FISCAL AFFAIRS

Tracking Domestic Revenue Mobilization: How the IMF's New Database Can Help

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World's Revenue Longitudinal Database (WoRLD): What is it and why it was compiled

Motivation

- Patchwork of various regional databases, not always compiled using a common standard – Eurostat, Latin America, OECD, Africa

- Lack comprehensiveness and coherence in compilation methodology—for example, country coverage; definition of "government revenue" or tax revenue, and time covereage

What is WoRLD

- 32 years of tax and non-tax revenues for 190 IMF member countries

- Common compilation method based on GFS classification of government budget operations

- No surveys or questionnaires—entirely based on existing IMF surveillance data

- 18 months of work and collaboration across various IMF departments

Coverage of WoRLD

- With better IMF data, coverage has improved to 81 percent in 2000-2009 and 90 percent in 2010-2022

- Coverage of tax series surpassed 71 percent from 1990 to 2022

	1990-1999			2000-2009			2010-2022			Global (1990-2022)		
	Countries	Observations	Coverage	Countries	Observations	Coverage	Countries	Observations	Coverage	Countries	Observations	Coverage
Total Revenue	142	1068	55%	188	1781	92%	193	2476	99%	193	5325	84%
Tax Revenue	131	947	49%	188	1740	90%	193	2448	98%	193	5135	81%
Taxes on Income and Profits	123	844	44%	179	1635	85%	189	2323	93%	189	4802	75%
Taxes on Sales and Production	118	788	41%	175	1599	83%	187	2272	91%	187	4659	73%
Taxes on International Trade	113	778	40%	168	1529	79%	180	2193	87%	180	4500	71%
Social Security Contributions	74	462	24%	114	1031	53%	119	1468	59%	119	2961	46%
Grants	108	742	38%	165	1515	78%	170	2103	84%	170	4360	68%
Levies on Extractives	26	182	9%	46	386	20%	57	674	27%	57	1242	20%

Source: Author, based on IMF WoRLD (2024).
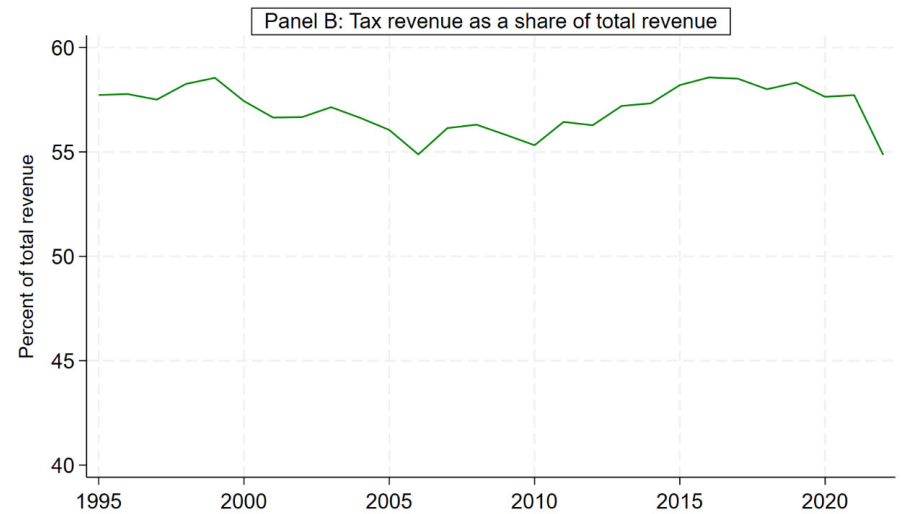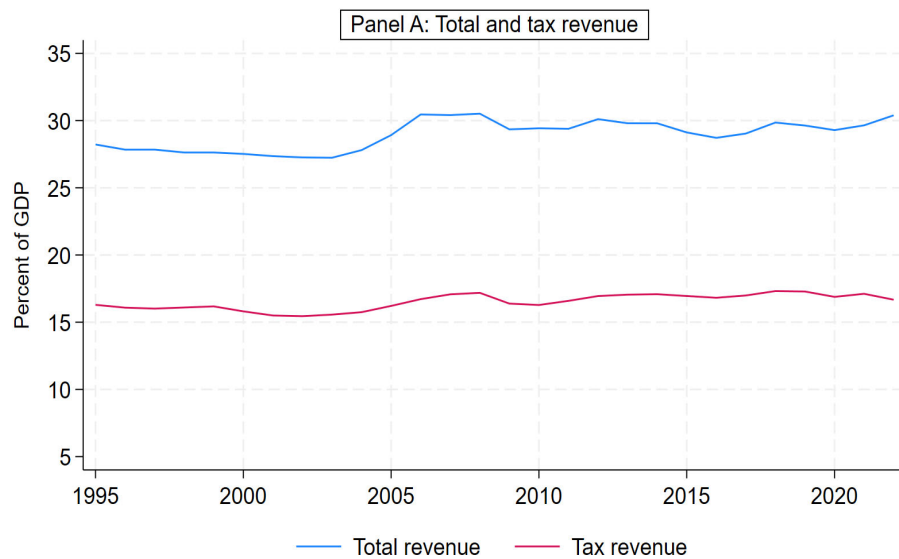
Uses and users of WoRLD

Uses—some examples

- Benchmarking levels and compositions of government tax revenue

- Tracking domestic revenue mobilization

- Impact analysis

- Historical study of tax capacity and tax potential

Users—some examples

- Technical assistance and analytical work at the IMF and other IOs

- Ministries of Finance and tax administrations

- Think-Tanks and academia

- Donors funding projects in taxation and institution building
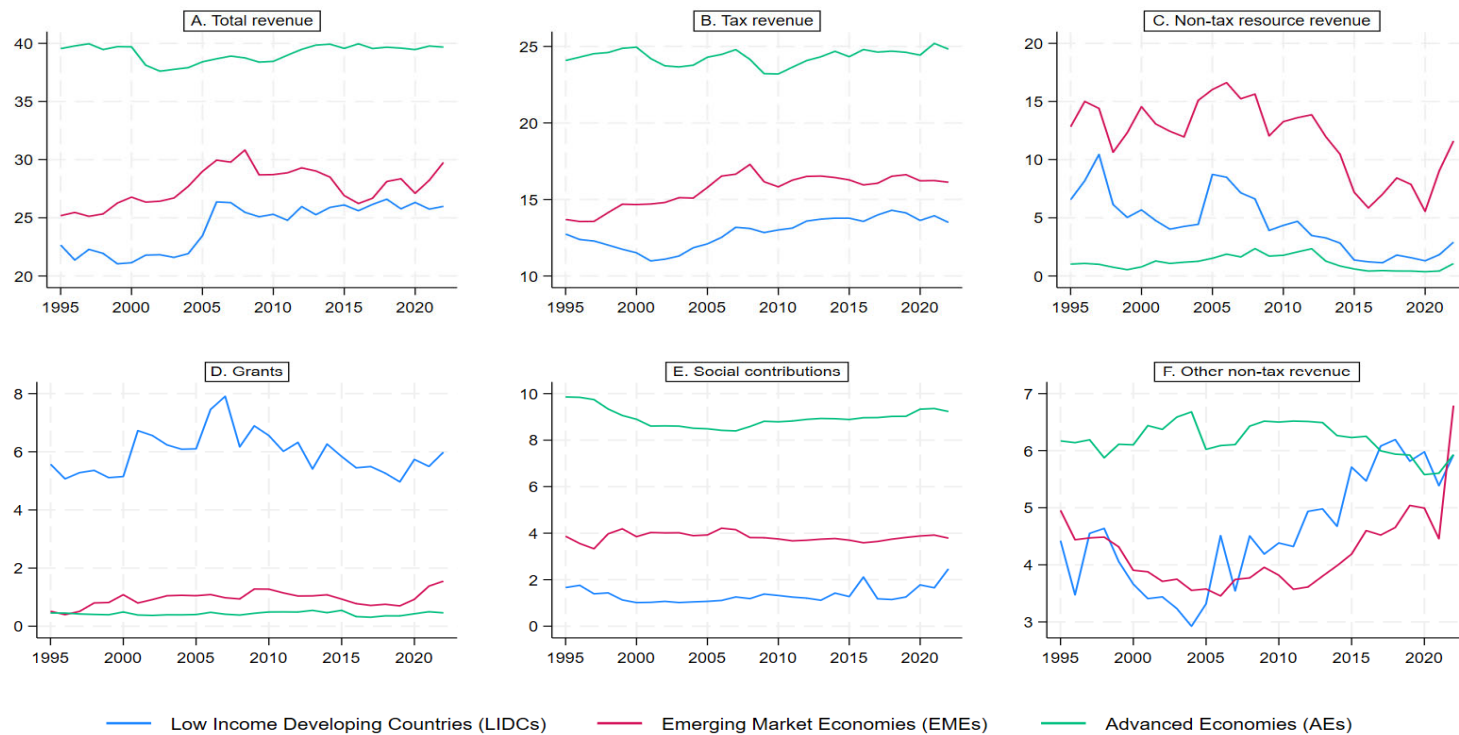
Global Total and Tax Revenue Development

Source: Author, based on IMF WoRLD (2024).
Note: Figures are unweighted averages across countries. 1995 was selected as the start year to have stable country coverage over the period. The data for 2022 do not include all countries, due to data availability at the time of compilation. The next update will include data up to 2024.

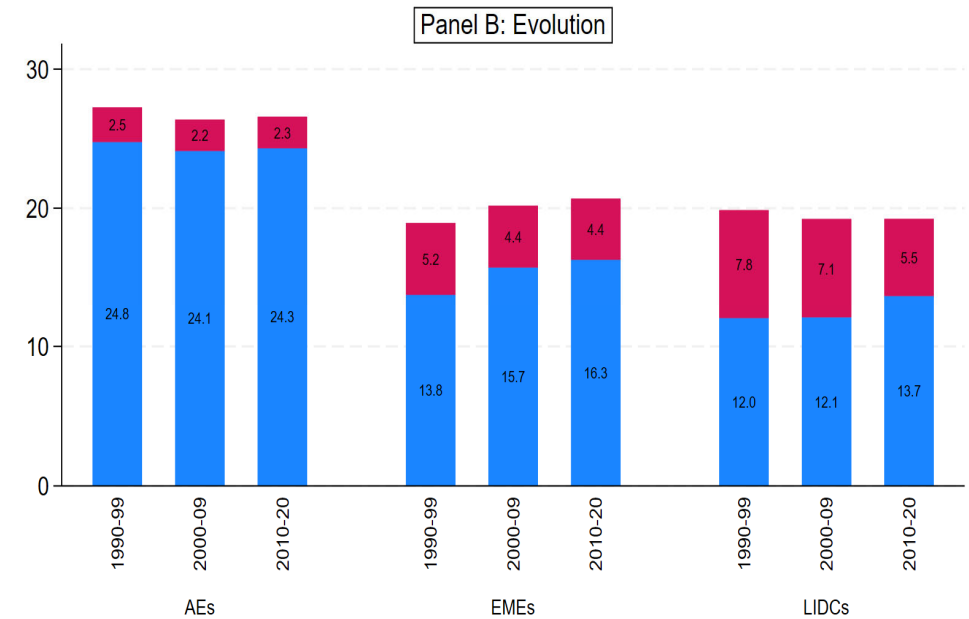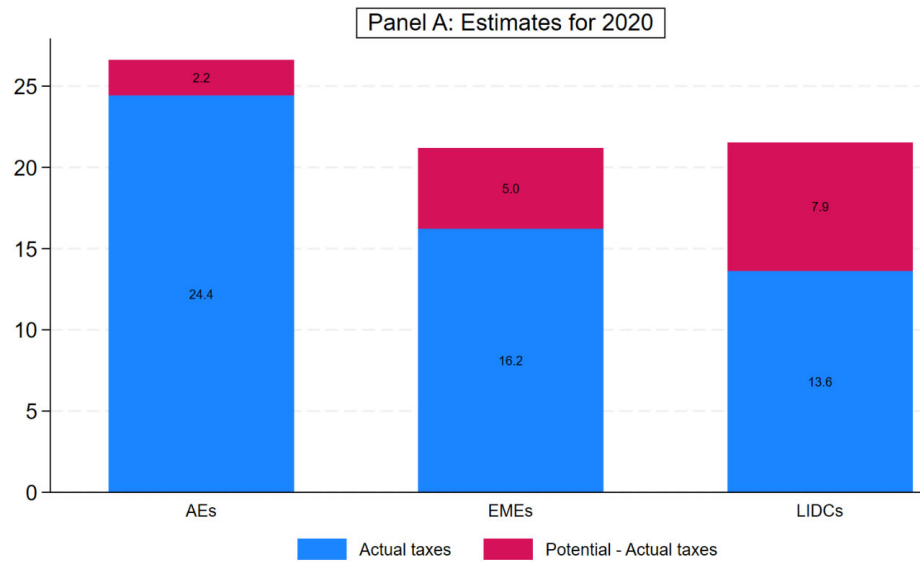# Evolution of Revenue by Type and Income level

(in percent of GDP)

Source: Authors, based on IMF WoRLD (2024).

Notes: Figures are unweighted averages across countries. 1995 was selected as the start year to have stable country coverage over the period. The data for 2022 do not include all countries, due to data availability at the time of compilation. The next update will include data up to 2024. Other non-tax revenue includes other revenues not classified elsewhere in tax revenue, grants, social contributions, and non-tax resource revenue. It was not always possible to identify the source of such revenue, but they may be important in countries rich in natural resources—for example, royalties, dividends, profit shares. These Countries include Guinea, Mozambique, UAE, and Uzbekistan.

Tax Revenue Potential Estimates
(in percent of GDP)

Panel A: Estimates for 2020

Panel B: Evolution

Actual taxes — Potential - Actual taxes

Sources: Author, based on IMF WoRLD (2024); Benitez, Mansour, Pecho, and Vellutini (2023).
Notes: Actual and potential tax revenue estimates exclude social contributions.
AEs: advanced economies; EMEs: emerging markets economies; LIDCs: low-income developing countries.

Next Steps

- Comments and suggestions from users are welcome

- Dedicated IMF landing page is available today

- Annual updates and revision of two most recent years

- Broaden country coverage for 1990-1995, and for 1980s

- Migration to a new IMF data platform

Thank you!

https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/fiscal-policies/world-revenue-longitudinal-database