



Webinar COVID-19 Implication on Water Management in Megacities

Panel 1 | 10:00 – 12:00 am (CET)
Panel 2 | 16:00 – 18:00 pm (CET)
July 23rd 2020



WATER SECURITY IN THE AGE OF POST COVID-19

WEBINAR PROGRAMME

BACKGROUND

The current COVID-19 pandemic is disrupting every facet of human life in 212 countries and territories around the world.

Megacities are spaces where more than 10 million people commute, live and work daily, where financial centers are located, and an essential part of the National GDP is produced. Therefore, the severity of the pandemic effects is higher, causing not only a negative impact on the inhabitants' health, but also in diverse sectors such as economy, education, amenities and services etc. It comes as no surprise that megacity become focal points for governmental and other stakeholders' strategies, such as utilities, services operators, planners and academia to deal with this pandemic, given the massive and complex environments in megacities to manage, ranging from human behavior and environmental conditions to institutional setting.

Therefore, a more collaborative approach among the actors in a megacity (authorities, operators, population, scientists, private companies and civil society etc.), is required to collectively prevent the exacerbation and impacts of the multiple crisis.

While the pandemic has raised different challenges at a global level, experiences from different local sites can be shared and used to learn from one city to another. While strengthening the leading effort of the national authorities and city officials to tackle the current pandemic, there is a need to enhance the knowledge exchange and uptake of scientific findings, managerial responses, with the collaboration of experts from diverse fields, such as research institutions, universities, urban planners and utility operators, municipal decision makers and among others.

THE WEBINAR

UNESCO, as the UN specialized agency with a specific mandate in water sciences through its [Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme \(IHP\)](#), supports countries in their efforts to achieve water security. This work recognizes the need to protect vulnerable water systems, to mitigate the impacts of water-related hazards, such as floods, droughts and pandemic situations (e.g. COVID-19), to safeguard access to water functions and services, and to manage water resources in an integrated and equitable approach.

The [Megacities Alliance for Water and Climate \(MAWAC\)](#) aims at providing a platform for megacities to share their experiences, challenges and solutions in managing their water related services, while taking into consideration the effects of climate change and variability in this endeavor. Furthermore, MAWAC focuses on sharing proposed measures or actions addressing identified challenges, and on obtaining access to technical and financial support for related programmes and projects.



OBJECTIVES

The public webinar aims to bring together leading voices from both policymakers and water experts of megacities around the world to discuss the water-related response to COVID-19 pandemic. More specifically:

- The event will focus on the **understanding** of the current water crisis, and the health and socio-economic risks associated with COVID-19, and provide solutions and lessons learned based on the experiences shared by the invited panelists.
- It will further envisage the future sector **strategies** and scientific **foresight** at the Post-COVID Era in coping with crisis of all kinds, and especially the implication for tackling the challenges of climate change and for strengthening resilience in urban water management.
- It allows different Megacities to **share and exchange** their experiences and knowledge concerning water management practices in the context of climate change, when facing critical conditions such as COVID19.

REGISTRATION

- * External participants are invited to register [here](#).

PANELS

The Webinar will gather **two Panels** of water managers, planners and water experts from megacities around the world:

[10:00-12:00 am, CEST]: [English](#) and [Chinese](#) Interpretation are available

Beijing, Guangzhou, Jakarta, Karachi, Lagos, Mumbai, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Tehran, Wuhan

[16:00-18:00 pm, CEST]: [English](#) and [Spanish](#) Interpretation are available

Bogota, Cairo, Istanbul, Lima, Mexico City, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The session will contribute to strengthening the MAWAC network and its members, as the **panelists and stakeholders from megacities** will benefit from the views brought forward and the possibilities for cooperation among various megacities globally and between regions. The **public audience** will benefit from receiving a trans-disciplinary knowledge from the panelists, through the sharing of diverse experiences regarding water security management, thus significantly strengthening the awareness of water security in urban settings.



STRUCTURE

10:00-10:10 | 16:00-16:10

OPENING

Water security and management in Megacities

The outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic affects different parts of the world in such a sudden manner produces a disruption among diverse aspects of reality. Since the very early stage, “wash your hands” has been one of the main slogans throughout the pandemic. More strongly than before, water has been brought forward as one of the main elements for personal health and hygiene, raising higher awareness on effective management.

In the meantime, water security, an ongoing and intensifying crisis, is aggravated and becomes increasingly complex due to the Pandemic and Lock-Down. In such a short time and high uncertainty, urban water authorities, operators, population, scientists, private companies and civil society are requested to take acute efforts, so that collectively drive cities towards crisis resilience and recovery.

The specific experience brings meaningful implication to megacities’ response to climate change.

10:10-10:40 | 16:10-16:40

SESSION 1: IMPACT

Water crisis and socio-environmental risks associated with COVID-19

The First Session of the Panel will focus on the similar and diverse influence of COVID-19 on urban water-related aspects in different megacities. While the water insecurity issues could substantially varied from city to city, the various national and local guidelines and strategies developed to face COVID-19 may affect water management approaches in megacities in various dimensions and contrasting ways.

What are the direct and indirect impacts on water resources and water systems due to COVID-19? What is the main problem being identified this time, and the most challenging part in your city?

- Statistics on resource pressure: water consumption, user-behaviors of inhabitants
- Water and sanitation service disruption
- Research of virus transmission through water
- Vulnerable group
- Sustainable development in the face of pandemic



10:40-11:10 | 16:40-17:10

SESSION 2: REACTION

Cross-sectoral response and contribution from water stakeholders

The Second Session of the Panel will highlight the immediate and continuous efforts of local water stakeholders. The discussion intends to unpack the extensive resource mobilization among the civil society, private sector, utilities, or other groups, in order to mitigate the negative impacts brought up by the pandemic. It will not only explore how local-national, sector-to-sector strategies but also what effective and innovative approaches are adopted to facilitate an efficient response.

What particular strategy has been undertaken for protection, prevention and preparation in water and wastewater management and service?

- Trans-sectoral response and coordinative mechanism
- Application of new technology and tool
- Finance and resource to support: cost of operation and general reaction
- Action remained as legacy

11:10-11:40 | 17:10-17:40

SESSION 3: LESSON

Future sector strategies and scientific foresight at the Post COVID-19 Era to cope with crisis and contingency

After the discussions on the impacts and reactions to COVID-19 pandemic, the Third Session will focus on lessons learned towards the adaptive and responsive urban water management in Megacities. The session will further consider the need for processes to deal with the synergistic effects of a pandemic, while managing or responding to a natural disaster (such as earthquakes, floods, hurricanes etc.), and the impact of climate change, which make human societies more vulnerable.

What are the most essential lesson for the future, for developing responsive and adaptive approach to water crisis?

- Emerging opportunity: open science education, technology, digitalization and innovation
- Service and system improvement
- Scientific monitor
- Multilateral governance and management
- Global cooperation



11:40-11:55 | 17:40-17:55

PUBLIC Q&A SESSION

The moderator will pass the question from the public audience for every panelist, and close the public session with a conclusive question.

11:55-12:00 | 17:55-18:00

CLOSING

The future of water security in megacities and Sustainable Development Goals

Coming into July, the transmission of COVID-19 is growing faster than ever worldwide, with more than 100,000 new cases reported each day, affecting severely the economy of countries and thus the livelihoods of billions of people worldwide. Dealing with a common global threat has brought forward a new sense of urgency for international cooperation and solidarity, in facing the effects of the pandemic and in providing solutions for the present while planning for a “new normal”.

We are engaged in a continuous cycle of assessing, changing and adapting. The endeavor of collaboration, within and among sectors, locally, nationally, regionally and internationally shall be preserved as a continuing progress and even stronger commitment to overcome the challenges.

Our action to the COVID-19 challenge could serve as a stepping-stone for the upcoming strategies to be implemented in megacities.