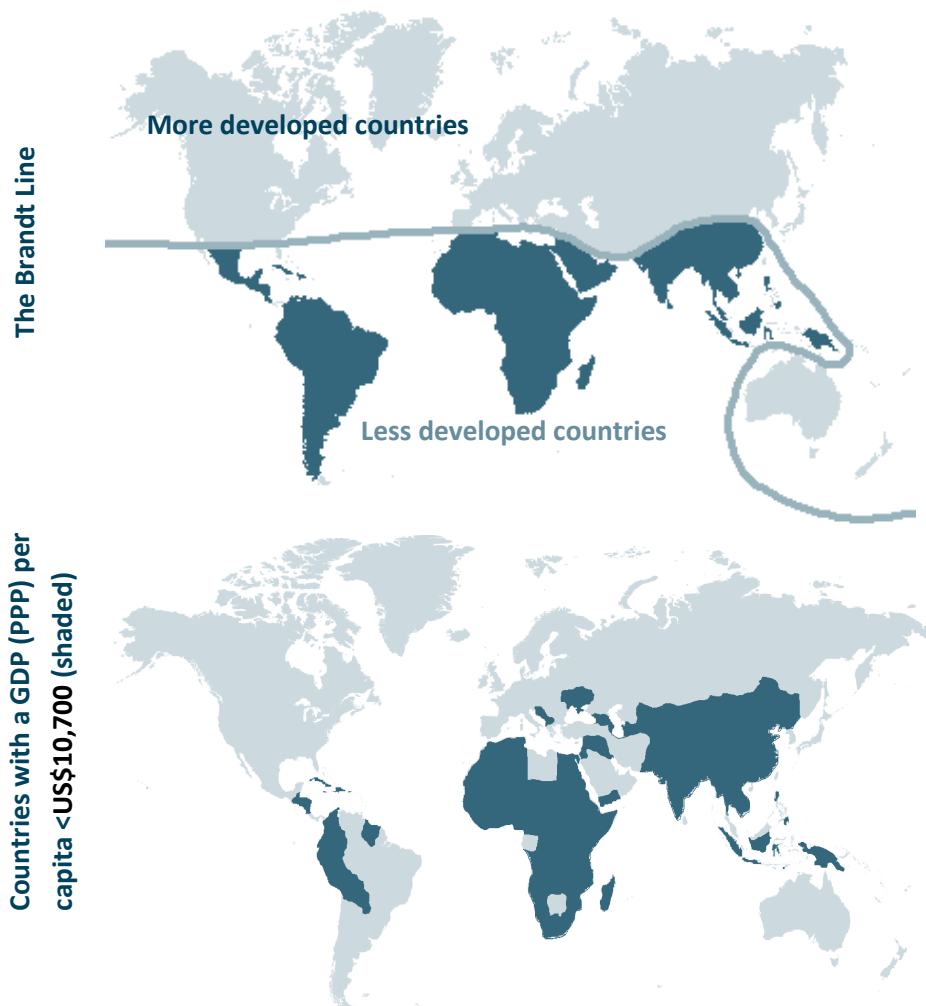


# The Global North/South Divide

## Definition

The concept of a gap between the Global North and the Global South in terms of development and wealth.



## Classifying countries

In the 1980s, the **Brandt Line** was developed as a way of showing how the world was geographically split into relatively richer and poorer nations. According to this model:

- Richer countries are almost all located in the Northern Hemisphere, with the exception of Australia and New Zealand.
- Poorer countries are mostly located in tropical regions and in the Southern Hemisphere.

However over time it was realised that this view was too simplistic. Countries such as Argentina, Malaysia and Botswana all have above global average GDP (PPP) per capita, yet still appear in the 'Global South'. Conversely, countries such as Ukraine appear to be now amongst a poorer set of countries by the same measure.

## The gap between the 'North' and 'South'

Despite very significant development gains globally which have raised many millions of people out of absolute poverty, there is substantial evidence that inequality between the world's richest and poorest countries is widening. In 1820 western Europe's per capita income was three times bigger than Africa's but by 2000 it was thirteen times as big. In addition, in 2013, Oxfam reported that the richest 85 people in the world owned the same amount of wealth as the poorest half of the world's population.

Today the world is much more complex than the Brandt Line depicts as many poorer countries have experienced significant economic and social development. However, inequality *within* countries has also been growing and some commentators now talk of a 'Global North' and a 'Global South' referring respectively to richer or poorer communities which are found both within and between countries. For example, whilst India is still home to the largest concentration of poor people in a single nation it also has a very sizable middle class and a very rich elite.

There are many causes for these inequalities including the availability of natural resources; different levels of health and education; the nature of a country's economy and its industrial sectors; international trading policies and access to markets; how countries are governed and international relationships between countries; conflict within and between countries; and a country's vulnerability to natural hazards and climate change.