



Water management *is* conflict management. From the Aral to the Zambezi, water disputes are a priority at local, regional, national, and international levels.

Worldwide, water demands are growing, groundwater levels are dropping, water

Universities Partnership for water cooperation and diplomacy

bodies are increasingly contaminated, and delivery and treatment infrastructure is aging. The potential for

conflict and the need for cooperation

between watershed stakeholders will increase as

problems become more acute. The global university community, with its inherent mission of teaching, research, and service, has much to offer in addressing the challenges of preventing and resolving transboundary water disputes.

We are proposing to establish the *Universities Partnership for Water Cooperation & Diplomacy*, a consortium of academic expertise in fields related to water resources conflict prevention and resolution, including research institutions on five continents. With a global hub at the University of Geneva, Switzerland, coordinating universities include the German-Kazakh University in Kazakhstan, IHE Delft Institute for Water Education in the Netherlands, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, the International Water Management Institute, Oregon State University in the USA, the University for Peace in Costa Rica, and the University of Zimbabwe. Twenty universities on five continents have expressed interest in participating; a scoping meeting was held in Delft, the Netherlands in January 2018, and a formal announcement was made at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland in February 2018.

The institutions involved in the *Partnership* comprise both policy and technical expertise within and beyond their respective regions and across academic disciplines. The local networks of each partner institution extend the reach of the consortium to include policy makers and practitioners and thus will encourage dialog and capacity-building between North and South, East and West, and among different professional sectors.

The activities of the *Partnership* will focus on key socioeconomic and geopolitical issues in shared water management at local, regional, national, and international levels. All activities would be explicitly linked and integrated within four coordinated focus areas:

- 1) *Coordinated applied research;*
- 2) *Shared and unified data accumulation, analysis, and distribution;*
- 3) *Capacity-building training for local, regional, and international basin stakeholders, as well as for graduate students in water-related fields.*

Universities offer tremendous resources in helping to build capacity for effectively and peacefully managing shared waters. By coordinating and focusing our energy and expertise, the *Universities Partnership* can provide a valuable resource for research, teaching, and global service in shared water dispute prevention and resolution.

A draft workplan follows.

Focus area	Action	Purpose	Target	Timeline
Coordinated applied research	Interdisciplinary Research on water cooperation and diplomacy processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Analyses of water cooperation and diplomacy processes -Development of multilevel analytical frameworks allowing an understanding of specific case studies and increase of generality -Provision of critical thinking and promotion of scientific debates -Development of a conceptual toolbox for researchers, practitioners and policy makers 	Scientific community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of joint research projects; - International collaboration; - In-depth understanding of specific cases Policy-makers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence-based research supporting decision-making 	Middle term to long-term → need for rapid evidences of the added value through publication and launching of research projects within the consortium.
Platform of exchange of opportunities and information	Exchanges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supervision of students - Exchange of scholars - Exchange of PhD / Master students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - North-South / South-North / East-West exchanges - Building of a community of practice around the questions of water cooperation and diplomacy -Capacity building -Collection of relevant case studies - Connect relevant expertise globally 	Students, Scholars	Middle to long term
	Information platform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internship possibilities - Jobs platforms - Scholarships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure good communication on available opportunities in the water cooperation and diplomacy sector 	Students, Scholars, Practitioners	Short to middle term
Capacity building and training	Open access education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open access material - Online courses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o MOOCs o Webinars o Live Streamed conferences and talks o Research and education grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To allow open and free access to resources provided by the partnership members 	Students, Scholars, Practitioners, Policy makers, General audiences	Short term to middle term
	Courses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Certifying programs provided by partnership's members - Tailor-made workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of courses that are combined with open-access teaching material - Capacity building through the obtaining of certificates and diploma provided by Partners 	Students, Scholars, Practitioners, Policy makers, General audiences	Short to middle term