

PARIS (AFP) - Afghanistan top index for food insecurity – while Sweden is the second most favourably-placed country.



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Afghanistan and nine African countries top the world rankings for food insecurity, while North America and Western Europe, especially Scandinavia, have the surest food supplies, according to a survey of 163 economies published on Thursday.

The Food Security Risk Index 2010 is compiled by a British risk analysis firm, Maplecroft, on the basis of 12 factors drawn up in collaboration with the UN's World Food Programme.

The criteria include cereal production, GDP per capita, risk of extreme weather events, quality of agricultural and distribution infrastructure, conflict and effectiveness of government.

Ten countries were rated as being at "extreme" risk, starting with Afghanistan, and followed by Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Eritrea, Sudan, Ethiopia, Angola, Liberia, Chad and Zimbabwe.

Among countries that were rated "high" were Bangladesh (23rd overall), Pakistan (30), India (31) and the Philippines (52), while countries deemed at "medium" risk included China, which was placed 96th overall.

The most favourably-placed countries were the developed economies of North America and Western Europe, with Finland the most food-secure, followed by Sweden, Denmark and Norwa

Nordic countries world's most food-secure

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Of the 50 nations most at risk, 36 were from sub-Saharan Africa.

Maplecroft attributed climate change to the leap in wheat prices this year and warned of harsh consequences for vulnerable nations.

"The recent extreme weather events in Pakistan and Russia are expected to result in a further increase in risk to their own food security next year," it said.

Maplecroft's 2009 index was headed by Angola, Haiti, Mozambique, Burundi, DRC, Eritrea, Zambia, Yemen, Zimbabwe and Rwanda. No data were available for Afghanistan that year.