# Making the Human Rights Performance of Countries More Transparent

## New data for use in research and advocacy

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HRMI

Human Rights Measurement Initiative

"We tend to overvalue the things we can measure and undervalue the things we cannot."

— John Hayes

# The Human Rights Measurement Initiative (HRMI)

- Global collaborative project - founded in late 2015
- Hosted by Motu Economic and Public Policy Research
- Contributors include human rights NGOs, academics, and others
- Funded by philanthropic grants & donations

# What are we doing and why?

- We are REINVENTING the way human rights data are PRODUCED and USED,

- In order to HOLD Governments to ACCOUNT to FULFIL their HUMAN RIGHTS obligations under international Law, and

- Inspire MORE ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR by states and other actors.

# Users of HRMI data

- Policy makers, advisers, and researchers

- Those who help direct capital flows

- Human rights advocates

- Governments & the United Nations

- Those monitoring SDGs

Right to Opinion and Expression

Right to Assembly and Association

Right to Freedom from Execution

Right to Freedom from Torture

Right to Participate in Government

Right to Food

Right to Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest

Right to Freedom from Disappearance

Right to Education

Right to Health

Right to Housing

Right to Work

# 13 countries in Civil and Political Rights pilot

# Civil & Political Rights Methodology

- Expert survey filled in by in-country human rights practitioners
  - Best available information at the cross-national level
- Ask questions about the type, distribution, and frequency of abuse
- Bayesian statistical model to produce indicators of frequency
  - Cross-nationally comparable
  - Honest about uncertainty

# The Social and Economic Rights Fulfillment Index, SERF Index, & component Right Indices



FULFILLING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS

SAKIKO FUKUDA-PARR | TERRA LAWSON-REMER | SUSAN RANDOLPH

# Suite of 5 Economic and Social Rights Metrics


Right to Food


Right to Education


Right to Health
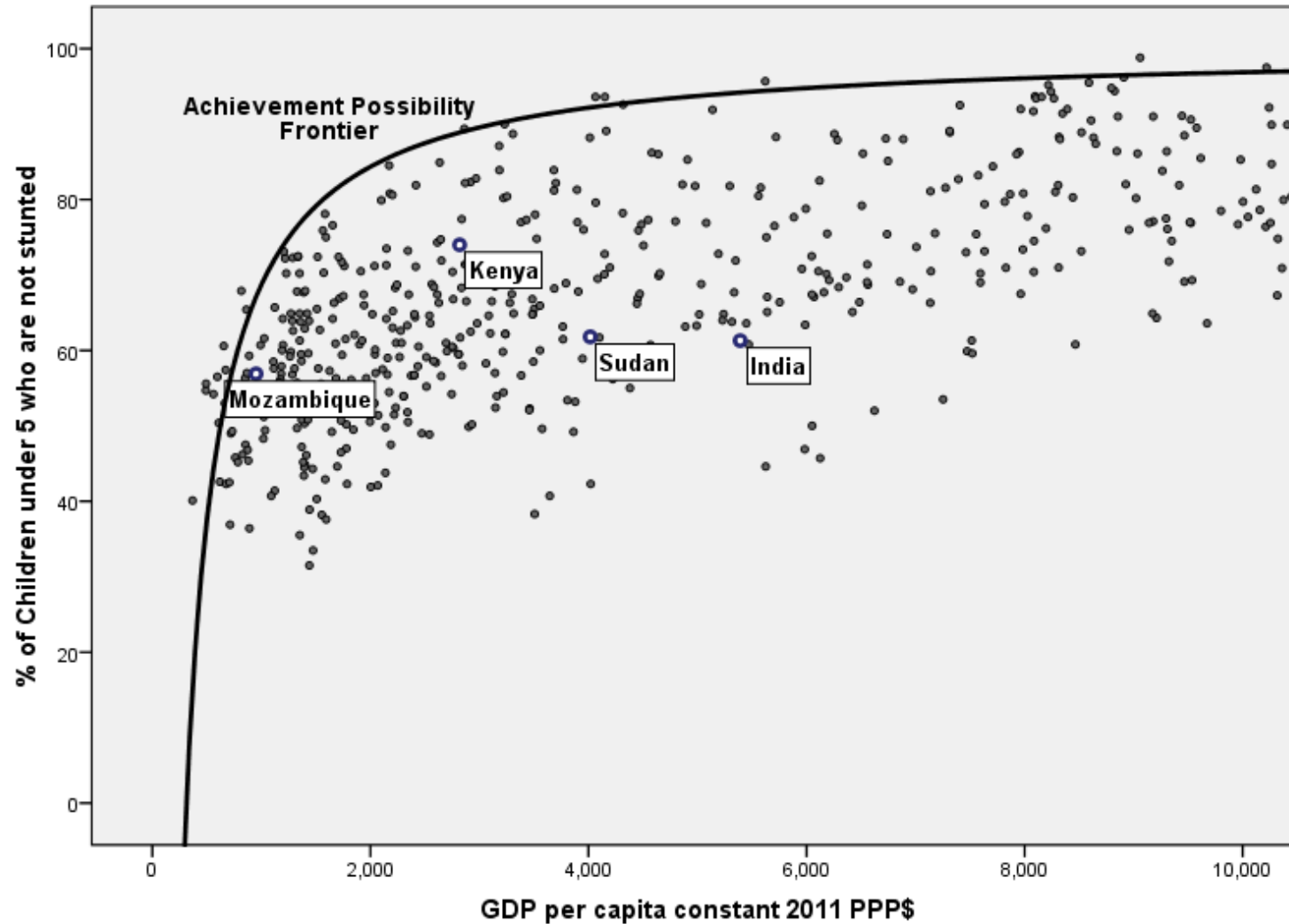

Right to Housing


Right to Work

# Country Obligations:
# Principle of Progressive Realization

- Article 2.1 of the ICESCR obligates countries to fulfill rights to the extent possible given their available resources

- The SERF methodology benchmarks obligations relative to what experience indicates is feasible:
  - for each country
  - at each point in time
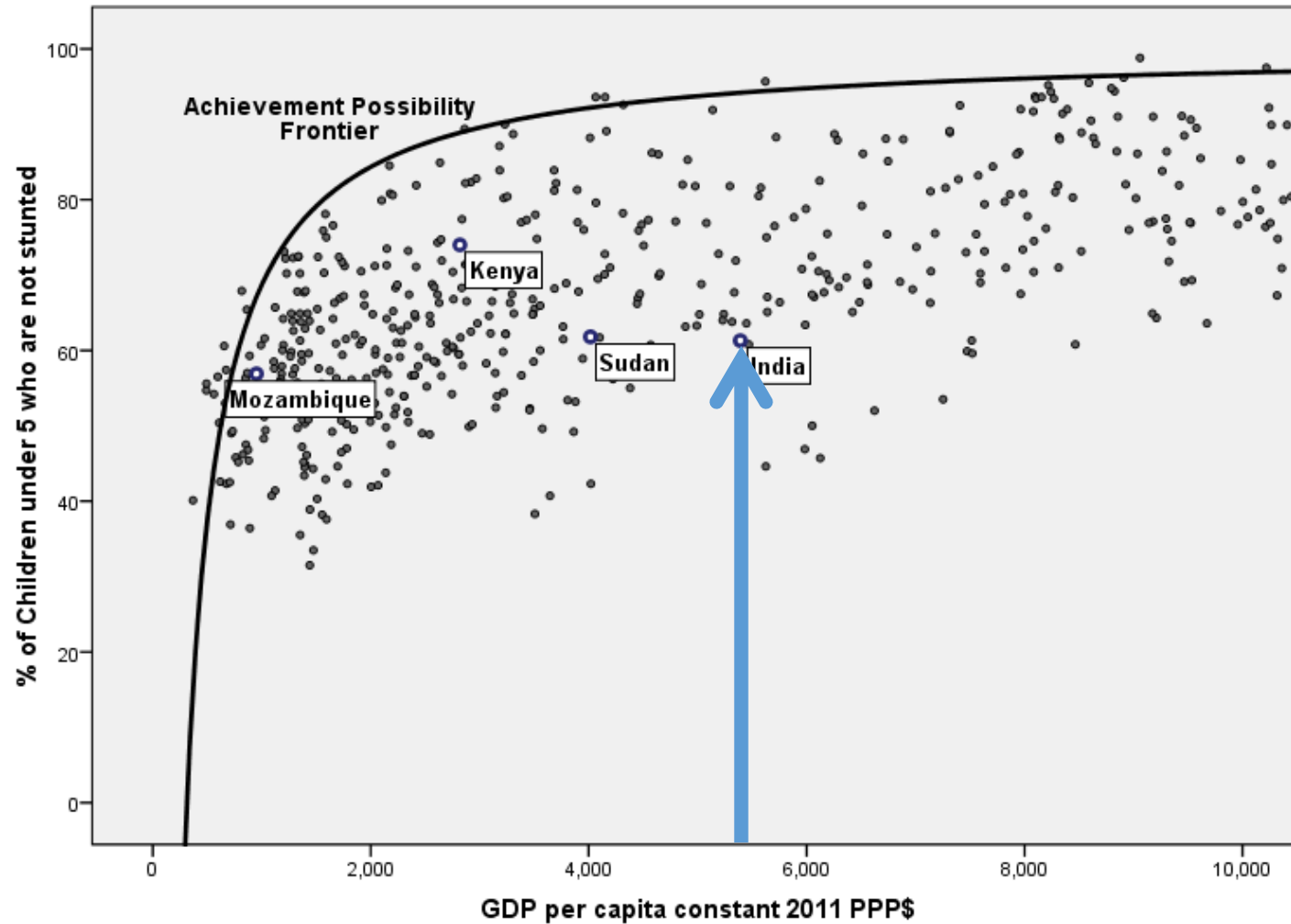  - on each aspect of each economic and social right

# Example - Right to Food
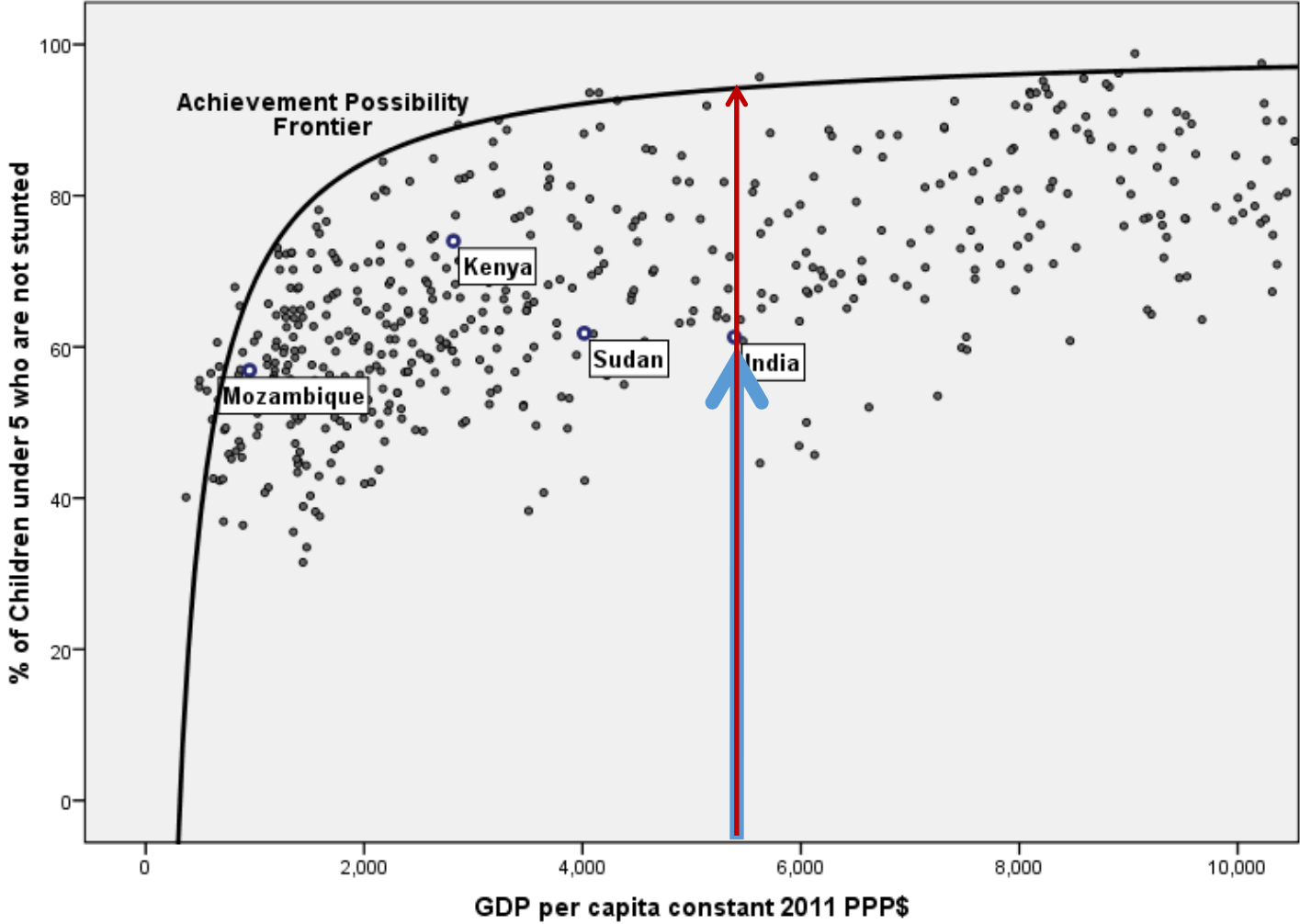
# Achievement Possibilities Frontier—Food

# Achievement Possibilities Frontier—Food

# Achievement Possibilities Frontier—Food

# HRMI Website

https://humanrightsmeasurement.org/

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**HRMI**

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# Extensions of the SERF Approach

- Methodology is very flexible

- Can be used to examine discrepancies among different population subgroups.

- Can be used with alternative data sources

- Can be applied to incorporate alternative indicators.

# Methodology for measuring Civil and Political Rights

- Expert survey filled in by in-country human rights experts:
    - Human Rights NGO researchers and practitioners (e.g. lawyers)
    - Journalists reporting on human rights violations
    - NHRI staff (if A-status)
- Reasons for using expert survey approach:
    - Objective data doesn't exist, or is unreliable
    - It is a tool that gives voice to in-country human rights experts, rather than relying on "western" analysis

# Methodology for Converting Responses into Metrics

- Bayesian methodology allows sensible results to be drawn from small sample sizes (5 or more).

- Survey sent out to 20 - 50 potential respondents in each country
  - Encrypted, single response link
  - 5 to 12 complete responses received per country

- Use of anchoring "vignettes" helps to improve cross-national comparability

- Produces certainty bands around central estimates
  - Narrower "certainty bands" reflects stronger agreement among respondents