

HEALTH RISK MAP HELPS BUSINESS TRAVELERS



International SOS has presented the Health Risk Map 2015 – a world map which aims to help companies and organizations estimate the medical risk of the markets in which they are actively in business.

The Health Risk Map has been published for the sixth time now. It supports organizations such as internationally involved businesses, non-governmental organizations, educational establishments and governments in their estimates and prevention of health risks of their employees worldwide.

The International SOS experts' medical analysis shows very interesting development in parts of Africa: some countries profit from private or state investments in the health sector; often thanks to sponsors from foreign countries, even in the sector of private health insurance. This allows better access to medical facilities with higher standards, which is beneficial not only for the locals but also expats and business travelers.

Dr. Stefan Eßer, Medical Director at International SOS, said: “We have to view these improvements relative to the current situation and in the context of the African continent, as well as the local medical risks and standards. The still-present Ebola crisis highlights the extreme challenge in the existing health systems. However, this development is a positive step for healthcare provision in Africa. It specifically affects South Africa, Angola, Ghana, Tunisia, Morocco, and Nigeria.”

Without a realistic estimate of health risks, business travelers and delegates often have a false perception of the risks to which they could be exposed abroad. The International SOS Health Risk Map intends to close the gap between perception and reality.

The Health Risk Map 2015 divides risk estimates into the categories “low”, “medium”, “high”, “extreme” and “Large Rapidly Developing Countries”. The medical risk levels are decided by International SOS’s panel of medical experts and are based on factors such as risk of infectious diseases, hygiene and access to sanitary facilities, accidents, and the availability and quality of the local infrastructure of the healthcare system and the emergency services.

The new category “Large Rapidly Developing Countries” was created for countries in which there is a big difference between the high-quality medical provision in individual larger cities and the lower quality of the more rural areas. Examples of this are Brazil, China, and India.

“The International SOS data show that currently more than 40% of our medical cases occur in countries that are labeled as “high risk” or “extreme risk”. This means a significant increase since 2010, when the value was at only 25%”, emphasized Dr. Eßer. “The preparation of travelers, which should include information and a risk estimate of the travel destination as well as health checks before departure, is an important preventative measure and can help to avoid travel disruptions. This applies especially to trips to countries with high and extreme medical risks. The Health Risk Map 2015 as such is a great opportunity to support businesses in their risk management in international activities.”

[See the Health Risk Map here \(pdf\)](#)

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