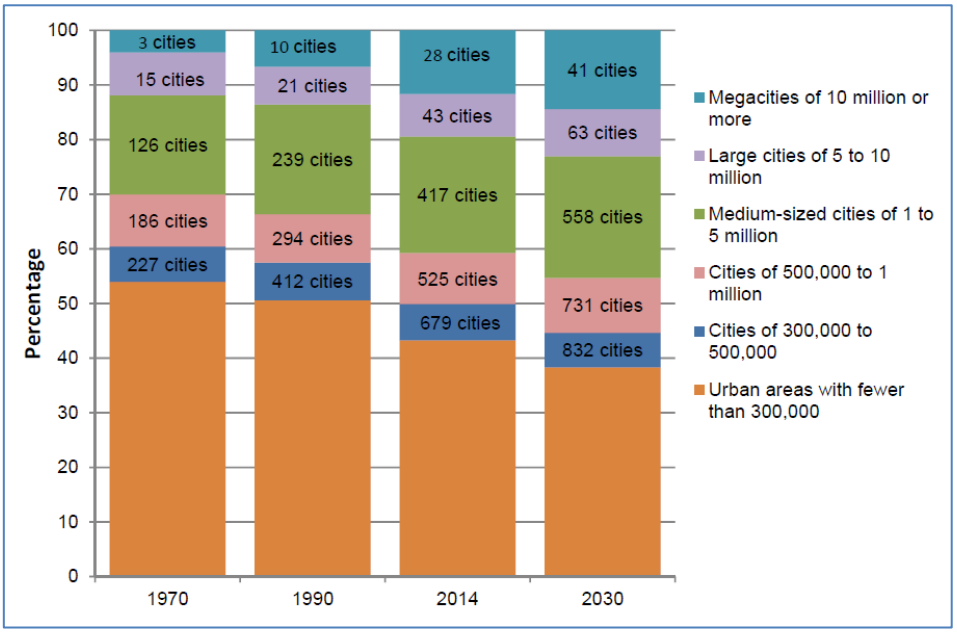
MEGACITIES ALLIANCE FOR WATER AND CLIMATE

Concept note

1. CONTEXT

Paris, New York, Beijing, Mumbai, Tokyo, Buenos Aires, Mexico, Lagos… Since 2008 and for the first time in history, the majority of the world population is concentrated in urban centers (United Nations Statistics Division). By 2030, more than one billion people will live in around one hundred very large cities. Megacities, which accommodate more than 10 million inhabitants each, are growing fast, with significant disparities between historical Megacities and the more recent ones. There is no unique development model for Megacities, as they evolve based on different processes (consolidation, sprawl) and this explains their varied governance characteristics. The new Megacities that will emerge between 2014 and 2030 will all be located in developing countries.



Distribution of the world's urban population by size class of urban settlement and number of cities, 1970, 1990, 2014 and 2030 (World Urbanization Prospects, UN, 2014)

These Megacities have one thing in common, i.e. a major issue related to water for their inhabitants: drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, recycled water. The characteristics of Megacities, population concentration, services and goods as well as territorial expansion amplify the consequences of water-related risks in a context of global fragility due to the effects of climate change, such as large-scale floods, water-related diseases, water scarcity, pollution of aquatic environments and soils, etc.

Faced with these challenges, these territories, which are exceptional in terms of size, concentrate a multitude of intellectual, technical and financial resources in order to respond to the specific water-related challenges caused by the effects of climate change. It is imperative to mobilize these resources so that innovative solutions emerge and guarantee access to water and sanitation for all populations,

equality of services, economic viability, resilience of systems, flexibility of solutions, and the protection of the natural environment. These solutions are intended to be shared and deployed by these mega-urban centers, in terms of hydrological, health, environmental, and economic and socio-political aspects.

Four actors are working towards establishing the Megacities Alliance for Water and Climate because of their consciousness of water-related challenges affecting Megacities as highlighted above, and their capacities to find solutions. These organizations are:

- The association ARCEAU IdF, created in 2013 by the main local authorities that are responsible for water management in the Paris region, brings together, in an original way, political, operational, academic and associative actors, all engaged in concrete actions in order to guarantee the quality and sustainability of water and sanitation services.
- The International Hydrological Programme of UNESCO is the only intergovernmental programme of the United Nations system devoted to water research, water resources management, and education and capacity building.
- ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability is the leading global network of over 1,500 cities and regions committed to building a sustainable future. Water management is an essential aspect of ICLEI's work to help cities become low-carbon, resilient, biodiverse, resource-efficient, ecomobile, healthy and happy, with a green economy and smart infrastructure.
- SIAAP is the public service that daily treats the wastewater of 9 million inhabitants in Paris and its region, as well as rainwater and industrial water, in order to make the Seine and the Marne water fit for the development of the natural environment. SIAAP is engaged in institutional partnerships and technical exchanges with numerous operators and local governments throughout the world.

Project background

Water, Megacities and Global Change Conference

ARCEAU IdF and UNESCO co-organized during COP21 an international conference on Water, Megacities and Global Change (eaumega2015).

The Conference (eaumega2015) took place at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 1-4 December 2015 and brought together three types of partners: researchers, representatives of technical services as well as political and civil society representatives. It also brought together regional, global, environmental and societal perspectives, different economic models, technological aspects and politics, management and innovation issues as well as information on hydrographic and urban systems. This event thus made it possible to draw up an inventory of issues at stake and to discuss the solutions in order to support urban public policies. The conference was a success, bringing together more than 300 people from all over the world: scientists, utilities, politicians and NGOs.

Publication Water, Megacities and Global Change: Portraits of 15 Emblematic Cities of the World

This publication[1] was launched during Habitat III in Quito in October 2016, and is the result of the collective work of 33 authors and co-authors. It contains summaries of monographs on 15 Megacities: Beijing, Buenos Aires, Chicago, Ho Chi Minh City, Istanbul, Lagos, London, Los Angeles, Manila, Mexico, Mumbai, New York, Paris, Seoul, and Tokyo.

The digital version of this publication will be enriched continuously both by improving existing monographs and summaries and also new ones. Megacities that wish to contribute to the project can submit and share their summaries and monographs that will be made available on the publishers' websites.

2. TOWARDS THE MEGACITIES ALLIANCE ON WATER AND CLIMATE

Through the Alliance, the four actors will provide a framework for cooperation among Megacities in order to facilitate dialogue on urban water and climate.

This alliance, supported by representatives of the Megacities that were present at the eaumega2015 conference and other participants, was included in the Climate Agenda. The Alliance was presented at both COP 21 and COP 22 during the Adaptation and Water Days.

The Megacities Alliance for Water and Climate, in collaboration with the relevant international institutions in this field, is committed to **putting in place** by the end of 2018 a **cooperation platform** to establish dialogue on water, adaptation and mitigation of the water-related effects of climate change in Megacities.

To this end, the creation of two temporary structures has been proposed. These two structures are intended to establish the network of Megacities and to mobilize the funding essential to the functioning of the platform:

- A Support Unit working at the level of Megacities and aimed at establishing the platform;

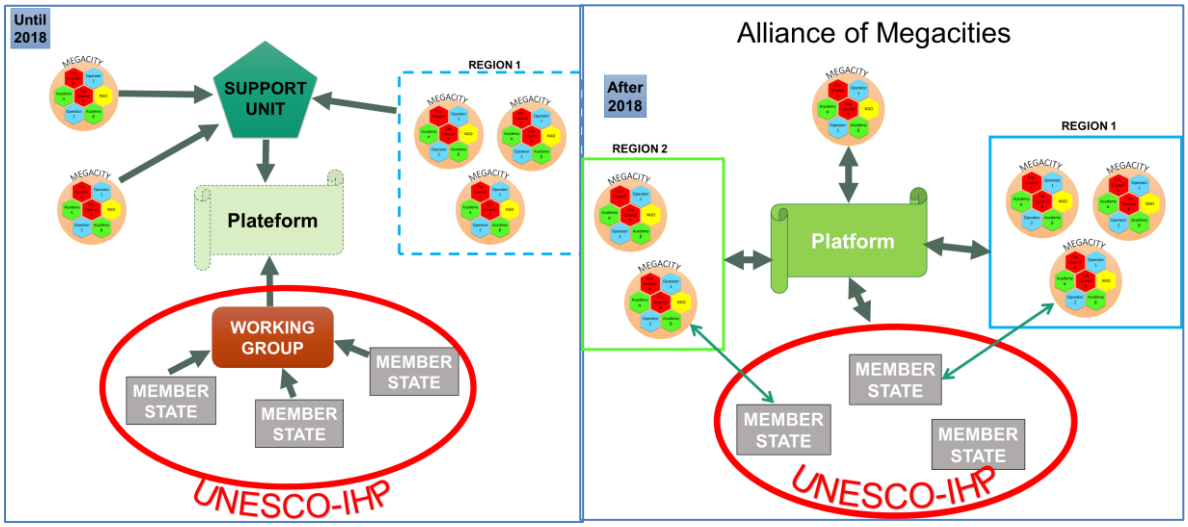
[1] The publication is available in digital version on a USB key or/and in open access on the publishers' websites: www.eaumega.org

http://en.unesco.org/news/emblematic-megacities-address-threats-climate-change-their-water-related-needs

http://www.arceau-idf.fr

- A UNESCO-IHP Working Group, at the level of Member States, implemented in order to facilitate the creation of the platform.

Both structures have common objectives, as well as specific ones, and will work jointly.



2.1. Support Unit

The Support Unit will work in conjunction with the IHP Working Group for a specific period of time, potentially two years, until the platform is set up. Its aim is to:

- Recruit the founding Megacities with which the Unit will work;
- Create and coordinate a network of scientific, operational, and political actors (individuals and structures) involved in the creation of the platform;
- Identify and validate the hosting structure of the platform and specify the practical conditions;
- Propose the governance documents for the platform;
- Propose a strategic plan for the platform;
- Obtain financial commitments for the platform in the medium term;
- Establish means of communication and information, including a website;
- Organize and participate in symposia and conferences in order to raise awareness on the Alliance.

A steering committee will be established within the Support Unit to monitor the progress of the project. It should at least include the initial four actors, other international organizations interested in the platform, and the founding Megacities. The four types of actors involved in water governance in cities (elected officials, operational staff, scientists, and associations) will be represented.

The Support Unit will therefore need financial support to cover a permanent secretariat and the specific actions listed above. The Support Unit will also support the organization of the second international conference Water, Megacities and Global Change (eaumega2018).

The Secretariat of the Support Unit could be hosted at UNESCO-IHP Headquarters in Paris, subject to the availability of adequate external funding.

2.2. UNESCO Working Group

During the 22nd session of the Intergovernmental Council of the International Hydrological Programme held at UNESCO-HQ, on 13-17 June 2016, Resolution XXII-5, submitted by Japan and supported by the Republic of Korea, was adopted, aiming at the creation of a Working Group for the establishment of the Megacities Alliance for Water and Climate.

The text of the resolution points out that the expected population growth in the coming decades will be higher in urban centers and particularly in metropolitan areas with over 10 million inhabitants. It also states that by 2030, over a billion people will live in approximately 100 very large cities and 60% of the world's population will live in urban areas. At the same time, it considers the adverse effects that climate change is expected to have on urban water resources, both quantity and quality wise.

The text also refers to the UNGA Resolution 64/292 on the human right to water and sanitation; and to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes two dedicated goals:

- One on water and sanitation (SDG 6) that aims to "ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" as well as targets of other goals related to water.
- One on Resilient Cities (SDG 11) that aims to "Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable".

Member States recognized the need for an international platform for cooperation to facilitate dialogue on urban water and climate, with the aim of helping Megacities to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change on water. They decided to establish an IHP Working Group for helping the establishment of the Megacities Alliance for water and climate, and for proposing mechanisms to promote international synergies between Megacities at the local level and Member States at the national level.

The resolution encourages Member States to take an active participation in the aforementioned Working Group. The purpose of the working group is to help build the enabling conditions for the creation in 2018 of the platform, and to create the links and interactions with the UNESCO Water Family, IHP National Committees, and other UN agencies, especially UN-Water and UN-Habitat.

The Working Group has a two-year mandate and terms of reference complying with UNESCO standard rules for composition and working condition. The objectives of the Working Group as stated in the resolution are the following ones:

- to help recruit Megacities for joining the network;
- to define and promote the interactions between the future Platform, and UNESCO, UN organizations and their traditional partners;
- to identify and develop synergies with UNESCO-IHP activities;
- to propose a governance model for the Platform that will have to be endorsed by the Megacities;
- to formulate, in consultation with the IHP Bureau and the IHP Intergovernmental Council, a Strategic Plan for the establishment and development of the future relations between UNESCO-IHP and the Water and Megacities International Cooperation Platform.

3. PLATFORM OF THE MEGACITIES ALLIANCE FOR WATER AND CLIMATE

The platform will be created to coordinate the network of Megacities according to practical modalities that will have to be proposed both by the Support Unit and the Working Group, and will be endorsed by the Megacities.

3.1. Objectives

The main objective of this platform will be to build solidarity between Megacities in their adaptation to climatic disruption in the water sector (drinking water, sanitation, rainwater, protection of the aquatic environment) while promoting original and effective local solutions.

Objectives include:

- Collecting global data on strategies developed at the Megacities scale;
- Developing the sharing of experience between academics and operators through technical exchanges or training and improving adaptation through the evaluation of experiments and good practices;
- Sharing research and studies on similar topics to build technical and governance tools and train potential users on these tools;
- Measure the results achieved by Megacities according to indicators to be defined;
- Identify the means and mechanisms for financing the adaptation of Megacities to the impacts of climate change on water in urban areas.

3.2. Regional platforms

The creation of regional platforms (as per UN definitions) is encouraged in order to take into account cultural, legal, environmental, climate and institutional diversity and/or common points.

These regional platforms will benefit from the existing networks available to Alliance members: IHP regional offices, ICLEI local government network, ARCEAU-IdF network of scientists, and SIAAP operator network.

The process of establishing these regional platforms is already under way, particularly in South-East Asia.

3.3. Results

The platform will report on its activities, in particular:

- The increased awareness of water and Megacities at an international level through the promotion of cross-sectoral participation in various forums, debates and international conferences, with emphasis on climate change, water, habitat or urbanism, and by organizing exchanges between Megacities on common themes.
- The international conference on water in Megacities (eaumega) will be organized every three years in order to update knowledge and examine progress in both research and operational areas. It should also allow the follow-up, from COP to COP, of post-2015 commitments made in Paris during COP 21.

The organization of the “eaumega2018” conference will be supported by the Support Unit.

4. CHRONOGRAM

	2017				2018			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Support Unit/Platform								
1 – Set-up of the Support Unit								
• Find the necessary funding								
• Define and validate the hosting structure and the modes of operation								
2 – Recruit the founding Megacities								
3 – Create and define the functioning of regional platforms								
4 – Create and coordinate the network of actors								
5 – Set-up of the platform								
• Identify and validate the hosting structure of the platform								
• Propose and validate the governance mode and the strategic plan								
• Obtain financial commitments for a medium-term operation of the platform								
5 - Establish means of communication and information								
6 - Organize and participate in symposia and conferences (including eaumega2018) in order to promote the Alliance								

	2017				2018			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
UNESCO Working Group								
1 - Write and validate terms of reference								
2 - Constitute the working group								
3 - Help recruiting Megacities								
4 - Make proposals for a governance model of the platform								
5 - Prepare a strategic plan on synergies between UNESCO and the Alliance								

5. ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR 2 YEARS

	Subject	**Cost (EUR)**
Support Unit / Set-up of the platform	Full time employment (a senior manager and an assistant)	240,000
	Steering Committee	10,000
	Missions	20,000
	Communication	30,000
4 regional platforms	10,000 EUR/year/platform	80,000
Working Group	Secretariat	50,000
	Meetings	20,000
Total		450,000