



Commitment to Development Index 2008

United States

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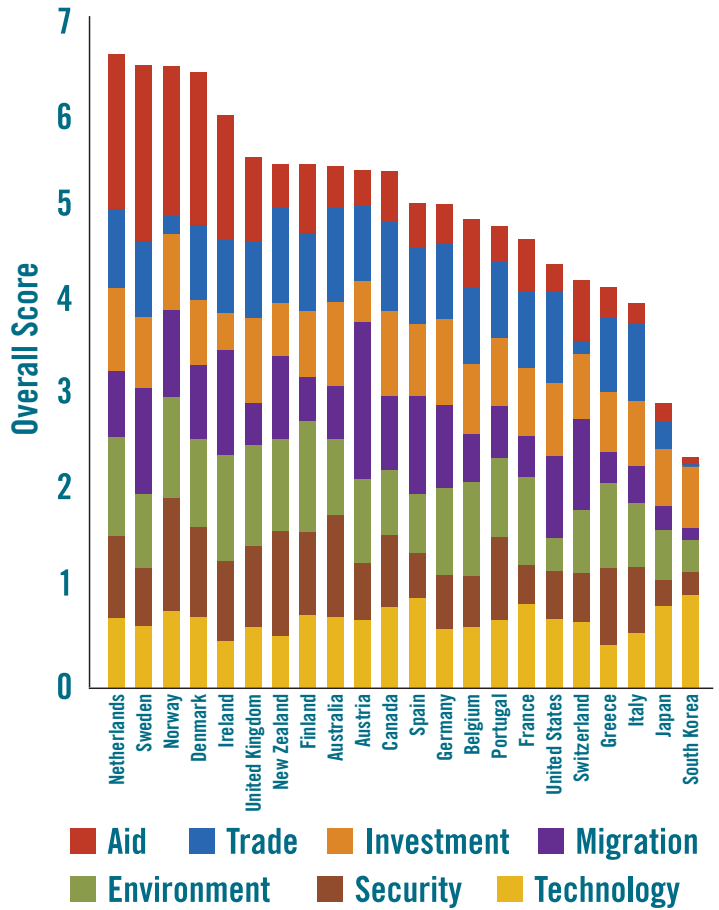
The Commitment to Development Index (CDI) ranks 22 of the world's richest countries based on their dedication to policies that benefit poor nations. Looking beyond standard comparisons of foreign aid flows, the CDI measures national effort in seven policy areas that are important to developing countries: aid, trade, investment, migration, environment, security and technology. This report reviews the United States' performance on the 2008 CDI.

United States' 2008 CDI Performance

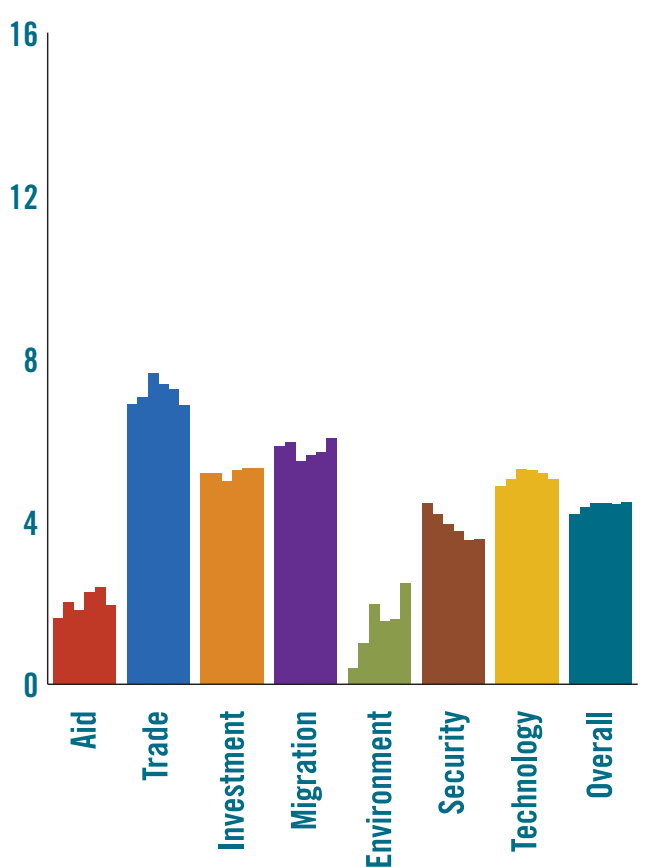
- Overall rank 2008: 17
- Overall score 2008: 4.5
- Change since 2003: +0.3
(using 2008 methodology)

The United States ranks 17th overall in 2008. U.S. barriers against developing country agricultural exports are lower than those of most CDI countries, and some U.S. policies promote healthy investment in poor countries. But the United States finishes near the bottom of the rankings in both the foreign aid and environment components. U.S. foreign aid is small as a share of its income and it "ties" a large share of this aid to the purchase of U.S. goods and services. The United States also has the lowest gas taxes and among the highest greenhouse gas emission rates per person. It is the only CDI country that has not signed the Kyoto Protocol.

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United States' CDI Performance, 2003–08



Aid

Aid quality is just as important as aid quantity, so the CDI measures gross aid as a share of GDP adjusted for various quality factors: it subtracts debt service, penalizes “tied” aid that makes recipients spend aid only on donor goods and services, rewards aid to poor but relatively uncorrupt recipients, and penalizes overloading poor governments with many small projects.

■ **Score: 1.9**

■ **Rank: 19**

Strengths

- Large amount of private charitable giving attributable to tax policy (rank as a share of GDP: 6)

Weaknesses

- Low net aid volume as a share of the economy (0.16%; rank: 19)
- Large share of tied or partially tied aid (47%; rank: 22)
- Selectivity: large share of aid to less poor and relatively undemocratic governments (rank: 22)

Trade

International trade has been a force for economic development for centuries. The CDI measures trade barriers in rich countries against exports from developing countries.

■ **Score: 6.8**

■ **Rank: 3**

Strengths

- Low tariffs on agricultural products (10.6% of the value of imports; rank: 3)
- Low agricultural subsidies (equivalent to 11.9% tariff; rank: 9)

Weaknesses

- High barriers against textiles (8.4% of the value of imports; rank: 19)
- High barriers against apparel (9.6% of the value of imports; rank: 18)

Investment

Rich-country investment in poorer countries can transfer technologies, upgrade management and create jobs. The CDI includes a checklist of policies that support healthy investment in developing countries

■ **Score: 5.3**

■ **Rank: 7**

Strengths

- Employs foreign tax credits to prevent double taxation of corporate profits earned abroad
- Particularly active in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and in the G-8 Anti-Corruption and Transparency Action Plan
- Provides support for outflows of portfolio investment

Weaknesses

- Limits insurance against political risk to domestically owned firms
- Employs inappropriate home country national economic tests for eligibility of projects
- Negligent in identifying bribery and corrupt practices on the part of home country firms abroad
- Imposes some restrictions on pension fund investments in emerging markets

Migration

The movement of people from poor to rich countries provides unskilled immigrants with jobs, income and knowledge. This increases the flow of money sent home by migrants abroad and the transfer of skills when the migrants return.

■ **Score: 6.0**

■ **Rank: 9**

Strengths

- Large increase during the 1990s in the number of unskilled immigrants from developing countries living in the United States (rank by share of population: 2)
- Large share of foreign students from developing countries (78%; rank: 9)

Weaknesses

- Bears small share of the burden of refugees during humanitarian crises (rank: 16)

Environment

Rich countries use a disproportionate amount of scarce resources and poor countries are most vulnerable to global warming and ecological deterioration, so the CDI measures the impact of policies on the global climate, fisheries, and biodiversity.

■ **Score: 2.5**

■ **Rank: 21**

Weaknesses

- High greenhouse gas emissions rate per capita (21.3 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent; rank: 20)
- Low gas taxes (\$0.10 per liter; rank: 22)
- Has not ratified the Kyoto Protocol on climate change
- Large number of endangered species imports (rank: 17)

Security

Since security is a prerequisite for development, the CDI rewards contributions to internationally sanctioned peacekeeping operations and forcible humanitarian interventions, rewards military protection of global sea lanes, and penalizes arms exports to poor and undemocratic governments.

■ **Score: 3.6**

■ **Rank: 17**

Strengths

- Has the most military ships in the world stationed in sea lanes that are important to international trade (rank by share of GDP: 1)

Weaknesses

- High arms exports to poor and undemocratic governments (rank by share of GDP: 21)
- Small financial and personnel contributions to internationally sanctioned peacekeeping and humanitarian interventions over last decade (rank by share of GDP: 15)

Technology

Rich countries contribute to development through the creation and dissemination of new technologies. The CDI captures this by measuring government support for R&D and penalizing strong intellectual property rights regimes that limit the dissemination of new technologies to poor countries.

■ **Score: 5.0**

■ **Rank: 11**

Strengths

- High government expenditure on R&D (rank by share of GDP: 1)
- Does not offer patent-like proprietary rights to developers of data compilations, including those assembled from data in the public domain

Weaknesses

- Large share of government R&D expenditure on defense (6.0%; rank: 22)
- Low tax subsidy rate for business R&D (rank: 14)
- Allows patents on plant and animal varieties
- Allows patents on software programs
- Pushes to incorporate into bilateral free trade agreements “TRIPS-Plus” measures that restrict the flow of innovations to developing countries
- Imposes strict limitations on anti-circumvention technologies that can defeat encryption of copyrighted digital materials

Background Papers and Contributors

See “The Commitment to Development Index: 2008 Edition” by David Roodman, available at www.cgdev.org/cdi. The website also has background papers for each policy area: David Roodman on foreign aid, William R. Cline on trade, Theodore H. Moran on investment, Elizabeth Grieco and Kimberly A. Hamilton on migration, Amy Cassara and Daniel Prager on environment, Michael E. O’Hanlon and Adriana Lins de Albuquerque on security, and Keith Maskus on technology.

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Country	Rank	Aid	Trade	Investment	Migration	Environment	Security	Technology	Overall Score	Change since 2003
Netherlands	1	11.4	5.9	6.1	4.9	7.2	6.1	5.1	6.7	0.0
Sweden	2	13.0	5.6	5.2	7.8	5.4	4.3	4.6	6.6	+0.3
Norway	2	11.0	1.4	5.6	6.4	7.5	8.3	5.6	6.6	+0.3
Denmark	4	11.3	5.5	4.8	5.5	6.5	6.7	5.2	6.5	-0.6
Ireland	5	9.2	5.4	2.8	7.7	7.9	5.9	3.4	6.0	+0.7
United Kingdom	6	6.2	5.6	6.3	3.1	7.5	6.0	4.4	5.6	+0.1
New Zealand	7	3.2	7.1	3.9	6.1	6.8	7.7	3.8	5.5	-0.4
Finland	7	5.1	5.7	4.9	3.2	8.2	6.2	5.3	5.5	+0.4
Australia	7	3.1	6.9	6.1	4.0	5.6	7.5	5.2	5.5	-0.2
Austria	7	2.7	5.5	3.0	11.6	6.2	4.2	5.0	5.5	0.0
Canada	11	3.8	6.5	6.3	5.5	4.7	5.4	5.9	5.4	+0.2
Spain	12	3.3	5.6	5.3	7.3	4.3	3.3	6.6	5.1	+0.7
Germany	12	2.9	5.5	6.3	6.2	6.4	4.0	4.3	5.1	0.0
Belgium	14	5.1	5.5	5.2	3.6	6.9	3.7	4.5	4.9	+0.3
Portugal	14	2.6	5.6	5.0	3.9	5.8	6.2	4.9	4.9	+0.4
France	16	4.0	5.6	5.0	3.0	6.6	2.9	6.2	4.7	0.0
United States	17	1.9	6.8	5.3	6.0	2.5	3.6	5.0	4.5	+0.3
Switzerland	18	4.5	1.0	4.8	6.6	4.6	3.6	4.8	4.3	-0.4
Greece	19	2.3	5.5	4.4	2.3	6.3	5.7	3.1	4.2	+0.5
Italy	20	1.5	5.7	4.8	2.7	4.7	4.9	4.0	4.1	0.0
Japan	21	1.4	2.0	4.2	1.8	3.6	2.0	6.0	3.0	+0.8
South Korea	22	0.6	0.0	4.6	0.9	2.3	1.7	6.8	2.4	n/a

This table ranks the 22 countries in the CDI, showing their scores in seven policy areas. A country's overall score is the average of its seven policy scores. The final column shows the change in each country's overall score since the CDI began in 2003, using 2008 methodology.

The CGD website (www.cgdev.org/cdi) has reports on each of the 22 countries in the CDI, as well as graphs, maps, spreadsheets and background papers.

The Commitment to Development Index is designed by the Center for Global Development, an independent think tank that works to reduce global poverty and inequality by encouraging policy change in the United States and other rich countries through rigorous research and active engagement with the policy community.

David Roodman, the architect of the Commitment to Development Index, is a Research Fellow at the Center for Global Development.