	HDI* rank	Poverty line*	GDP	Budget Education % GDP	% of population access to drinking water &
		Gini*	GDP /hab.	SLE*	sanitation
Cambodia	138	20% (2012)	**Total:** 39.6 billions	2.6% **Rank:** 152	**Water:** 67%
Pop. = 15,5 million 52% under 25 years		Gini: 37.9	**/hab:** $2,600 **Rank:** 183 **Tourism=23.5%**	**SLE** = 11 years	**Sanitation:** 33%
China	101	13.4% (2011)	**GDP:** 13,37 trillion	NA	**Water:** 92%
Pop. = 1.355 billion (2014) 32% under 25 years		Gini: 47.4	**/hab:** $9,800 **Rank:** 120 **Tourism=9.2%**	**SLE** = 13 years	**Sanitation:** 65%
Indonesia	121	11.7% (2012)	**GDP:** 1,285 trillion	2.8% **Rank:** 143	**Water:** 84%
Pop.= 253,6 million 43% under 25 years		Gini: 36.8	**/hab:** $5,200 **Rank:** 158 **Tourism=9.2%**	**SLE** = 13 years	**Sanitation:** 58%
Japan	10	16% (2010)	**GDP:** $4.7 trillion	3.8% **Rank:** 115	**Water:** 100%
Pop. = 127 million 23% under 25 years		Gini: 37.6	**/hab:** $37,100 **Rank:** 5 **Tourism=6.9%**	**SLE** = 15 years	**Sanitation:** 100%
Laos	138	26% (2010)	**GDP:** $20.8 billion	2.8% **Rank:** 147	**Water:** 70%
Pop. = 6,8 million 56% under 25 years		Gini: 36.7	**/hab:** $3,100 **Rank:** 177 **Tourism=14.2%**	**SLE** = 10 years	**Sanitation:** 61%
Myanmar	149	32.7% (2007)	**GDP:** $111 billion	0.8% **Rank:** 172	**Water:** 84%
Pop. = 55,7 million 35% under 25 years		NQ	**/hab:** $1,700 **Rank:** 201 **Tourism=3.7%**	**SLE** = 9 years	**Sanitation:** 77%
Thailand	103	7.8% (2010)	**GDP:** $674 billion	5.8% **Rank:** 47	**Water:** 96%
Pop. = 67,7 million 33% under 25 years		Gini: 53.6	**/hab:** $9,900 **Rank:** 31 **Tourism=20.2%**	**SLE** = 13 years	**Sanitation:** 93%
Vietnam	127	11.3% (2012)	**GDP:** $359 million	6.3% **Rank:** 33	**Water:** 96%
Pop. = 93,4 million 42% under 25 years		Gini: 37.6	**/hab:** $4,000 **Rank:** 169 **Tourism=9.6%**	**SLE** = NA	**Sanitation:** 75%

Sources: CIA The World Factbook - WTTC for share of tourism sector in GDP

* **HDI** = Human Development Index – **SLE** = School life expectancy – **Gini** index measures the degree of inequality in the distribution of family income in a country, the higher it is the more unequal is the society - **Poverty line:** National estimates of the percentage of the population falling below the poverty line are based on surveys of sub-groups, with the results weighted by the number of people in each group. Definitions of poverty vary considerably among nations. For example, rich nations generally employ more generous standards of poverty than poor nations. **Share of tourism in GDP**: total contribution of tourism to the GDP including direct, indirect and induced impacts.

Countries' Snapshot

Data was collected from various sources including CIA, Oxfam, Global Forest watch.

Cambodia

Cambodia is rising out of a history marred by conflict and unrest. Since 2004, garments, construction, agriculture, and tourism have driven Cambodia's growth. GDP climbed more than 7% per year between 2010 and 2013. The garment industry currently employs more about 400,000 people and accounts for about 70% of Cambodia's total exports. In 2005, exploitable oil deposits were found beneath Cambodia's territorial waters, representing a potential revenue stream for the government, if commercial extraction becomes feasible. Mining also is attracting some investor interest and the government has touted opportunities for mining bauxite, gold, iron and gems. The tourism industry has continued to grow rapidly with foreign arrivals exceeding 2 million per year since 2007 and reaching over 3 million visitors in 2012.

Cambodia, nevertheless, remains one of the poorest countries in Asia and long-term economic development remains a daunting challenge, inhibited by endemic corruption, limited educational opportunities, high income inequality, and poor job prospects. Approximately 4 million people live on less than $1.25 per day, and 37% of Cambodian children under the age of 5 suffer from chronic malnutrition. More than 50% of the population is less than 25 years old. The majority of Cambodians live in the countryside with 85% of the population largely dependent on small-scale agriculture, fishery and forestry assets for their livelihoods. The population lacks education and productive skills, particularly in the impoverished countryside, which also lacks basic infrastructure. The Cambodian Government is working with bilateral and multilateral donors to address the country's many pressing needs; more than 50% of the government budget comes from donor assistance. The major economic challenge for Cambodia over the next decade will be fashioning an economic environment in which the private sector can create enough jobs to handle Cambodia's demographic imbalance. Cambodia was ranked by Standard & Poors as the country with the highest vulnerability to climate change in the world with the least capacity to recover from climate change impacts on its economy.

Another major challenge is deforestation Cambodia which has the fifth highest deforestation rate in the world; forest cover has fallen from about 72 per cent in 1973 to only about 46 per cent in 2013, with most clearing having taken place since 2000. This is sometimes done in the name of tourism development with some National Parks like Botum Sakor and Bokor litterally sold to the private sector ;careful planning and regulation will be important to avoid negative impact to the environment and the natural resources on which, aside from the tourism sector, many people depend. Along deforestation, social issues are increasing with regular eviction of the most disadvantaged from their ancestral land and livelihoods.

Indonesia

Indonesia, a vast polyglot nation, has grown strongly since 2010. During the global financial crisis, Indonesia outperformed its regional neighbours and joined China and India as the only G20 members posting growth. The government has promoted fiscally conservative policies, resulting in a debt-to-GDP ratio of less than 25% and historically low rates of inflation. Fitch and Moody's upgraded Indonesia's credit rating to investment grade in December 2011. Indonesia still struggles with poverty and unemployment, inadequate infrastructure, corruption, a complex regulatory environment, and unequal resource distribution among regions. The government also faces the challenges of quelling labour unrest and reducing fuel subsidies in the face of high oil prices. Deforestation is also accelerating with over 2 million hectares lost in 2012 on a total of 142 million hectares, palm tree plantation being the first cause of land use change. According to FAO data, 59.3% of GHG emissions in this country came from land-use change and forestry in 2011

Laos

Despite a strong growth rate (over 7% per year during 2008-13), Laos remains a country with an underdeveloped infrastructure, particularly in rural areas. The labour force, however, relies mainly on agriculture, dominated by rice cultivation in lowland areas, which accounts for about 25% of GDP and 73% of total employment. Economic growth has reduced official poverty rates from 46% in 1992 to 26% in 2010. The economy also has benefited from high-profile foreign direct investment in hydropower, copper and gold mining, logging, and construction though some projects in these industries have drawn criticism for their environmental impacts. Civil society was allowed only in late 2009 and is slowly shaping up this is a significant development in the Lao political context where there is no organized political opposition and little space for freedoms of association, speech and media. With 56% of its population under 25 years old and limited education infrastructures Laos is as well facing a huge challenge for its future generations,

The government of Laos, one of the few remaining one-party communist states, began decentralizing control and encouraging private enterprise in 1986. The results, starting from an extremely low base, were striking - growth averaged 6% per year from 1988-2008 except during the short-lived drop caused by the Asian financial crisis that began in 1997. Laos' growth exceeded 7% per year during 2008-13. Despite this high growth rate, Laos remains a country with an underdeveloped infrastructure, particularly in rural areas. It has a basic, but improving, road system, and limited external and internal land-line telecommunications. Electricity is available in 83 % of the country. Laos' economy is heavily dependent on capital-intensive natural resource exports. The labour force, however, still relies on agriculture, 70% of the population works in semi-subsistence agriculture dominated by rice cultivation in lowland areas, which accounts for about 25% of GDP and 73% of total employment. Economic growth has reduced official poverty rates from 46% in 1992 to 26% in 2010. The economy also has benefited from high-profile foreign direct investment in hydropower, copper and gold mining, logging, and construction though some projects in these industries have drawn criticism for their environmental impacts. The commercial exploitation of the natural resources on which the most vulnerable communities and especially women rely, has a significant impact on their livelihoods.

The World Bank has declared that Laos' goal of graduating from the UN Development Program's list of least-developed countries by 2020 is achievable, and the country is preparing to enter the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015.

Civil society, only allowed in 2009, is slowly shaping up and this is a significant development in the political context of Laos where there is no organised political opposition and little space for freedoms of association, speech and media. With 56% of its population under 25 years old, 26% below the poverty line and limited education infrastructures in place, Laos is facing a huge challenge in relation to the lives of its future generations.

Myanmar

Since the transition to a civilian government in 2011, Burma has begun an economic overhaul aimed at attracting foreign investment and reintegrating into the global economy. Economic reforms have included establishing a managed float of the Burmese kyat in 2012, granting the Central Bank operational independence in July 2013, and enacting a new Anti-corruption Law in September 2013. The government's commitment to reform, and the subsequent easing of most Western sanctions, has begun to pay dividends. The economy accelerated in 2012 and 2013. And Burma's abundant natural resources, young labor force, and proximity to Asia's dynamic economies have attracted foreign investment in the energy sector, garment industry, information technology, and food and beverages.

Although Myanmar is rich in natural resources such as petroleum, timber, minerals, gemstones, natural gas, and hydropower, the political, economic and social problems of the last forty years have left the country suffering extreme levels of poverty. Many communities have been affected by conflicts, loss of lands and of political freedom. Myanmar is one of the few countries in the world where parents are better educated than their children, and skills levels have been in decline for two to three decades. In November 2010, political elections heralded the start of a positive move towards democracy. Although relative freedom of speech has been restored and many political prisoners released, problems remain, including rights issues such as the persecution and killings of Muslims and members of the Rohyngiya ethnic group; child labour, which is still common and the fact that major sectors of the economy and in particular upmarket hotels and tourist venues are mainly controlled by former members of the junta or closely related to it. Boycotted by the international community for years, Myanmar has now become the latest, fashionable tourist destination and has been experiencing a unique tourism boom in the last two years, which it is struggling to cope with. We hope the Ministry of Tourism will keep up its open stance on sustainable development and responsible tourism. The haste to build the necessary hospitality infrastructures and develop tourism business does not augur well for consideration for environmental and social issue, and deforestation is another major issue. Myanmar is a fantastic natural destination with one of the largest, untouched virgin forests in Asia, however government data shows that its forest cover shrank by one-fifth, from 58 % to 47 %, between 1990 and 2010.

Thailand

With a well-developed infrastructure, a free-enterprise economy, generally pro-investment policies, and strong export industries, Thailand achieved steady growth due largely to industrial and agriculture exports - mostly electronics, agricultural commodities, automobiles and parts, and processed foods. Unemployment, at less than 1% of the labour force, stands as one of the lowest levels in the world, which puts upward pressure on wages in some industries. Thailand also attracts nearly 2.5 million migrant workers from neighbouring countries. The Thai government in 2013 implemented a nation-wide 300 baht ($10) per day minimum wage policy and deployed new tax reforms designed to lower rates on middle-income earners. The Thai economy has weathered internal and external economic shocks in recent years. The global economic recession severely cut Thailand's exports, with most sectors experiencing double-digit drops. In late 2011 Thailand's recovery was interrupted by historic flooding in the industrial areas in Bangkok and its five surrounding provinces, crippling the manufacturing sector. The government approved flood mitigation projects worth $11.7 billion, which were started in 2012, to prevent similar economic damage, and an additional $75 billion for infrastructure over the following seven years. This was expected to lead to an economic upsurge but growth has remained slow, in part due to ongoing political unrest and resulting uncertainties. The political unrest is so far not in any way threatening the security of tourists, but if it continues it may be detrimental to one of the main sectors of the economy (20% of total contribution to GDP)

Vietnam

Vietnam is a densely-populated developing country that has been transitioning from the rigidities of a centrally-planned economy since 1986. Vietnamese authorities have reaffirmed their commitment to economic modernization in recent years. Agriculture's share of economic output has continued to shrink from about 25% in 2000 to less than 20% in 2013, while industry's share increased from 36% to more than 42% in the same period. State-owned enterprises account for about 40% of GDP. Poverty has declined significantly, and Vietnam is working to create jobs to meet the challenge of a labour force that is growing by more than one million people every year. Between 2008 and 2011, Vietnam's managed currency, the dong, was devalued in excess of 20%, but its value remained relatively stable in 2013. Hanoi has oscillated between promoting growth and emphasizing macroeconomic stability in recent years. In February 2011, the government shifted from policies aimed at achieving a high rate of economic growth, which had stoked inflation, to those aimed at stabilizing the economy, through tighter monetary and fiscal control.

After years of institutional and economic reform, Vietnam’s poverty rate declined rapidly. In 1990, Vietnam was among the world’s poorest countries with a GDP per capita of $98. By 2010, GDP reached $1,000. Vietnam is now defined as a lower middle income country by the World Bank.

Of the total Vietnamese population of 88 million people (2010), 13 million people still live in poverty and many others remain near poor. Poverty reduction is slowing down and inequality increasing with persistent deep pockets of poverty. This is especially true for ethnic minorities, who make up for 14 percent of the population, but account for half of the country’s poor people.