

NEWS RELEASE

Hong Kong again leads world in economic freedom, followed by Singapore, New Zealand and Switzerland

September 14, 2015
For immediate release

TORONTO—Hong Kong is once again the most economically free jurisdiction in the world, according to the Fraser Institute’s annual *Economic Freedom of the World* report.

The report measures the economic freedom (levels of personal choice, ability to enter markets, security of privately owned property, rule of law, etc.) by analysing the policies and institutions of 157 countries and territories.

“Economic freedom breeds prosperity, and the most economically free countries offer the highest quality of life while the lowest-ranked countries are usually burdened by oppressive regimes that limit the freedom and opportunity of their citizens,” said Fred McMahon, Dr. Michael A. Walker Research Chair in Economic Freedom with the Fraser Institute.

According to the report, based on 2013 statistics (the most recent year of available data), the top 10 most economically free jurisdictions are Hong Kong (which continues its streak of number one rankings), Singapore, New Zealand, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, Mauritius, Jordan, Ireland and Canada, with the United Kingdom and Chile tied for 10th.

“Hong Kong’s still number one but because democracy is the best safeguard of freedom, if China, which ranks low in economic freedom, encroaches on Hong Kong, we can expect Hong Kong’s ranking to fall,” McMahon said.

The United States, once considered a bastion of economic freedom, now ranks 16th in the world, a steep fall from second place in the world rankings in 2000.

“A weakened rule of law, the so-called wars on terrorism and drugs, and a confused regulatory environment have helped erode economic freedom in the United States, which has now fallen behind more economically free countries such as Qatar, Jordan and the U.A.E.,” McMahon said

Other notable rankings include Japan (26), Germany (29), Russia (99), China (111) and India (114).

The 10 lowest-ranked countries are Angola, Central African Republic, Zimbabwe, Algeria, Argentina, Syria, Chad, Libya, Republic of Congo, and Venezuela. Some despotic countries such as North Korea and Cuba can’t be ranked due to lack of data.

Globally, the average economic freedom score rose slightly to 6.86 out of 10 from 6.84 last year.

According to research in top peer-reviewed journals, people living in countries with high levels of economic freedom enjoy greater prosperity, more political and civil liberties, and longer lives.

For example, countries in the top quartile of economic freedom had an average per-capita GDP of US\$38,601 in 2013, compared to US\$6,986 for bottom quartile nations.

Moreover, the average income in 2013 of the poorest 10 per cent in the most economically free countries (US\$9,881) dwarfed the overall average income in the least free countries (US\$1,629). And life expectancy is 80.1 years in the top quartile of countries compared to 63.1 years in the bottom quartile.

The Fraser Institute produces the annual *Economic Freedom of the World* report in cooperation with the Economic Freedom Network, a group of independent research and educational institutes in 90 nations and territories. It’s the world’s premier

measurement of economic freedom, ranking countries based on economic freedom, which is measured in five areas: size of government, legal structure and security of property rights, access to sound money, freedom to trade internationally, and regulation of credit, labour and business.

The 2015 report was prepared by James Gwartney, Florida State University, Robert A. Lawson, Southern Methodist University and Joshua Hall, West Virginia University.

Check out our Economic Freedom of the World [video here](#).

The full report is available at www.freetheworld.com. And you can 'Like' the Economic Freedom Network @ www.facebook.com/EconomicFreedomNetwork.

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