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Factsheet

Key results of the WorldRiskReport 2015

WorldRiskIndex 2015

- Vanuatu is the country with the highest disaster risk (Index value: 36.72) among the 171 countries covered by the WorldRiskIndex 2015. Tonga, ranked 2nd (Index value: 28.45), and the Philippines, ranked 3rd (Index value: 27.98) have switched positions in comparison to last year. Whereas Tonga shows an increase in the lack of adaptive capacities, the Philippines have managed to slightly reduce their lack of adaptive capacities and susceptibility.
- The hotspot regions of disaster risk are in Oceania, Southeast Asia, Central America, and the Southern Sahel (see Map on pages 48/49).
- Six island nations are represented among the 15 countries with the highest disaster risk. The other nine countries are also situated close to the sea. They are particularly exposed to natural hazards such as floods, cyclones, and sea-level rise.
- Updated figures were available for 15 of the 28 indicators for the WorldRiskIndex 2015.

Focus: Food security

- The WorldRiskReport 2015 establishes a very urgent need for action to achieve better food security in the countries of Bangladesh, Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Cambodia, Cameroon, Madagascar, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Timor-Leste, and Chad, all of which are severely threatened by extreme natural events.
- An urgent need for action or a need for action has been established for further groups of countries and is demonstrated with the aid of indicators (see Map on pages 38/39).
- Food insecurity and disaster risk reinforce each other. Not only do disasters often have devastating consequences for a country's food situation. Food insecurity conversely also raises disaster risk.
- For example, people are more exposed to natural hazards if a lack of food security forces them to migrate. In the new settlement areas, they are then often left with only those areas that bear a high disaster risk, such as steep hill slopes or river banks.
- People suffering from hunger can neither build up stocks for the event of a disaster nor can they take long-term measures to adapt to disaster risks. Environmental protection and changing over to resilient cultivation methods, for example, fall by the wayside.
- Worldwide, the lives of 2.5 billion people immediately depend on agriculture. The destruction of their harvests, livestock, or transportation routes by an extreme natural event represents an immediate threat to their livelihoods.

- Pure food aid is increasingly losing significance in disaster situations. Instead, the regional markets are strengthened. More and more often, the people affected are provided with money and vouchers to buy what they need in the context of international relief measures. Recovery and rehabilitation efforts are also remunerated, which creates income sources and strengthens local craftspeople.

Recommendations for action

- Investment in food security should be designed in such a way that the vulnerability of societies towards disasters is lowered. Conversely, a reduction of disaster risk also has a positive impact on food security.
- Civil protection and emergency management alone will not be sufficient without strong climate change policies. At the COP21 climate conference in Paris in early December 2015, effective measures to limit global warming urgently need to be adopted. All states should commit themselves to the Two-Degree Target and contribute their fair share to achieving it.
- The new guidelines on shaping humanitarian aid which are to be resolved by the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in May 2016 also ought to address the close link between food security and disaster risk.
- Donor countries as well as actors in humanitarian aid and development cooperation ought to support long-term development measures, such as seed exchange systems and training in resilient cultivation methods, and develop relief measures that are in harmony with them.
- Crisis prevention strategies should always be a part of development policy.
- Reducing disaster risk in the rural regions, where the overwhelming majority of people suffering hunger live, requires a determined effort to strengthen socioeconomic structures, e.g. by creating income alternatives to agriculture and the protection of land rights and the expansion of microcredit.
- The national governments should make a special effort to develop infrastructure, transport capacities, and markets in rural areas and provide government funding should this be required for the purpose. In order to identify their needs, they have to establish monitoring units.
- The participation of marginalized population groups such as smallholders and indigenous peoples should be ensured in all measures aimed at improving food security and lowering disaster risk. The major role that women play in food security has to be recognized. The special needs of children, expectant mothers, and people with disabilities have to be consistently considered.
- Business and consumers in industrialized countries ought to reject trade in and purchase of agricultural produce the production of which destroys the natural resources in the long term.
- Common causes of food insecurity and extreme natural events can, for example, be eliminated by abandoning monocultures that emaciate the soil and using seed for which the respective climate zone is ideal.