North and Central America comprise a region threatened by earthquakes along the Pacific coast as well as by hurricanes and storm surges from the Atlantic. River flooding can happen practically anywhere. A key difference between North and Central America, however, is in their distribution of economic production sites.

While the economies of the smaller countries of Central America are highly dependent on just a few metropolitan areas, the US, Canada and Mexico have more urban centres. The difference in economic geography is reflected on the chart by the fact that North America’s cities are located in the lower right-hand corner while Central American cities are found in the upper left-hand corner.

From the perspective of the national economy, the Central American capitals of San Jose (Costa Rica) and Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) rank highest. A catastrophe in either of these two locations would heavily affect the entire country. The deadly earthquake that ravaged Haiti in January 2010 is remembered as one of the worst disasters to hit the impoverished island nation. But it is worth noting that Santo Domingo has an even higher earthquake risk than Port-au-Prince (Haiti).

In contrast to Central America, metropolitan areas of the United States are numerous and highly developed. They are ranked higher in terms of the absolute value of working days lost when compared to all other cities in the world.
North and Central America at a glance

Metropolitan areas analysed: 83
- total population: 222.7 mn
- total combined GDP: USD 10.5 trn

Most people endangered by single scenario:
- 14.7 mn earthquake Los Angeles,
- 6.1 mn river flood Mexico City, 5.0 mn earthquake San Francisco

Top 3 all perils: people potentially affected
- Los Angeles, Mexico City, San Francisco

Top 3 all perils: absolute value of working days lost (global index)
- Los Angeles (0.93), New York-Newark (0.62), San Francisco (0.47)

Top 3 all perils: relative value of working days lost (global index)
- San Jose (1.26), Santo Domingo (0.69), Port-au-Prince (0.49)

Cities in focus: USA & Canada

People potentially affected by all 5 perils (global rank)
- 1 Los Angeles (9)
- 2 San Francisco (28)
- 3 New York-Newark (52)
- 4 Miami (74)
- 5 Houston (95)
- 6 Tampa (106)
- 7 New Orleans (112)
- 8 San Diego (126)
- 9 Seattle (134)
- 10 Montreal (157)
- 11 San Juan, PRI (179)
- 12 Boston (216)
- 13 Philadelphia (246)
- 14 Washington-Baltimore (259)
- 15 Salt Lake City (275)

Value of lost working days lost, global index (global rank)
- 1 Los Angeles (6)
- 2 New York-Newark (7)
- 3 San Francisco (8)
- 4 New Orleans (16)
- 5 Miami (25)
- 6 Houston (27)
- 7 Tampa (29)
- 8 Washington-Baltimore (41)
- 9 Boston (43)
- 10 San Diego (44)
- 11 Philadelphia (57)
- 12 Seattle (58)
- 13 Jacksonville (68)
- 14 Virginia Beach (73)
- 15 San Juan, PRI (78)

Value of lost working days lost, national index (global rank)
- 1 Los Angeles (115)
- 2 New York-Newark (142)
- 3 San Francisco (168)
- 4 Winnipeg (177)
- 5 Denver (180)
- 6 Toronto (193)
- 7 New Orleans (209)
- 8 Montreal (212)
- 9 Edmonton (247)
- 10 Miami (250)
- 11 Houston (257)
- 12 Tampa (264)
- 13 Vancouver (278)
- 14 Washington-Baltimore (282)
- 15 Ottawa (284)