

## “Asia and the Pacific: Megacities, Water, and Climate Change” Second MAWAC Regional Meeting for Asia and the Pacific (MAWAC-ASPAC)

26 October, 2021 - 12:00 to 15:00 pm (Jakarta time)

### SUMMARY

#### Opening Session

**Mr. Mohamed Djelid**, Director of UNESCO Jakarta Office expressed his warm welcome to the participants from 8 megacities. Water is affecting all the other Sustainable Development Goals. He highlighted a nexus approach of water management by taking into account of fields such as food, energy ecosystem, security and health and so on. He called for the attention to the sustainable and integrated water management, service and infrastructure, because the rapid socio-economic development will confront with higher risk of climate change, accordingly several UN assessment reports. Mr. Djelid reaffirmed UNESCO’s commitment to support the cooperative initiatives and the Alliance is back up by a wide scientific network of UNESCO Water Family and Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP).

The sessions are moderated by **Mr. Hans Dencker Thulstrup**, Senior Programme Specialist at Jakarta Office and **Ms. Mehrasa Mehrdadi**, National Professional Officers at Tehran Office. They also welcomed two new megacities to join in the experience sharing of the 2<sup>nd</sup> MAWAC-ASPAC meeting that continued the dialogue of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting in June 2021. Ms. Mehrdadi introduced the Agenda and invited the newly joined megacities representatives to deliver the presentations.

#### Sharing Session

##### Karachi

The presentation of Karachi was addressed by **Mr. Ghulam Hussain Dars**, Assistant Professor of Mehran University of Engineering and Technology. He introduced that Karachi is a coastal megacity in Pakistan, with 14.9 million inhabitants, and this figure is still growing rapidly due to the rural-urban population shift caused by the climate disasters, getting better livelihood opportunities and the housing schemes. The impact of climate change has substantially led to the uncertain precipitation pattern of Karachi, approx. 10 cm rise in the city coastline, and the intensifying sedimentation in reservoirs and dams, the main water source for Karachi, while it also faced severe water contamination issues. Among those challenges, water governance became the primary bottleneck of actions, such as the difficult argument between industries stakeholders towards the environmental legislation, and the lack of capacity and determination of local government and KW&SB. Mr. Dars urged to work on adaptation to climate change such as recycling and re-use of wastewater, construction of small/check dams to enhance water storage, build ecosystems to retard the flood flows, installation of desalination plants, accelerate the implementation of [K-IV Water Scheme](#) of Karachi, including addressing infrastructure and financial deficit. But more importantly, he stated that collaborating with the research community is highly essential for informed decision making, capacity building and evidence-based planning.

##### Bangkok

**Mr. Pathan Banjongproo**, Senior Sanitary Engineer of Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, introduced that the that of Bangkok is the city closely living with water, with 1,682 canals (2,604 km in length) flowing across the city, while facing severe water pollution. He elaborated the current capacity of wastewater treatment and reuse as the major solution. Currently, the 8 WWTP in in Bangkok is able to treat 1.112 million m<sup>3</sup> per day, and is expected to have 15 WWTP for being able to treat 2 million m<sup>3</sup>/d in the future. The Polluter-Pay-Principle and Service-Pay-Principle will be applied to mitigate the challenges. Furthermore, the wastewater tariff in Bangkok is comparatively low, in comparison to the increasing operational cost of the WWTP and higher demand of water of the citizens. For the bottom-up approach, Mr. Banjongproo also highlighted the role of community engagement into water quality control, and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration strived to promote the local communication and cultivate local knowledge.

**Mr. Philippe Pypaert, Programme Specialist of UNESCO**, thanked the participants from Bangkok and Karachi for the experience and information they shared, highlighting the fact that they were both representing a coastal megacity with common challenges of water contamination, seawater intrusion, and the need to engage with the civil society in water governance. He stressed that the Megacities Alliance, under the coordinative effort of UNESCO, is to promote the multi-disciplinary collaboration between megacities, but also 3 main categories of stakeholders (policy makers, scientists and operators). In his presentation, Mr. Pypaert introduced more in detail 2 important activities for the regional plans: (a) *to mobilize and set up a basic framework (ToR's) for ASPAC region*, in reference to the Global Strategic Framework, to which the next regional meeting will be entirely dedicated; (b) *to define the setting of the Regional Session on 12 January 2022, at the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Euamega Conference*. He further introduced the opportunities of joining in the MAWAC Working Group as the representatives of the megacities, the group of nominated experts to develop and finalize the Strategic Global Framework for the Alliance. Mr. Pypaert solicited the important opinions from the representatives to the regional framework and global framework of the MAWAC.

In the Questions and Answers Session, **Mr. Dudi Gardesi Asikin**, representative from Jakarta, wished to clarify the inbound boarder restriction policy for attending the physical conference in January 2022. **Mr. Seyed Ali Chavoshian**, representative from Tehran, suggested a clear expectation of the regional participation towards the Conference, programme and panelists setting for Regional Session and the Conference in general. He would also like to know the current confirmation of megacities attendance in the Conference.

## Closing Remarks

On behalf of UNESCO and the organizers, **Ms. Mehrasa Mehrdadi** expressed the gratitude to the invited participants and representatives, UNESCO Jakarta Office for hosting this meeting, and all the colleagues in support. In her closing remarks, she reiterated the strategic importance of Asia region in the field of megacities, where water security becomes a key driving force for sustaining the socio-economic development. UNESCO is highly looking forward to the next strategic step, together with megacities in Asia and the Pacific region, towards framing the regional initiatives in the next meeting.