



Covenant of Mayors
in Sub-Saharan Africa



CoM SSA SEACAP Toolbox

4.1: Key concepts related to climate change adaptation

This chapter is one component of the SEACAP Toolbox for the full Toolbox, please visit: <https://comssa.org/>

What you will learn in this chapter:

- Key concepts related to climate change adaptation

This chapter has been designed for facilitators and trainers as well as local government officials and partners completing a SEACAP



Weather

The state of the atmosphere at a particular place and time

For example:

“Today is a sunny day”

OR

“Yesterday it was partly cloudy and windy”

OR

“Tomorrow it will be raining”



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Climate

Climate is the prevailing weather condition or trend for a specific geographical region over a period of about 20 to 30 years

For example:

“In Harare, Zimbabwe observations taken over the past 50 years show that the summer months occur from Sept to March and are hot and wet, whilst the winter months occur from April to August and are cool and dry”



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Climate change

Climate change is a long-term change in the average weather patterns that have come to define local, regional and global climate

For example:

“In Harare, Zimbabwe we have observed in the last 5 years shifts in the seasonal rainfall patterns to much later in the season”



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Climate change adaptation

Climate change adaptation is the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate change and its effects.

Adaptation actions are undertaken in anticipation of the adverse effects of climate change and aim to prevent or minimize the damage the impacts of climate change can cause and/ or take advantage of opportunities that may arise.



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Climate Hazard

A physical process or event (hydro-meteorological or oceanographic variables or phenomena) that can harm human health, livelihoods, or natural resources. A hazard is not simply the potential for adverse effects

For example, a cyclone is an example of a hydro-meteorological climate hazard. Whilst storm surges are an example of oceanographic climate hazards



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Exposure

The presence of people, livelihoods, species or ecosystems, environmental services and resources, infrastructure, or economic, social, or cultural assets in places that could be adversely affected by a hazard.



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Sensitivity/ Vulnerability

The degree to which a system, asset, or species may be affected, either adversely or beneficially, when exposed to climate variability or change or geophysical hazards



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Risk

The potential for consequences where something of human value (including humans themselves) is at stake and where the outcome is uncertain.



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Impact

The effects of hazards on human or natural assets and systems. These potential effects, which are determined by both exposure and sensitivity, may be beneficial or harmful.



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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 of climate hazards.



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Resilience

The capacity of a social-ecological system to cope with a hazardous event or disturbance, responding or reorganizing in ways that maintain its essential function, identity, and structure, while also maintaining the capacity for adaptation, learning, and transformation.



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The next chapter is:

Introduction to the Adaptation Pillar



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The full SEACAP Toolbox is found here: <https://comssa.org/>

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Thank you



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