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## **RESILIENCE: ESSENTIAL FOR SUSTAINABILITY**

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### **Abstract**

What is a natural disaster? The meaning of the word obviously changes with person, culture, and time. There is ample historical evidence to illustrate how disasters result not as much from the destructive agent itself but from the way in which communities are (or are not) prepared, and the socioeconomic conditions of the people. The case of Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans provides the most dramatic example of the effects of poverty on vulnerability.

Disasters happen when the natural systems are encroached upon by human development. It is apparent that there needs to be significant shift in how we address natural disasters, moving away from the traditional focus on response and recovery toward emphasis on **resiliency**, that is, preventive actions to reduce the effects of a natural hazard.

Resilience can be understood as the capacity to anticipate and minimize potential destructive forces through adaptation or resistance. Basically, addressing changes in the environment, whether gradual (climate change) or more abrupt (such as hurricanes) or immediate (such as a terrorist attack), require actions to mitigate their negative effects.

If we identify resiliency, not solely as a state of preparedness for disaster, but as a desired characteristic of a sustainable society, one more in control of its energy and food production, access to water supplies, as well as being one that enables local social capital, we can begin to see the relationship.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, resiliency.