

DATA AT A GLANCE

Marked Gaps in International Tourist Arrivals in Countries with Contrasting Conditions

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In every nook and cranny of the world, countries are striving to scale up their international tourism arrivals, for the benefit of their national coffers as well as their domestic companies and workforce. The prospects of countries to draw more international tourists also depend on how they are classified by global organizations (e.g., the World Bank) according to their conditions. This report establishes the linkage between the economic-political classification of countries and their numbers of international tourist arrivals, defined as those who visit another country for less than 12 months for non-remunerative purposes.

With raw 1996-2016 data drawn from the World Bank (2018) and analyzed in this report, Table 1 suggests that countries in higher income levels, including those that are not fragile and not affected

by conflict, tend to have more international tourist arrivals. Countries at the top of the classification receive international tourists by several hundreds of millions during the period, while countries in the lower strata only receive either some millions or some tens of millions of international tourists. Regardless of classifications, the data clearly indicate that all countries have increases in their international tourist arrivals, with low-tiered countries seeing far more increases than their richer counterparts. For example, the former (e.g., Nepal) received 50% to 100% more in international tourists in 1996–2006 and in 2006–2016, while the latter (e.g., Singapore) received far less numbers (<40%). Data have tourism marketing and promotion implications for many countries throughout the world.

Table 1

Number of International Tourist Arrivals by Countries Classified According to Economic-Political Conditions, 1996–2016

Classification of Countries	Arrivals			% Change, 1996-2006, 2006-2016
	1996	2006	2016	
High income (e.g., Singapore)	390,435,530	538,504,917	749,546,775	37.9, 39.2
Upper-middle income (e.g., Russian Federation)	119,330,472	217,526,032	337,029,449	82.3, 54.9
Lower-middle income (e.g., Sudan)	34,553,041	84,928,134	133,242,209	145.8, 56.9
Low income (e.g., Nepal)	5,810,806	10,001,308	16,104,549	72.1, 61.0
Heavily-indebted poor countries (e.g., Malawi)	5,096,742	11,138,075	21,590,019	118.5, 93.8
Fragile and conflict affected countries (e.g., Afghanistan)	6,201,841	14,408,939	No data	132.3

Reference

The World Bank. (2018). *International tourism, number of arrivals*. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/st.int.arvl>