

Human development indices and indicators: 2018 Statistical Update ^[1]

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Introduction

The greatest innovations of the HDRs have been new measurement tools—notably the Human Development Index (HDI), launched in the first HDR (box 1). The underlying principle of the HDI, considered pathbreaking in 1990, was elegantly simple: National development should be measured not only by income per capita, as had long been the practice, but also by health and education achievements. Ranking countries by their HDI value transformed the development discourse and dethroned income per capita as the sole indicator of development progress.

Over the years additional indices have been developed to capture other dimensions of human development to identify groups falling behind in human progress and to monitor the distribution of human development. In 2010 three indices were launched to monitor poverty, inequality and gender empowerment across multiple human development dimensions: the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), the Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI) and the Gender Inequality Index (GII). In 2014 the Gender Development Index (GDI) was introduced.

It is 28 years since the launch of the first HDR, and new challenges to human development, especially inequality and sustainability, require concerted measurement and analytical attention. Data availability is expanding with new opportunities for measurement innovation and disaggregation and possibilities for new partnerships growing out of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Technologies are introducing new ways of communicating key report messages. These are all opportunities to strengthen the analysis, insights, relevance and reach of future HDRs. Reflecting on the next generation of HDRs that give full consideration to new challenges and opportunities for analysis and innovation takes time. Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update is being released to ensure consistency in reporting on key human development indices and statistics. It provides a brief overview of the state of human development—snapshots of current conditions as well as long-term trends in human development indicators. And it includes a full statistical annex of human development composite indices and indicators across their various dimensions.

This update includes the 2017 values for the HDI and other composite indices as well as current statistics in key areas of human development for use by policymakers, researchers and others in their analytical, planning and policy work. In addition to the standard HDR tables, statistical dashboards are included to draw attention to the relationship between human well-being and five topics: quality of human development, life-course gender gaps, women's empowerment, environmental sustainability and socioeconomic sustainability. Accompanying the statistical annex is an overview of trends in human development, highlighting the considerable progress, but also the persistent deprivations and disparities.

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