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GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Chile

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Chile Boasts the Highest Living Standard in Latin America

Report Categories:

Agriculture in the News

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Report Highlights:

Chile maintained its rank of 44 on the United Nations report, beating Argentina, Uruguay and Cuba.

General Information:

Chile remains the country with the highest standard of living in Latin America, according to the report of the Human Development Index (HDI) released Wednesday by the United Nations. This news is consistent with the fact that Chile is also the only Latin American country to become a member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Chile ranks 44 out of 187 and is top-ranked among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, beating Argentina (45), Uruguay (48) and Cuba (51). The HDI is calculated from a set of indicators including literacy rates, years of schooling, life expectancy and per capita income.

The Global Human Development Report 2011, titled "Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All," also classifies Chile as a country with a "very high" development index, a designation offered to the first 47 countries listed.

The ranking is led by Norway, followed closely by Australia, Holland, the United States, New Zealand, Canada, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Germany and Sweden. This year's index included 187 countries, 18 more than in 2010.

Over the last 31 years, the UN report shows that human development in Chile showed a steady rise. Between 1980 and 2011, life expectancy grew by about 9.9 years; expected schooling increased by 3.4 years, and gross national income per capita grew 158 percent.

"This evolution makes us realize that the country has had the ability to advance steadily in its human development, building capacity on the basis of a balanced combination between economic growth and public policies that pay off in the long term," said the report released by the United Nations.

The HDI was developed by the United Nations Development Program in 1990 as an alternative to the classification of countries progress only based on the level of GDP. Chile's HDI value was calculated as 0.805 on a scale from zero to one.