

Definitions*

Adaptation: Adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual, expected or projected climatic conditions, which mitigates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities.

Adaptive capacity: The ability of a system to adjust to climate change (including variability and extremes) to mitigate potential damages, to take advantage of opportunities, or to cope with consequences.

Climate: A statistical description (average and variability) of weather (temperature, precipitation and wind) over a 30 year period.

El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO): A warm-water current that periodically flows along the coast of Ecuador and Peru. It is associated with a fluctuation of the inter-tropical surface pressure pattern and the circulation in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. It also has a great impact on the wind, sea surface temperature, and precipitation patterns in the tropical Pacific, and has climatic effects in many parts of the world.

Extreme weather event: An event that is as rare, or rarer, than the 10th or 90th percentile of the average weather.

La Niña: The cold phase of ENSO.

Resilience: The ability of a social or ecological system to absorb disturbances while maintaining the same basic structure and ways of functioning, the capacity for self-organization, and the capacity to adapt to environmental stress and change.

Sensitivity: The degree to which a system is directly or indirectly affected (adversely or beneficially) by climate change or climate variability.

Storm surge: The temporary increase, at a particular location, in the height of the sea due to extremely low atmospheric pressure. It is defined as being the excess above the level expected from the tidal variation alone at that time and place.

Vulnerability: The degree to which a system is susceptible to, and unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extremes. It is a function of the amount and rate of climate change and variation to which a system is exposed, its sensitivity, and its adaptive capacity.

* Reference - IPCC glossary