

The Palgrave Handbook of Climate Resilient Societies

Pathways for mainstreaming resilience thinking into climate change adaptation and planning in the city of Cape Town

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Abstract

Between 2015 and 2017, the City of Cape Town in the Western Cape Province of South Africa experienced three lower than average rainfall years. A changing climate has altered the rainfall patterns in the Western Cape, shifting most of Cape Town's winter rainfall south and offshore. In 2017, this resulted in the lowest rainfall on record since 1945. In May 2017, the Western Cape Government declared the province a disaster area amidst ever stricter water restrictions imposed on Cape Town's residents, and in early 2018 National Government declared the drought a national disaster. Cape Town authorities have accepted these potentially replicating drought conditions as the "new normal" and resolved that future planning must strengthen the City's resilience to the shocks and stresses associated with a changing climate. In July 2017 a focused, multistakeholder, multidisciplinary SDG "Lab" was hosted by the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research to facilitate the co-generation of new ideas to mainstream resilience into urban climate change adaptation and planning. The Lab resulted in five pathways to enhance planning toward a climate-resilient Cape Town, which included technical and engineering solutions, environmental management approaches, as well as sustainable development and socio-political strategies.