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Press Release

WorldRiskReport: Vulnerability to extreme natural events has declined

Bonn, November 7, 2017 – The vulnerability of countries worldwide to extreme natural events has declined. On average, people are better prepared for natural hazards such as cyclones or earthquakes than they were five years ago. This is the outcome of a five-year analysis of the WorldRiskIndex. Today, Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft presents its new WorldRiskReport at the COP 23 Climate Conference in Bonn.

The WorldRiskIndex states the risk of an extreme natural event leading to a disaster in 171 countries. The five-year-analysis shows that the disaster risk global hotspots are in Central America, West and Central Africa, Southeast Asia and Oceania. In a comparison of world regions, the disaster risk is at its highest in Oceania and at its lowest in Europe.

“On a global scale, vulnerability to extreme natural hazards has declined. Many countries have learnt from previous disasters and are improving disaster preparedness,” says Peter Mucke, WorldRiskReport Project Director and Managing Director of Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft.

However, warning against false optimism, Mucke adds: “There has been a marked increase in extreme weather events such as storms and heavy rain. This has once again been demonstrated by both the hurricanes in the Caribbean and the severe storms in Germany. And extremes in climate such as prolonged drought are expected to occur more frequently in the future.” Less vulnerability could be offset by higher exposure to natural hazards. Binding commitments to mitigate the consequences of climate change as well as progress in development cooperation and disaster preparedness are therefore indispensable.

The report identifies that there are many options to lessen risk particularly in the tropical, developing coastal nations that are the most at risk including ecosystem-based options. “Mangroves can reduce flood risks to people and property by 25% every year” says Dr. Michael Beck, Lead Marine Scientist for The Nature Conservancy.

Since 2011, the WorldRiskReport has been published annually by Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft, and the WorldRiskIndex it contains was developed together with the Institute for Environment and Human Security of the United Nations University (UNU-EHS).

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Notes to journalists:

- The full report and other material will be available for downloading as of 07.11.2017, 09.00 a.m., at www.WorldRiskReport.org.
- The Report will be presented at the COP 23 German Pavilion, Side Event 012, in Bonn at 4:30 p.m. on the 07.11.2017.
- You are welcome to request further illustrations, infographics and maps from Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft.
- Our authors are available for interviews by phone or in person.

As Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft, Brot für die Welt, Christoffel-Blindenmission, DAHW, Kindernothilfe, medico international, Misereor, terre des hommes, Welthungerhilfe and associated members German Doctors, Oxfam and Plan International provide emergency and long-term aid in disasters and in crisis areas.