

General definitions of vulnerability

Vulnerability is:

- "The degree of loss to a given element at risk or set of elements at risk resulting from the occurrence of a natural phenomenon of a given magnitude and expressed on a scale from 0 (no damage) to 1 (total damage)" (UNDRP, 1991)
- "Exposure to risk and an inability to avoid or absorb potential harm (Pelling, 2003). In this context, he defines physical vulnerability as the vulnerability of the physical environment; social vulnerability as experienced by people and their social, economic, and political systems; and human vulnerability as the combination of physical and social vulnerability" (in Vilagrán de León, 2006)
- "The characteristics of a person or group in terms of their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from impacts of a hazard" (Blaikie, Cannon et al. 1994).
- "The degree of susceptibility and resilience of the community and environment to hazards" (EMA, 1995).
- "A human condition or process resulting from physical, social, economic and environmental factors, which determine the likelihood and scale of damage from the impact of a given hazard" (UNDP, 2004).
- "The conditions determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes, which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards "(UN-ISDR)
- "The intrinsic and dynamic feature of an element at risk that determines the expected damage/harm resulting from a given hazardous event and is often even affected by the harmful event itself. Vulnerability changes continuously over time and is driven by physical, social, economic and environmental factors" (UNU-EHS, 2006)
- "The potential to suffer harm or loss, related to the capacity to anticipate a hazard, cope with it, resist it and recover from its impact. Both vulnerability and its antithesis, resilience, are determined by physical, environmental, social, economic, political, cultural and institutional factors" (Provention Consortium, 2007)
- "The degree to which a system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extremes". Vulnerability is a function of the character, magnitude, and rate of climate variation to which the system is exposed, its sensitivity, and its adaptive capacity" (IPCC,2001:165).
- Vulnerability = (Exposure) + (Resistance) + Resilience

With: Exposure: at risk property and population;
 Resistance: Measures taken to prevent, avoid or reduce loss;
 Resilience: Ability to recover prior state or achieve desired post-disaster state.