

Top 10 global risks include armed conflicts, water shortages: report

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LONDON — International conflict and water crises lead the list of Top 10 global risks, according to a survey by the World Economic Forum ahead of next week's meeting in Davos.

The 2015 report published Thursday highlighted the most significant threats expected over the next decade, according to almost 900 WEF members surveyed from July to September. Deemed the likeliest risk was interstate conflict followed by extreme weather events; the top global risk as ranked by impact was water crises, then infectious diseases.

With almost two billion of Earth's seven billion people lacking access to clean drinking water, about 14 per cent of the population still defecating outdoors and a child dying every 20 seconds due to poor sanitation, water was also eighth on the likelihood list. Conflict was fourth on the impact ranking followed by failure to adapt to climate change. Joblessness or underemployment was fifth for likelihood, ninth on impact.

A map of the most likely global risks and those with the most potential impact emerging from the survey shows that "25 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the world again faces the risk of major conflict between states," Margareta Drzeniek-Hanouz, lead economist at WEF, said in the report.

This year "differs markedly from the past with rising technological risks, notably cyber attacks, and new economic realities, which remind us that geopolitical tensions present themselves in a very different world from before," the Global Risks 2015 report said.