

UN-HABITAT THEMATIC GUIDE

ADDRESSING THE MOST VULNERABLE FIRST

PRO-POOR CLIMATE ACTION INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

UNHABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

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Addressing the most Vulnerable First - **PRO-POOR CLIMATE ACTION IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACCCRN	Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network
ACP	Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
ACVN	Association of Vietnamese Cities
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CBA	Community-based adaptation
CCCI	Cities and Climate Change Initiative
City-RAP	City Resilience Action Planning Tool
CO₂eq	Carbon dioxide equivalent
CRRP	City Resilience Profiling Programme
CSPS	Centre de Santé et de Promotion Sociale
DiMSUR	Disaster Risk Management, Sustainability and Urban Resilience
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
EBA	ecosystem-based adaptation
EC	European Commission
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEAG	Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group
GHG	Greenhouse gas(es)
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GPS	Global Positioning System
HoH	Hands on Homes
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LED	Light-emitting diode
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PNC	People's Community Network
PSUP	Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme
RFA	Resilience Framework for Action
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPREP	Pacific Regional Environment Program
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
VA	Vulnerability assessments

DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS¹

This section outlines the key terminology used in this guide. Many of the key terms relating to climate change adaptation have multiple definitions, and where appropriate, this Guide uses the definition provided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fifth Assessment Report² of 2014 as the benchmark, as this reflects current international scientific consensus (although other framings have been – and continued to be used).

Adaptation: The process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects. In human systems, adaptation seeks to moderate or avoid harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. Adaptation therefore has a forward-looking aspect, as well as relating to actions that respond to current impacts of climate change.

Adaptive capacity: The ability of systems, institutions, humans and other organisms to adjust to potential damage, to take advantage of opportunities, or to respond to consequences. Adaptive capacity has an element of forward-looking action, whereas coping capacity is an action taken to minimise the immediate impact of a climatic event, which does not also contribute to the ability to address potential future events.

Community-based Adaptation: Adaptation approaches based on the premise that local communities have the skills, experience, local knowledge and networks to undertake locally appropriate activities that increase resilience and reduce vulnerability to a range of factors including climate change.

Ecosystem-based Adaptation: The use of a range of opportunities for the sustainable management, conservation, and restoration of ecosystems to provide services that enable people to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Exposure: The presence of people, livelihoods, species or ecosystems, environmental functions, services, and resources, infrastructure, or economic, social, or cultural assets in places and settings that could be adversely affected.

Hazard: The potential occurrence of a natural or human-induced physical event or trend or physical impact that may cause loss of life, injury, or other health impacts, as well as damage and loss to property, infrastructure, livelihoods, service provision, ecosystems and environmental resources.

Informal (economic) sector: this encompasses economic and other activities which fall outside the purview of state regulation. The informal economy covers enterprises, workers and activities operating outside the legal regulatory framework, and the output they create.

Informal settlements are urban neighbourhoods that developed outside the formal system recording land ownership, land tenure and a range of regulations relating to planning and land use, built structures and health and safety.

Maladaptation: actions that are taken to cope with immediate shocks and stresses that may reduce the ability to deal with future challenges associated with climate change.

Mitigation: in referring to disasters, mitigation means actions taken to reduce the adverse impacts of physical hazards. In referring to climate change, mitigation means actions taken to reduce the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, either by reducing their emission or by facilitating their removal (e.g. by reforestation).

Resilience: The capacity of social, economic and environmental systems to cope with a hazardous event or trend or disturbance, responding or reorganizing in ways that maintain their essential function, identity and structure, while also maintaining the capacity for adaptation, learning and transformation.

Urban resilience is the measurable ability of any urban system, with its inhabitants, to maintain continuity through all shocks and stresses, while positively adapting and transforming toward sustainability.

Risk: The potential for adverse consequences where something of value is at stake and where the occurrence and degree of an outcome is uncertain. In the context of the assessment of climate impacts, the term risk is often used to refer to the potential for adverse consequences of a climate-related hazard, or of adaptation or mitigation responses to such a hazard, on lives, livelihoods, health and wellbeing, ecosystems and species, economic, social and cultural assets, services (including ecosystem services), and infrastructure. Risk results from the interaction of vulnerability (of the affected system), its exposure over time (to the hazard), as well as the (climate-related) hazard and the likelihood of its occurrence³.

Sensitivity: the degree to which a system or people are likely to be affected by the impacts of climate variability or change.

Shocks: potential uncertain abrupt or long-onset events, whose main consequence is shifting a system from its current state to a disturbed one.

Stresses: chronic and ongoing dynamic pressures within a system, whose cumulative impacts undermines the capacity for sustainability and resilience.

Upgrading: UN-Habitat understands Slum Upgrading in a broader sense that refers to improvements in housing and infrastructure, and also includes enhancements in the economic and social processes that can bring about such physical improvements.

Vulnerability: The propensity or predisposition to be adversely affected. Vulnerability encompasses a variety of concepts including sensitivity or susceptibility to harm and lack of capacity to cope and adapt. When discussing vulnerability, it is important to be clear about *who* is vulnerable, to *what*.

¹ <https://unhabitat.org/books/planning-for-climate-change-a-strategic-values-based-approach-for-urban-planners-cities-and-climate-change-initiative/>

² <https://unhabitat.org/books/guiding-principles-for-climate-city-planning-action/>

³ IPCC (2018). *Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5 °C*



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