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**DATA**BLOG  
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## Human development index: Equality matters if we are to reduce poverty

This year's UN human development report will for the first time include an 'Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index' to rank quality of life within nations

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2010 is the 20th anniversary of the first UN human development report. Photograph: Chris Jackson/Getty Images

Twenty years ago the first UN's human development report (UNDP) put numbers on something we all know anyway – that there are more important things in life than money. Whereas previously countries had been ranked in terms of wealth, the HDR ranked them according to human wellbeing. I have yet to find a better explanation of why GNP is such a limited measure of how a country is doing than the one given by Robert Kennedy, when he was running for president, a few weeks before he was shot:

"Our gross national product counts air pollution and cigarette advertising,

and ambulances to clear our highways of carnage. It counts special locks for our doors and the jails for those who break them. It counts napalm and the cost of a nuclear warhead, and armoured cars for police who fight riots in our streets. It counts Whitman's rifle and Speck's knife, and the television programmes which glorify violence in order to sell toys to our children.

"Yet the gross national product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages; the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials.

"It measures neither our wit nor our courage; neither our wisdom nor our learning; neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country; it measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile. And it tells us everything about America except why we are proud that we are Americans."

## 2010 rank HDI

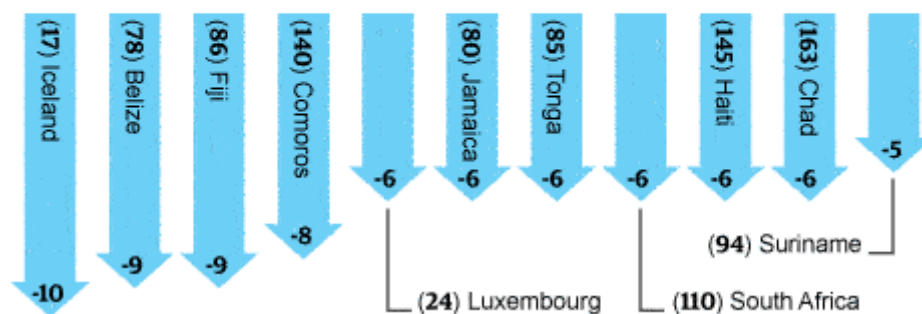
### Top 10

1	Norway
2	Australia
3	New Zealand
4	United States
5	Ireland
6	Liechtenstein
7	Netherlands
8	Canada
9	Sweden
10	Germany

### Bottom 10

160	Mali
161	Burkina Faso
162	Liberia
163	Chad
164	Guinea-Bissau
165	Mozambique
166	Burundi
167	Niger
168	Congo (Dem Rep)
169	Zimbabwe

### Greatest drop in rank (2005 to 2010)



Human development

index rankings

The HDR tried to rectify some of that, and it is still an eagerly anticipated publication. But it is also true that in recent years it has been losing a bit of its pulling power. There

is little to surprise us any more. Norway is always top, and an unfortunate African country (recently Zimbabwe) is always bottom. Even the movements around the Index are not big enough to be very significant given the limitations in the methodology.

But this year, to mark the 20th anniversary of the first report, tucked away unassumingly in chapter five, is a new feature that could again revolutionise our way of assessing progress, and revitalise the HDR's mission. Alongside the regular Human Development Index, the team of researchers has added what they are calling an "Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index", or IHDI.

The HDI measures average wellbeing in a country, but not the disparities between different regions or groups within a country, which are sometimes vast. The IHDI now takes into account how human development is distributed as well. Countries which are very unequal see their human development scores suffer more than those that are less unequal.

So how does this affect the all-important rankings? In the top 20 countries, movement is limited. Inequality in health, education and income, which are the dimensions of inequality measured in the new Index, is less in countries with "very high human development". But there are some things worth noting. The USA moves down nine places, while South Korea, the incredible economic and human development success story of the past half century, also moves down 18 places (from 12th to 30th) in recognition of its high levels of inequality.

The other big losers are almost all in Latin America, the most unequal region in the world. Panama falls 20 places, Peru 26, Brazil 15, Colombia 18. Venezuela only falls one place, while Nicaragua bucks the trend, rising six places – read into that what you will.

Which are the countries moving up the scale, to take the places of these falling unequal countries? There is no clear pattern but quite a few of them seem to be from the former soviet block (Armenia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Uzbekistan).

Does any of this matter? I think so. One of the main findings of the first 10 years of the MDGs is that inequality matters. More and more people are realising that rising inequality within and between countries is one of the great challenges facing the modern world. Equality matters as an end in itself, and it matters as one of the quickest means to reduce absolute poverty.

It is very significant that this UN flagship publication is for the first time including inequality in its rankings, tentatively at first, but hopefully it will get bolder in coming years. When the HDI proper fully incorporates an inequality adjustment (ie the IHDI replaces the HDI as the main index), countries will really sit up and listen.

Governments do care about this index and where they are placed on it. Civil society will

use these figures in their battles for a more just world. Crucially, when a country manages to reduce inequality, it moves up the rankings. Brazil has seen its "HDI losses" fall between 2000 and 2005 as the country has become a little more equal.

As with the HDI when it was first launched, the methodology may need some tinkering over time, and the weighting (how much importance you attach to inequality, in a number, which affects overall ranking) will no doubt be adjusted according to what is politically feasible. But the first step has been taken.

This is not the only innovation in this year's HDR, which also launches indexes in gender inequality and multidimensional poverty, nor the only interesting talking point – the document is full of fascinating analyses that challenge some widely held beliefs. But in the long term, it could prove the most important.

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## **Download the data**

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- [DATA: download the full spreadsheet - including the inequality-adjusted data](#)

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## **Data summary**

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### **Human development index trends**

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2010 HDI rank	Country	Condition	2010	2010, inequal-ity adjusted	2005 rank	Change in HDI rank (2005 to	Ave ann. Growth, %, 1980-2010

				score		2010)	
1	Norway	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.938	<b>0.876</b>	1	0	0.58
2	Australia	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.937	<b>0.864</b>	2	0	0.57
3	New Zealand	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.907	..	3	0	0.48
4	United States	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.902	<b>0.799</b>	4	0	0.36
5	Ireland	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.895	<b>0.813</b>	5	0	0.72
6	Liechtenstein	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.891	..	11	5	..
7	Netherlands	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.890	<b>0.818</b>	10	3	0.44
8	Canada	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.888	<b>0.812</b>	8	0	0.39
9	Sweden	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.885	<b>0.824</b>	6	-3	0.45
10	Germany	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.885	<b>0.814</b>	9	-1	..
11	Japan	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.884	..	12	1	0.47
12	Korea, South	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.877	<b>0.731</b>	20	8	1.18
13	Switzerland	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.874	<b>0.813</b>	13	0	0.30

14	France	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.872	<b>0.792</b>	19	<b>5</b>	0.68
15	Israel	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.872	<b>0.763</b>	15	<b>0</b>	0.51
16	Finland	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.871	<b>0.806</b>	14	<b>-2</b>	0.52
17	Iceland	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.869	<b>0.811</b>	7	<b>-10</b>	0.50
18	Belgium	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.867	<b>0.794</b>	17	<b>-1</b>	0.51
19	Denmark	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.866	<b>0.810</b>	16	<b>-3</b>	0.39
20	Spain	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.863	<b>0.779</b>	21	<b>1</b>	0.79
21	Hong Kong	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.862	..	23	<b>2</b>	0.73
22	Greece	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.855	<b>0.768</b>	25	<b>3</b>	0.63
23	Italy	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.854	<b>0.752</b>	27	<b>4</b>	0.65
24	Luxembourg	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.852	<b>0.775</b>	18	<b>-6</b>	0.57
25	Austria	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.851	<b>0.787</b>	24	<b>-1</b>	0.52
26	United Kingdom	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.849	<b>0.766</b>	22	<b>-4</b>	0.47

27	Singapore	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.846	..	28	1	..
28	Czech Republic	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.841	<b>0.790</b>	26	-2	..
29	Slovenia	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.828	<b>0.771</b>	29	0	..
30	Andorra	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.824	..	32	2	..
31	Slovakia	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.818	<b>0.764</b>	36	5	..
32	United Arab Emirates	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.815	..	37	5	0.87
33	Malta	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.815	..	30	-3	0.59
34	Estonia	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.812	<b>0.733</b>	31	-3	..
35	Cyprus	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.810	<b>0.716</b>	39	4	0.67
36	Hungary	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.805	<b>0.736</b>	35	-1	0.52
37	Brunei Darussalam	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.805	..	33	-4	..
38	Qatar	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.803	..	34	-4	..
39	Bahrain	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.801	..	38	-1	0.88
40	Portugal	VERY	0.795	<b>0.700</b>	43	3	0.80

		HIGH HUMAN DEV					
41	Poland	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.795	<b>0.709</b>	44	<b>3</b>	..
42	Barbados	VERY HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.788	..	41	<b>-1</b>	..
43	Bahamas	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.784	<b>0.671</b>	40	<b>-3</b>	..
44	Lithuania	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.783	<b>0.693</b>	42	<b>-2</b>	..
45	Chile	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.783	<b>0.634</b>	47	<b>2</b>	0.85
46	Argentina	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.775	<b>0.562</b>	50	<b>4</b>	0.56
47	Kuwait	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.771	..	45	<b>-2</b>	0.44
48	Latvia	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.769	<b>0.684</b>	46	<b>-2</b>	0.55
49	Montenegro	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.769	<b>0.693</b>	48	<b>-1</b>	..
50	Romania	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.767	<b>0.675</b>	51	<b>1</b>	..
51	Croatia	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.767	<b>0.650</b>	49	<b>-2</b>	..
52	Uruguay	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.765	<b>0.642</b>	52	<b>0</b>	..
53	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.755	..	56	<b>3</b>	..
54	Panama	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.755	<b>0.541</b>	58	<b>4</b>	0.69
55	Saudi Arabia	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.752	..	53	<b>-2</b>	1.01
56	Mexico	HIGH	0.750	<b>0.593</b>	54	<b>-2</b>	0.85



		HUMAN DEV					
57	Malaysia	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.744	..	55	-2	1.06
58	Bulgaria	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.743	<b>0.659</b>	57	-1	0.45
59	Trinidad and Tobago	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.736	<b>0.621</b>	60	1	0.38
60	Serbia	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.735	<b>0.656</b>	59	-1	..
61	Belarus	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.732	<b>0.664</b>	62	1	..
62	Costa Rica	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.725	<b>0.576</b>	61	-1	0.63
63	Peru	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.723	<b>0.501</b>	67	4	0.85
64	Albania	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.719	<b>0.627</b>	63	-1	..
65	Russian Federation	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.719	<b>0.636</b>	68	3	..
66	Kazakhstan	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.714	<b>0.617</b>	65	-1	..
67	Azerbaijan	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.713	<b>0.614</b>	83	16	..
68	Bosnia and Herzegovina	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.710	<b>0.565</b>	64	-4	..
69	Ukraine	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.710	<b>0.652</b>	66	-3	..
70	Iran	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.702	..	80	10	..
71	Macedonia, FYR	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.701	<b>0.584</b>	72	1	..
72	Mauritius	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.701	..	70	-2	0.96

73	Brazil	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.699	<b>0.509</b>	73	<b>0</b>	..
74	Georgia	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.698	<b>0.579</b>	71	<b>-3</b>	..
75	Venezuela	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.696	<b>0.549</b>	78	<b>3</b>	0.44
76	Armenia	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.695	<b>0.619</b>	76	<b>0</b>	..
77	Ecuador	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.695	<b>0.554</b>	75	<b>-2</b>	0.62
78	Belize	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.694	<b>0.495</b>	69	<b>-9</b>	..
79	Colombia	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.689	<b>0.492</b>	81	<b>2</b>	0.83
80	Jamaica	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.688	<b>0.574</b>	74	<b>-6</b>	0.52
81	Tunisia	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.683	<b>0.511</b>	86	<b>5</b>	1.49
82	Jordan	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.681	<b>0.550</b>	84	<b>2</b>	0.97
83	Turkey	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.679	<b>0.518</b>	82	<b>-1</b>	1.24
84	Algeria	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.677	..	85	<b>1</b>	1.42
85	Tonga	HIGH HUMAN DEV	0.677	..	79	<b>-6</b>	..
86	Fiji	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.669	..	77	<b>-9</b>	0.65
87	Turkmenistan	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.669	<b>0.493</b>	87	<b>0</b>	..
88	Dominican Republic	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.663	<b>0.499</b>	88	<b>0</b>	..
89	China	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.663	<b>0.511</b>	97	<b>8</b>	1.96

		DEV					
<b>90</b>	El Salvador	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.659	<b>0.477</b>	90	<b>0</b>	1.23
<b>91</b>	Sri Lanka	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.658	<b>0.546</b>	91	<b>0</b>	0.83
<b>92</b>	Thailand	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.654	<b>0.516</b>	93	<b>1</b>	1.01
<b>93</b>	Gabon	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.648	<b>0.512</b>	94	<b>1</b>	0.80
<b>94</b>	Suriname	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.646	<b>0.489</b>	89	<b>-5</b>	..
<b>95</b>	Bolivia	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.643	<b>0.398</b>	92	<b>-3</b>	..
<b>96</b>	Paraguay	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.640	<b>0.482</b>	96	<b>0</b>	0.64
<b>97</b>	Philippines	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.638	<b>0.518</b>	95	<b>-2</b>	0.66
<b>98</b>	Botswana	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.633	..	100	<b>2</b>	1.28
<b>99</b>	Moldova (Republic of)	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.623	<b>0.539</b>	99	<b>0</b>	..
<b>100</b>	Mongolia	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.622	<b>0.527</b>	102	<b>2</b>	..
<b>101</b>	Egypt	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.620	<b>0.449</b>	103	<b>2</b>	1.52
<b>102</b>	Uzbekistan	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.617	<b>0.521</b>	101	<b>-1</b>	..
<b>103</b>	Micronesia (Federated States of)	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.614	<b>0.375</b>	98	<b>-5</b>	..
<b>104</b>	Guyana	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.611	<b>0.497</b>	105	<b>1</b>	0.67
<b>105</b>	Namibia	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.606	<b>0.338</b>	107	<b>2</b>	..
<b>106</b>	Honduras	MEDIUM HUMAN	0.604	<b>0.419</b>	106	<b>0</b>	1.09

		DEV					
<b>107</b>	Maldives	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.602	<b>0.508</b>	111	<b>4</b>	..
<b>108</b>	Indonesia	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.600	<b>0.494</b>	110	<b>2</b>	1.43
<b>109</b>	Kyrgyzstan	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.598	<b>0.508</b>	109	<b>0</b>	..
<b>110</b>	South Africa	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.597	<b>0.411</b>	104	<b>-6</b>	..
<b>111</b>	Syrian Arab Republic	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.589	<b>0.467</b>	108	<b>-3</b>	0.75
<b>112</b>	Tajikistan	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.580	<b>0.469</b>	112	<b>0</b>	..
<b>113</b>	Viet Nam	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.572	<b>0.478</b>	114	<b>1</b>	..
<b>114</b>	Morocco	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.567	<b>0.407</b>	115	<b>1</b>	1.59
<b>115</b>	Nicaragua	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.565	<b>0.426</b>	113	<b>-2</b>	0.84
<b>116</b>	Guatemala	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.560	<b>0.372</b>	116	<b>0</b>	1.05
<b>117</b>	Equatorial Guinea	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.538	..	118	<b>1</b>	..
<b>118</b>	Cape Verde	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.534	..	117	<b>-1</b>	..
<b>119</b>	India	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.519	<b>0.365</b>	120	<b>1</b>	1.61
<b>120</b>	Timor-Leste	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.502	<b>0.334</b>	131	<b>11</b>	..
<b>121</b>	Swaziland	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.498	<b>0.320</b>	121	<b>0</b>	..
<b>122</b>	Lao People's Democratic Republic	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.497	<b>0.374</b>	126	<b>4</b>	..
<b>123</b>	Solomon	MEDIUM	0.494		119	<b>-4</b>	

	Islands	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV					
124	Cambodia	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.494	<b>0.351</b>	125	1	..
125	Pakistan	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.490	<b>0.336</b>	123	-2	1.52
126	Congo	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.489	<b>0.334</b>	122	-4	0.19
127	Sao Tome and Principe	MEDIUM HUMAN DEV	0.488	..	124	-3	..
128	Kenya	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.470	<b>0.320</b>	127	-1	0.50
129	Bangladesh	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.469	<b>0.331</b>	130	1	1.99
130	Ghana	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.467	<b>0.349</b>	128	-2	0.84
131	Cameroon	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.460	<b>0.304</b>	129	-2	0.87
132	Myanmar	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.451	..	138	6	..
133	Yemen	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.439	<b>0.289</b>	141	8	..
134	Benin	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.435	<b>0.282</b>	134	0	1.67
135	Madagascar	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.435	<b>0.308</b>	133	-2	..
136	Mauritania	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.433	<b>0.281</b>	136	0	..
137	Papua New Guinea	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.431	..	137	0	1.27
138	Nepal	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.428	<b>0.292</b>	143	5	2.37
139	Togo	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.428	<b>0.287</b>	135	-4	0.70

140	Comoros	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.428	<b>0.240</b>	132	<b>-8</b>	..
141	Lesotho	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.427	<b>0.282</b>	140	<b>-1</b>	0.24
142	Nigeria	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.423	<b>0.246</b>	142	<b>0</b>	..
143	Uganda	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.422	<b>0.286</b>	147	<b>4</b>	..
144	Senegal	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.411	<b>0.262</b>	144	<b>0</b>	1.15
145	Haiti	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.404	<b>0.239</b>	139	<b>-6</b>	..
146	Angola	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.403	<b>0.242</b>	148	<b>2</b>	..
147	Djibouti	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.402	<b>0.252</b>	146	<b>-1</b>	..
148	Tanzania	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.398	<b>0.285</b>	149	<b>1</b>	..
149	Côte d'Ivoire	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.397	<b>0.254</b>	145	<b>-4</b>	0.42
150	Zambia	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.395	<b>0.270</b>	151	<b>1</b>	0.11
151	Gambia	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.390	<b>0.238</b>	150	<b>-1</b>	..
152	Rwanda	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.385	<b>0.243</b>	154	<b>2</b>	1.45
153	Malawi	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.385	<b>0.261</b>	153	<b>0</b>	1.33
154	Sudan	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.379	..	152	<b>-2</b>	1.39
155	Afghanistan	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.349	..	156	<b>1</b>	..
156	Guinea	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.340	<b>0.209</b>	155	<b>-1</b>	..

		DEV					
<b>157</b>	Ethiopia	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.328	<b>0.216</b>	160	<b>3</b>	..
<b>158</b>	Sierra Leone	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.317	<b>0.193</b>	159	<b>1</b>	1.09
<b>159</b>	Central African Republic	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.315	<b>0.183</b>	158	<b>-1</b>	0.58
<b>160</b>	Mali	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.309	<b>0.191</b>	162	<b>2</b>	2.10
<b>161</b>	Burkina Faso	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.305	<b>0.195</b>	161	<b>0</b>	..
<b>162</b>	Liberia	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.300	<b>0.188</b>	164	<b>2</b>	0.05
<b>163</b>	Chad	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.295	<b>0.179</b>	157	<b>-6</b>	..
<b>164</b>	Guinea-Bissau	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.289	<b>0.166</b>	163	<b>-1</b>	..
<b>165</b>	Mozambique	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.284	<b>0.155</b>	165	<b>0</b>	1.25
<b>166</b>	Burundi	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.282	<b>0.177</b>	167	<b>1</b>	1.47
<b>167</b>	Niger	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.261	<b>0.173</b>	166	<b>-1</b>	1.51
<b>168</b>	Congo (Democratic Republic of the)	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.239	<b>0.153</b>	168	<b>0</b>	-0.37
<b>169</b>	Zimbabwe	LOW HUMAN DEV	0.140	<b>0.098</b>	169	<b>0</b>	-1.81

SOURCE: UNDP

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