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Press release

WorldRiskReport 2019:

Water shortage exacerbates disaster risk

Berlin, Sep. 12, 2019 – With record breaking temperatures around the World and increasing droughts, climate change can already be seen as exacerbating water supply problems and thus increasing the vulnerability of societies. These are the findings of the 2019 WorldRiskReport, focused on water supply. The report was officially launched today by the Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft and the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict (IFHV) of the Ruhr-University Bochum.

If an extreme natural event such as a flood or a cyclone occurs, the results are more likely to be catastrophic in countries with poor water supply. Peter Mucke the managing director of Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft stated: “In developing countries in particular, policymakers need to act urgently and give all households safe access to clean water. After extreme natural events, the water supply must be restored quickly to ensure survival and prevent the spread of diseases.” People living in poverty are especially unlikely to have access to clean water inside their household and can be forced to pay fees at public water points. “Often the poorest people pay the most for water,” said Mucke.

An essential part of the report is the annual WorldRiskIndex, which is calculated by the IFHV. It indicates the respective risk of an extreme natural event leading to a disaster for 180 countries. With this data, the report examines eight more countries than in the previous year. The WorldRiskIndex considers a country’s exposure to extreme natural events as well as its societal vulnerability.

The three countries with the highest disaster risk are the tropical island states of Vanuatu, Antigua and Barbuda, and Tonga. Germany has a very low disaster risk, ranking 163rd. Overall, the states with the highest disaster risk are concentrated in Oceania, Southeast Asia, Central America, and West and Central Africa. “For the first time since 2012, we were able to use new data considering the risks vis-à-vis extreme natural events”, stated Katrin Radtke, Professor at the IFHV and scientific director of the WorldRiskReport. For Vanuatu and Tonga, the risk has

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increased further.

The English-language WorldRiskReport will be presented next Tuesday in Brussels at an event for politicians, staff of humanitarian organisations, and members of the interested public. The WorldRiskReport has been published annually by the Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft since 2011. The therein contained WorldRiskIndex was developed in cooperation with the United Nations University's Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) and has been calculated by the IFHV since 2018.

Notes to editors:

- The full report will be available for download at the end of the blocking period at www.WeltRisikoBericht.de.
- Infographics, maps and other images as well as print copies of the report are welcome to request form us.
- The authors of the report are available for telephone or personal interviews.

Brot für die Welt, Christoffel-Blindenmission, DAHW, Kindernothilfe, medico international, Misereor, Plan International, terre des hommes, Welthungerhilfe sowie die assoziierten Mitglieder German Doctors und Oxfam leisten als Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft akute und langfristige Hilfe bei Katastrophen und in Krisengebieten.

Das Institut für Friedenssicherungsrecht und Humanitäres Völkerrecht der Ruhr-Universität Bochum ist eine der führenden akademischen Einrichtungen in Europa in der Forschung und Lehre zu humanitären Krisen. Das Institut verbindet interdisziplinäre Forschung aus den Fachrichtungen des öffentlichen Rechts, der Sozialwissenschaften, der Geowissenschaften und der öffentlichen Gesundheit.