



**\*\*\*EMBARGO TILL 6 AM GMT (2 AM EDT) MARCH 20, 2017\*\*\***

## **Fifth World Happiness Report 2017 Ranks Happiest Countries**

NEW YORK, March 20—The World Happiness Report 2017, which ranks 155 countries by their happiness levels, was released today at the United Nations at an event celebrating World Happiness Day. The report, the fifth one to come out since 2012, continues to gain global recognition as governments, organizations and civil society increasingly use happiness indicators to inform their policy-making decisions. In addition to the rankings, this year's report includes an analysis of happiness in the workplace and a deeper look at China and Africa.

"The World Happiness Report," said Jeffrey Sachs Director of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, "continues to draw global attention around the need to create sound policy for what matters most to people – their well-being. As demonstrated by many countries, this report gives evidence that happiness is a result of creating strong social foundations. It's time to build social trust and healthy lives, not guns or walls. Let's hold our leaders to this fact."

Norway ranks as the happiest country, jumping three spots from last year and displacing Denmark, which had held the top spot for three out of the past four years. Rounding out the rest of the top ten in order are Denmark, Iceland, Switzerland, Finland, Netherlands, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and Sweden. The U.S. ranked 14th dropping down one spot from last year.

Despite recent declines in oil prices, oil-rich Norway still moved into the top spot, illustrating once more that high happiness depends on much more than income.

"It's a remarkable case in point," said Professor John Helliwell of the University of British Columbia. "By choosing to produce oil deliberately and investing the proceeds for the benefit of future generations, Norway has protected itself from the volatile ups and downs of many other oil-rich economies. This emphasis on the future over the present is made easier by high levels of mutual trust, shared purpose, generosity and good governance. All of these are found in Norway, as well as in the other top countries."

This year the World Happiness Report gives special attention to the social foundations of happiness, including especially happiness in the workplace. "People tend to spend the majority of their lives working, so it is important to understand the role that employment and unemployment play in shaping happiness," said Professor Jan-Emmanuel De Neve, Saïd Business School, University of Oxford.

"The research reveals that happiness differs considerably across employment status, job type, and industry sectors. People in well paid roles are happier, but money is only one predictive measure of happiness - work-life balance, job variety and the level of autonomy, are other significant drivers. There is a clear distinction in happiness between white and blue collar jobs with managers or

[www.unsdsn.org](http://www.unsdsn.org) – [info@unsdsn.org](mailto:info@unsdsn.org)

Reid Hall, 4 Rue de Chevreuse, 75006 Paris, France – Tel +33 (1) 84 860 660

314 Low Library, 535 W 116th Street, New York, NY 10027, USA – Tel +1 (212) 870-2776 – Fax +1 (212) 854-8702

N 21, Second Floor, Green Park Extension, New Delhi, 110016, INDIA – Tel +(91) 11 410 30859

professionals evaluating the quality of their lives at a much higher level than those in manual labor jobs even controlling for any possible confounding factors.”

The report is produced by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) through a three-year grant from the Ernesto Illy Foundation. It is edited by Professor John F. Helliwell of the University of British Columbia and the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research; Professor Richard Layard, director of the Well-Being Programme at LSE’s Centre for Economic Performance; and Professor Sachs, director of SDSN.

We are particularly proud to partner for the first time with SDSN and support the production of the World Happiness Report through the Ernesto Illy Foundation,” said Andrea Illy, Chairman of illycaffé. “There are many reasons that make me feel passionate about this partnership. Because coffee and happiness go hand in hand, illy decided to embrace the idea of happiness from the beginning. Our motto ‘live HAPPilly’ resonates with the eternal human search for happiness, which includes four elements: the Greek ‘eudemonia’ (virtue & harmony); wellbeing; altruism; and the perspective of the future. illy has always been promoting the virtuous circle of coffee’, which brings wellbeing to consumers, while generating social and economic development within the producing communities. This important mix of happy & healthy lifestyle and sustainability generated by coffee is central to our choice to support the World Happiness Report.”

As previous reports have done, The World Happiness Report 2017 looks at trends in the data recording how highly people evaluate their lives on a scale running from 0 to 10. The rankings, which are based on surveys in 155 countries covering the three years 2013-2015, reveal an average score of 5.1 (out of 10). Six key variables explain three-quarters of the variation in annual national average scores over time and among countries: real GDP per capita, healthy life expectancy, having someone to count on, perceived freedom to make life choices, freedom from corruption, and generosity (Table 2.1).

The report includes the following chapters:

- Social Foundations of World Happiness by John Helliwell, Haifang Huang, and Shun Wang
- Growth and Happiness in China, 1990-2015 by Richard Easterlin, Fei Wang, and Shun Wang
- ‘Waiting for Happiness’ in Africa by Valerie Møller, Benjamin Roberts, Habib Tiliouine, and Jay Loschky
- The Key Determinants of Happiness and Misery by Andrew Clark, Sarah Flèche, Richard Layard, Nattavudh Powdthavee, and George Ward
- Happiness at Work by Jan-Emmanuel De Neve, George Ward
- Restoring American Happiness by Jeffrey Sachs

**MEDIA INQUIRIES: Kyu Lee, [klee@ei.columbia.edu](mailto:klee@ei.columbia.edu), 646-337-3528**

**[www.worldhappiness.report](http://www.worldhappiness.report)**