

Introduction

The World Risk Report (WRR) 2011 produced by Alliance Development Works in cooperation with the United Nations University examines the risk that a country will be affected by a disaster. The goal of the report is to link classical risk analysis approaches of natural hazards with analysis of social and economic dimensions of risk. The authors support a developmental approach to disasters by focusing on prevention, protection of vulnerable groups and risk management. This snapshot highlights the WRR findings for countries receiving at least \$2 million in USAID Assistance in 2009 in the tables but all countries in the report are displayed on the maps.

Methodology

The World Risk Index (WRI) is calculated based on four components: exposure, susceptibility, coping capacities, and adaptive capacities. Each component is calculated individually and then used to determine the overall risk of a country. The susceptibility, coping capacities, and adaptive capacities are first aggregated into a vulnerability index which is then multiplied by the exposure component to determine the total risk score. The table below summarizes each component.

Table 1.
World Risk Index Components

Component	Definition	Subcomponents
Exposure	Exposure to natural hazards based on frequency of hazards and number of casualties from 1970–2005.	Earthquakes Storms and Floods Droughts Sea Level Rise
Vulnerability		
Susceptibility	The likelihood that elements of society will suffer harm and damages to their living situation.	Public Infrastructure Housing Nutrition Poverty and Economic Capacity
Coping Capacities	Capacities to minimize the negative impacts of natural hazards and climate change through direct action and resources.	Governance Disaster Preparedness Medical Services Social Networks and Coverage
Adaptive Capacities	Capacities for long-term adaptation and transformation to address expected negative consequences of natural hazards.	Education and Research Gender Equity Environmental Protection



Overall Results

The tables below show USAID Assisted countries with the highest and lowest overall risk of being impacted by disasters. The Philippines, with the highest overall risk score, is particularly exposed to frequent heavy rains and floods that destroy coral reefs and mangrove forests as well as damaging soil and crops. People living near streams and rivers without land rights are particularly vulnerable. Of the countries that have the Highest Overall risk, Afghanistan, Timor-Leste, and Madagascar have the lowest risk due to exposure to natural hazards and the highest risk due to vulnerability. In particular these three countries lack coping and adaptive capacities to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters. In addition, the 2010 earthquakes in Haiti and Chile are highlighted and compared in the WRR 2011. While the magnitude of the earthquake in Chile was greater than that of Haiti, the authors note that the mortality rate was 400 times lower, mainly due to better infrastructure and governance.

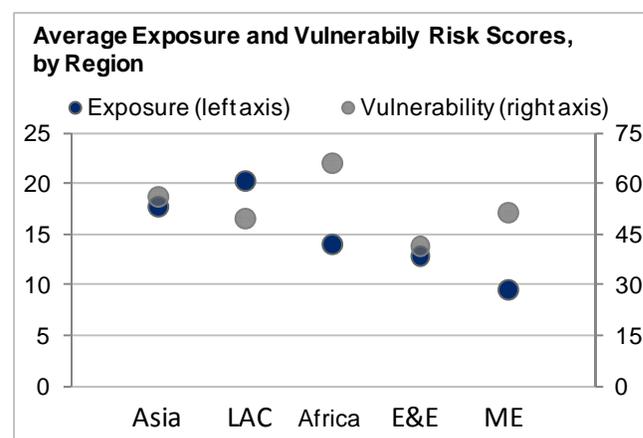
Table 2.
Ten Countries with the Highest Risk

Country	WRI (percent)
Philippines	24.3
Guatemala	20.9
Bangladesh	17.5
Timor-Leste	17.5
Costa Rica	16.7
Cambodia	16.6
El Salvador	16.5
Nicaragua	15.7
Madagascar	14.5
Afghanistan	14.1

Table 3.
Ten Countries with the Lowest Risk

Country	WRI (percent)
Egypt	2.4
Israel	2.6
Belarus	3.0
Ukraine	3.0
Mongolia	3.4
Cyprus	3.5
Russia	3.6
Kazakhstan	4.0
Paraguay	4.1
Ireland	4.2

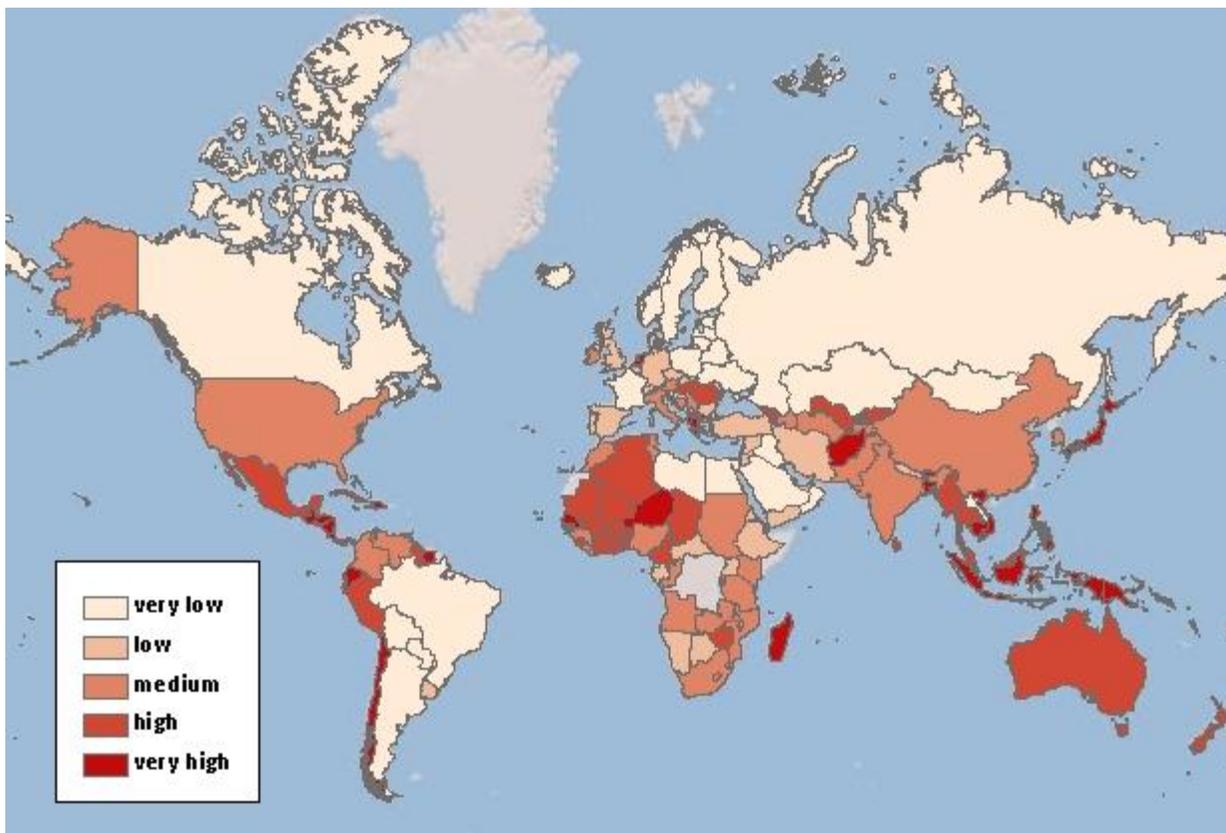
The maps on the following page highlight the difference between countries that are at high risk due to natural exposure to potential disasters and countries that are at high risk due to vulnerability as a result of weak institutions and capabilities to prevent and mitigate the negative consequences of natural disasters. While countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia are the most exposed to natural disasters, they are relatively better off in terms of handling the impacts of natural disasters than several countries on the African continent. Overall, Asia has the highest risk of disaster, followed closely by Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa. The Middle East and Europe have the lowest average risk level.



Additional Information

The full World Risk Report 2011 is available at <http://www.ehs.unu.edu/file/get/9018>. You can also find more information on the impacts of natural disasters from a variety of sources in the Economic and Social Database (ESDB), including data from the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) and the Environmental Performance Index (EPI), at <http://esdb.eads.usaidallnet.gov/>.

Exposure (classification based on the quantile method)



Vulnerability (classification based on the quantile method)

