

13 July 2006

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[Vanuatu Island "Happiest Place on Earth" Survey Shows](#)

The Pacific island hits number one in the so called "Happy Planet Index"

According to a new survey, published on Wednesday, the small island of Vanuatu in the Pacific was placed on the highest spot of the "Happy Planet Index", which consists of data compiled by the New Economics Foundation and Friends of the Earth, based on criteria such as life expectancy, happiness and consumption levels that damage the "environmental footprint", and not economic wealth or the like. Thus, the island, whose population barely hits 209,000, was called "the happiest place on Earth", because people display a general trend of happiness, live to nearly 70 and do not harm the planet. However, the interesting part is that although the island is at the top of the index, it is situated on the 207th place, in terms of economy, out of 233, when judged by the GDP criteria. Mark Lowen, of Vanuatu Online, stated: "People are generally happy here because they are very satisfied with very little. This is not a consumer-driven society. Life here is about community and family and goodwill to other people. It's a place where you don't worry too much". The index, which was created in order to prove the fact that people can live long and happy enough without using too much of the Earth's resources, also highlighted the fact that even though Western living standards have improved quite a lot in the past half a century, they still do not provide a greater incentive for people to be happy. According to Nic Marks, who was one of the people who contributed to this study, stated that this poll shows that well-being does not have to be linked to high consumption level: "No single nation listed in the index has got everything right, but it does reveal patterns that show how we might better achieve long and happy lives for all while living within our environmental means. The challenge is, can we learn the lessons and apply them?" As far as the rest of the top is concerned, Columbia was placed on the second spot, with Costa Rica third and Dominica fourth. Germany is on the 81st place, Japan on the 95th, Russia is ranked at 172, while Zimbabwe is at the bottom, on 178.