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# Income as Development's Yardstick: \_\_\_\_\_

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## \_\_\_\_\_ UN Study Challenges the Standard

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By Barbara Crossette

**C**hallenging traditional ways by which the world has measured the growth of nations, a new report issued by the United Nations

Development Program concludes that there is no automatic link between a country's per capita income and the well-being and progress of its people.

The report, prepared by an international team under the direction of Mahbubul Haq, a former minister of finance and planning in Pakistan, is intended to touch off a debate in the last decade of this century over why some nations, however poor in resources, make people's lives better and others fail.

"People cannot be reduced to a single dimension as economic creatures," the administrator of the Development Program, William H. Draper, says in an introduction to the report.

In an age of democratic urges, Mr. Draper says, factors like longevity, education human rights and political freedoms must be part of growth.

The report singles out 15 countries that have achieved relatively high levels of development in democratic, or "reasonably democratic," settings. These are Botswana, Colombia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mexico, Mauritius, Trinidad and Tobago, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

"Life does not begin at \$11,000, the average per capita income in the industrial world," the report says. "Sri Lanka managed a life expectancy of 71 years and an adult literacy rate of 87 per cent with a per capita income of \$400."

In South Asia, Sri Lanka is the exception. The nations of the reg-

ion, from Afghanistan through Pakistan, India, Nepal and Bhutan to Bangladesh, are all among the countries where human development is lowest, the report says.

The findings confirm what is daily becoming more readily observable: The Asian "miracle" is largely confined to Southeast Asia and East Asia.

In plotting regional aggregates of human development over nearly 30 years. South Asia falls behind all other regions of the world except sub-Saharan Africa in improving calorie intake, life expectancy of children under age 5, adult literacy and access to basic health care.

Meanwhile, populations continue to grow at a very fast rate in an area where more than a billion people are already straining natural resources and where government are spending large amounts of their revenues on the military and law enforcement.

By virtually every measure of material human progress, China, the world's most populous nation, outstrips India, a democratic country whose leaders contend that the Chinese have been more successful only because they apply policies coercively.

The report introduces a new measure of growth, the Human Development Index, based on a three-step calculation of deprivation measured in three basic variables: life expectancy, literacy and real disposable income. ■

*The report, titled "Human Development Report 1990," is published by the Oxford University Press in Oxford, England, and in New York.*

Courtesy - International Herald Tribune

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