**2015 Index of Economic Freedom**

Recently, the Heritage Foundation has published in partnership with the Wall Street Journal its **2015** **Index of** **Economic Freedom** of the world.

The report measures the economic freedom by analysing the policies and institutions of 178 countries and territories. The *Index* evaluates countries in four broad policy areas that affect economic freedom: rule of law; limited government; regulatory efficiency; and open markets. There are 10 specific categories: property rights, freedom from corruption, fiscal freedom, government spending, business freedom, labor freedom, monetary freedom, trade freedom, investment freedom, and financial freedom. Scores in these categories are averaged to create an overall score.

According to the index, the most economically free jurisdictions are Hong Kong, Singapore, New Zealand, Australia, and Switzerland.

There is a clear link between economic freedom and prosperity: countries in the top quintile of economic freedom have a significantly higher average per-capita GDP than the bottom quintile nations.

In the ASEAN the degree of economic freedom differs significantly from country to country. Whereas Singapore is the second most free economy in the world, only 5 of the 9 ASEAN members (Myanmar was not surveyed) make it into the Top 100. Least free are two of the poorest countries of the ASEAN: Laos (rank 150 out of 178) and Vietnam (rank 148). However –both, Laos and Vietnam, achieved their highest scores since the index was launched in 1995.