

Glossary

Adaptation is the strategies, policies, and measures undertaken now and in the future to reduce potential adverse health impact.

Adaptive capacity describes the general ability of institutions, systems and individuals to adjust to potential damages, to take advantage of opportunities, or to cope with the consequences of climate change in the future.

Alpine zones are the treeless areas between the natural climatic forest limit and the snow line.

Attributable burden is the reduction in current burden that would have been observed if past levels of exposure to a risk factor had been reduced to zero. The attributable burden is the attributable risk multiplied by the disease burden.

Attributable risk is the proportion of disease burden in an exposed population that can be attributed to a specific risk factor.

Climate change is defined as a statistically significant variation in either the mean state of the climate or in its variability, persisting for an extended period (typically decades or longer).

Climate is the average state of the atmosphere and the underlying land or water in a specific region over a specific time scale.

Climate-sensitive disease is a disease that is sensitive to weather or climate factors, with the current spatial distribution and seasonal transmission being affected.

Comparative risk assessment is defined by the World Health Organization as the systematic evaluation of the changes in population health that result from modifying the population's exposure to a risk factor or a group of risk factors.

Coping capacity describes the ability to implement new strategies, policies, and measures to minimize potential damage from climate variability and change.

Environmental burden of disease is the burden of disease caused by environmental factors, estimated using methods described by the World Health Organization.

Montane zones extend from the lower mountain limit to the upper thermal limit of forest (irrespective of whether forest is present or not). This limit is at a growing season mean temperature of $6 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$ globally; the mean temperature is closer to 5°C near the equator and closer to 7°C at high latitudes.

Nival zones are the terrain above the snowline, which is defined as the lowest elevation where snow is commonly present all year round.

Vulnerability is defined as the degree to which individuals and systems are susceptible to or unable to cope with the adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extremes.

Weather describes the day-to-day changes in atmospheric conditions in a specific place at a specific time. More simply, climate is what you expect and weather is what you get.