



Key findings of the WorldRiskReport 2014

WorldRiskIndex 2014

- The global risk hotspots can be found as in previous years in Oceania, South East Asia, Central America and the southern Sahel region. This is where high exposure to natural hazards and the effects of climate change, such as sea level rise, coincides with very high vulnerable societies.
- Vanuatu is the country with the greatest risk of disaster worldwide (index value: 36.5), followed by the Philippines (index value: 28.25) and Tonga (index value: 28.23). Germany is ranked in position 147 (index value: 3.01). The country with the lowest risk of disaster worldwide is Qatar with an index value of 0.08.
- This year's index covered only 171 instead of the 173 countries evaluated in previous years because new environmental data was integrated into the process that was not available for Sao Tome and Principe. A total of 21 of the 28 indicators were updated.

"Cities as an area of risk" (key focus)

- The infographic "Urban growth worldwide" (Pages 36/37) indicates where growth can be dangerous, i.e. in those areas where rapidly growing cities coincide with high urban exposure to natural hazards.
- In fast growing cities, there is a danger that the enormous influx of people will lead to the development of informal settlements and slums – often in areas that are particularly exposed to natural hazards such as on river banks or steep slopes. Examples of these types of settlements can be found in **Shanghai, Jakarta** and **Rio de Janeiro**.
- High and very high rates (2%-4% and >4%) of population growth in urban areas are exclusively found in developing and emerging countries.
- 22 of the 34 cities with a rate of population growth of over four percent are located in Africa. **Luanda** is the largest of these rapidly growing cities (growth rate of 4.1%) with 5.1 million inhabitants.
- The city with the highest rate of population growth worldwide is **Ouagadougou** in Burkina Faso – with a growth rate of 6.13 percent.
- Hundreds of millions of people around the world currently live in informal settlements or slums as city dwellers without any civic rights, and must compete against each other for poorly paid jobs and scarce food supplies.

WorldRiskIndex and the urban risk index

- In the WorldRiskIndex, some parts of West Africa are classified as having a high to a very high national risk. However, the urban risk in these areas tells another story. In the urban risk index some countries classified as having high or very high national risk, are classified in the very low to low risk class – such as **Ghana** or **Mali**.
- In contrast, in the urban index the **USA** places in the high risk class but its national risk in the WorldRiskIndex is classified as low.
- This situation is also similar in **Peru** and **Columbia**: The urban risk in both countries is very high, while the national risk in the WorldRiskIndex is classified as medium.
- At the same time, it is important to note that six of the 15 countries with the highest levels of urban risk also belong to the 15 countries with the highest levels of national risk worldwide: Costa Rica (rank 1 for urban risk), the Philippines (2), Guatemala (9), Bangladesh (11), El Salvador (13) and Papua New Guinea (14).

General comments

- Urban planning: It is particularly the case in rapidly growing cities that the municipal authorities face the major challenge of initiating urban planning measures designed to reduce urban vulnerability.
- In cities it is possible to have access to lots of people in a relatively small area, allowing for better provision of essential supplies to people and reduction of their level of vulnerability.
- Early warning measures and acute aid: It is also important to be able to reach those people that require particular protection and special assistance due to disability, illness or age.
- The international framework conditions in this area will be laid out in 2015 and 2016 at four groundbreaking world summits:
 - The World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 in Sendai, where a new action plan for disaster risk reduction will be adopted.
 - The World Summit of the United Nations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda 2015 in New York, where Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be adopted.
 - The United Nations Climate Change Conference 2015 in Paris, where a follow-up agreement to the Kyoto Protocol is set to be adopted that includes internationally binding emission reduction targets for the industrialised countries with specific timeframes.
 - The world summit Habitat III 2016 (location still to be decided), where guidelines for sustainable urban planning will be formulated. One theme will be the consequences the three previous world conferences will have on the development of cities and other residential areas.