea	38.5	15	62
115	Ethiopia	38.5	13	64
116=	Philippines	38.0	44	32
116=	Tunisia	38.0	44	32
118	Moldova	38.0	41	35
119	Kuwait	37.5	50	25
120	Kazakhstan	37.5	43	32
121	Papua New Guinea	37.5	22	53
122	Burkina Faso	37.5	17	58
123	Angola	37.5	8	67

		WI	HWI	EWI
124	Madagascar	37.0	24	50
125	Senegal	37.0	20	54
126	<i>Liberia</i>	<i>37.0</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>65</i>
127	Thailand	36.5	50	23
128	Ukraine	36.5	47	26
129	Turkey	36.5	45	28
130	Algeria	36.5	29	44
131	Bangladesh	36.5	27	46
132	Tanzania	36.0	18	54
133	Nigeria	36.0	16	56
134	Chad	36.0	13	59
135	Congo, DR	36.0	7	65
136	South Africa	35.0	43	27
137	Azerbaijan	35.0	42	28
138	Iran	35.0	38	32
139	Myanmar	35.0	21	49
140	Eritrea	35.0	10	60
141	<i>Bosnia & Herzegovina</i>	<i>34.5</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>45</i>
142	<i>Maldives</i>	<i>34.5</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>47</i>
143	Kenya	34.5	18	51
144	Rwanda	34.5	12	57
145	Sierra Leone	34.5	6	63
146	Morocco	34.0	36	32
147	Tajikistan	33.5	28	39
148	Guatemala	33.5	23	44
149	Niger	33.5	11	56
150	Mexico	33.0	45	21
151	Jordan	33.0	38	28
152	Uzbekistan	33.0	36	30
153	<i>Korea, DPR</i>	<i>33.0</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>45</i>
154	Yemen	33.0	15	51
155	Mozambique	33.0	11	55
156	Burundi	33.0	6	60
157	Mali	32.5	21	44
158	<i>Somalia</i>	<i>32.5</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>62</i>
159	<i>Qatar</i>	<i>32.0</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>24</i>
160	China	32.0	36	28
161	Comoros	32.0	20	44
162	<i>Bahrain</i>	<i>31.5</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>17</i>
163	<i>São Tomé & Príncipe</i>	<i>31.5</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>53</i>
164	Libyan Arab J	31.0	38	24
165	Turkmenistan	31.0	32	30
166	Haiti	31.0	19	43
167	Pakistan	31.0	18	44
168	Ghana	30.0	22	38
169	Oman	29.5	31	28
170	Zambia	29.5	16	43
171	Sudan	29.5	13	46
172	India	29.0	31	27
173	United Arab Emirates	28.5	41	16
174	Mauritania	28.5	17	40
175	<i>Tonga</i>	<i>28.0</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>30</i>
176	Saudi Arabia	27.0	31	23
177	Uganda	27.0	10	44
178	<i>Afghanistan</i>	<i>27.0</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>48</i>
179	Syrian Arab R.	26.5	28	25
180	Iraq	25.0	19	31