

Fact Sheet

WorldRiskReport – Analysis and Outlook 2017

The WorldRiskIndex from a five-year perspective

++ A calculation of the WorldRiskIndex average values for the period from 2012 to 2016 shows that the global hotspots for a very high disaster risk lie in Central America, West and Central Africa, Southeast Asia and Oceania.

++ From a five-year perspective, Oceania shows the highest disaster risk. This region consists mainly of island nations and is the only one in which the population's vulnerability to extreme natural events has risen according to the WorldRiskIndex (+0.44 percentage points).

++ At 3.60 percentage points, on a five-year median analysis, Europe has the lowest vulnerability and also bears the lowest disaster risk.

++ Looking at the entirety of countries considered in the WorldRiskIndex from 2012 to 2016, the vulnerability of the population to extreme natural events declined by 2.35 percentage points. Since the WorldRiskIndex calculates the disaster risk multiplying a country's exposure to extreme natural events by its population's vulnerability and no statistical updates are available for exposure, the decline is correspondingly reflected in the risk value.

++ There are significant differences between the values of the vulnerability components in terms of improvements. Susceptibility fell by 0.78 percentage points, the lack of coping capacities by 0.8 percentage points, and the lack of adaptive capacities by 4.73 percentage points.

Guidance for disaster preparedness

++ Extreme natural events and other causes of disasters and acute crises are going to exist in the future, too. Therefore, it is not enough to continuously improve disaster relief. Considerable efforts are also required regarding state conditions – especially in countries frequently hit by disasters – and development cooperation.

++ Conflict and crisis situations raise the level of vulnerability and thus exacerbate the negative impacts of extreme natural events. Thus one of the preconditions for disaster preparedness is that climate change is dammed and adaptive strategies are developed to address extremes in weather and climate. In addition, political solutions are needed for millions of refugees and internally displaced persons.

++ One important way for a nation to protect itself against extreme natural hazards is to learn from previous disasters and make corresponding preparations. This calls for sufficient financial resources and civil society structures.

++ Emergency relief and development cooperation have to be mutually considered. This starts with planning and reaches up to implementation. Binding commitments to sustainable development and long-term disaster preparedness planning are just as important as short-term support in the wake of a disaster.

++ Rapidly growing cities are posing major challenges for municipal administrations. Informal settlements are a particularly big risk. But wherever city institutions and services such as welfare centers, hospitals, rescue forces, and early warning systems are available, urbanization can reduce the risk of disaster. More effective urban planning is therefore needed to raise the protection of the population in the event of a disaster.

How can risk analyses in general and the WorldRiskReport in particular be improved?

++ The worldwide data banks for assessing exposure should be improved. One initial step towards this would be international coordination between those conducting risk analyses.

++ Further analyses and more reliable forecasts are needed regarding hazards that are changing e.g. through climate change.

++ Strain taken through already existing damage as well as political and economic factors such as civil wars, violence, and migration should be given more consideration in the WorldRiskReport in the future. This first of all requires solving operationalization problems.

++ A more in-depth analysis of individual factors putting a country at a high risk can guide priorities in development cooperation. Therefore, the focal topics of WorldRiskReports should be continued and even, if possible, extended.