

The new view of the Earth

What does the world look like? Extremely detailed maps are providing us the clearest picture ever. And, yet, they still provide only a limited view: that of the Earth's surface. Scientists from the United Kingdom and the United States have freed themselves from these confines. They are creating a new picture of our planet by placing the land surface in relation to other variables – and opening our eyes to the state of the Earth.

World population

1,000

With only 1,000 residents, the Vatican can't be seen on this picture. And even Namibia, a country twice the size of Germany, has almost disappeared. But China, with its nearly 1.3 billion residents, spreads far and wide, just like India and Japan.



Patent registrations

112,000

In 2002, 312,000 patents were registered around the world. Japan led all nations with 112,000 of them, followed by South Korea and the United States. But inventors can't be found everywhere: In one-quarter of all countries, not one single patent was registered in 2002.



Fresh water

20%

Ten of the 20 biggest rivers flow through the Amazon basin. As a result, one-fifth of the world's fresh water supplies can be found there. Oil-rich countries such as Libya, Saudi Arabia and Oman are among the world's most waterless regions.



Income distribution

23,800

The average income of the poorest tenth of Luxembourg's population is \$23,800 a year – but the picture is much different in such countries as Sierra Leone (\$26) or Niger (\$63). Countries where the poorest citizens have a relatively high income – and where relatively little inequality exists – are the largest areas on this map.



Metal exports

1,222

Midgets to giants: Iceland earns \$1,222 per capita each year on metal exports. Copper-rich Chile, gold-filled South Africa and even Germany are large net exporters. But the United States imports more metals than it exports – and disappears from the map as a result.



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