



GWOPA

Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance

Report of the 1st Bi-Annual Global WOPs Congress and GWOPA General Assembly

20-21 March 2011
Cape Town, South Africa



UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



Foreword from Dr. Faraj El-Awar GWOPA Program Manager, UN-HABITAT



We are pleased to issue this report as an outcome to the 1st Global WOPs Congress and General Assembly held in Cape Town, in conjunction with 2011 World Water Day Celebrations.

I found the Congress extremely encouraging. First of all, because of the great interest you showed in participating in the event. More than 150 participants attended from around the world. WOPs practitioner representation covered not only all regions in which we are active, but also all stakeholder groups in the Alliance, from water operators to development partners to civil society and labour union representatives. The passion and commitment so many of you showed for the practice of WOPs was astounding. We thank you for sharing both your experience and your excitement with the rest of us, and especially for the overwhelming interest you showed in becoming (or remaining) members of GWOPA's Steering Committee. This is, to us, a confirmation that you see the need and potential for this global network of partners in support of WOPs, and that you put your faith in GWOPA to lead this exercise.

The flip side of this is that you count on us to do more. In the course of the two-day discussion, participants generated some truly useful insight about how we can increase the impact and scale of WOPs. Here are the main messages that we, as the GWOPA Secretariat, have drawn from the discussion and have brought back to Nairobi as our 'homework' assignment:

- In order to scale up WOPs we need to mobilize more resources and tap into some larger funding processes. We need to help financial institutions consider WOPs as a serious way of safeguarding their investments, and a viable way to help build the needed capacity to guarantee return on their loans. Legal tools that enable water utilities to apply revenues to engage in solidarity-based cooperation also need to be advocated for wide adoption in Northern countries.

- For many, the WOPs concept needs further sharpening and to be more clearly associated with a reliably high-quality capacity building process that ultimately helps utilities improve access to the poor. Without foreclosing on diversity, different models need to be packaged so there is heightened 'product recognition' amongst funders and implementers alike.
- GWOPA needs to help gather, produce, and manage knowledge about WOPs. We will continue to build on our social networking tools to facilitate the not-for-profit sharing of WOPs information.
- WOPs impact needs to be demonstrated in order to establish credibility. GWOPA counts on its implementing partners to help us build a database and 'Ideas Book' of WOPs practice, so that we can speak about WOPs with greater conviction. Utilities who are leaders in WOPs should be more actively solicited to share their experience and ideas for the benefit of others.
- We need to better understand and help utilities overcome the legal, financial, and technical barriers to not-for-profit international collaboration. First and foremost, this touches on procurement rules which may preclude some utilities from tapping into the kind of long-term, flexible WOPs that tend to bring the best results.

Finally, I feel that it is obvious by now that we all need to work together to get things done. Everyone in our Alliance needs to think about what role they can play in contributing to WOPs efforts on the national, regional, and global levels. Thanks again to all of you, and we look forward to seeing you online and at upcoming events.



Opening Session



Alderman Ian Neilson, Executive Deputy Mayor of Cape Town

The Alderman warmly welcomed the Congress participants to the City of Cape Town and invited all to enjoy its offerings, not least among them, high quality tap water from the City's Water and Sanitation Department. He described the City's efforts to maintain its high standards of service while building resilience to the oncoming challenges of climate change through ambitious programs of efficiency improvement, catchment management and infrastructural investment.

"The future of cities is dependent on the ability to provide sufficient water resources."

Dr. Joan Clos, Under-Secretary General and Executive Director, UN-HABITAT

Dr. Clos, in a speech delivered by the Director of UN-HABITAT's Human Settlements and Financing Division, Mr. Bert Diphooorn, highlighted the critical role of water utilities in making cities more equitable, livable places in our urban future. He touted municipal service providers as generators of innovation to address urban challenges and heralded WOPs as an effective means of helping the world's public water utilities exchange ideas and capacity in order to play their full role in sustainable urban development.

"The provision of water and sanitation underpins efforts to make cities more equitable and livable places."



Keynote Address

H.E. Ek Sonn Chan, General Director PPWSA, Cambodia

In his moving keynote address, Mr. Chan focused on the role that WOPs had played in the extraordinary transformation of the Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority (PPWSA) in Cambodia. WOPs, he said, helped his utility avoid 'reinventing the wheel', noting that "providing clean water is not rocket science." Yet while mentors can provide model examples, he emphasized the need for recipient utilities to truly own and drive the learning process. After all, he said, while other utilities can provide peer support, 'they cannot replace us.'

*"Hearing something 100 times
is not as good as seeing it once.
But even seeing it 100 times
is not as good as doing it just once."*

Dr. Anne le Strat, President Aqua Publica Europea, President Eau de Paris, Deputy Mayor of Paris

Dr. Anne Le Strat offered congratulations to UN-HABITAT and stakeholders of the Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance for acknowledging and supporting the crucial role of public operators in their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. She explained that the City of Paris and Aqua Publica Europea actively defend public water management by helping build the capacities of their Southern counterparts through peer support partnerships. Highlighting both the benefits and the challenges of twinning, she called on GWOPA to provide technical and advocacy support to enable successful peer support relationships. She called on donors to build on the goodwill of utilities to extend their expertise by helping finance these initiatives.

Plenary Session I: WOPs Impacts

Part I: Presentations on WOPs



Example from Africa

Dr. Gerhard van den Top, Director, VEI (Vitens–Evides International, Netherlands) and Mr. Nelson Beete, Executive Chairman, FIPAG (Mozambican Water Authority, Mozambique)

Mr. Beete emphasized the importance of building mutual understanding and trust before entering into a relationship. FIPAG and VEI spent a full year to develop their agreement. This WOP was supported by VEI's 'Water for Life Foundation,' whose flexible funding mechanism enabled the partners to progressively develop and refine their joint activities. Accountability and institutional strengthening, he said, were essential to attracting investment, and these were the ultimate goals of FIPAG's WOPs with VEI. Long term objectives must nevertheless be balanced against more visible, dynamic change, in order to maintain the support of utility staff. FIPAG's final goal is to provide support to utilities in Mozambique and in other countries by extending the capacity and experience it gained through the WOPs.

*“Which house?” said the architect.
“You have to tell me which house you want to have.”*

Dr. van den Top attributed the success of this WOP to a number of key characteristics: long term commitment (5-10 years), stable leadership, flexible funding, an attitude of mutual learning, and time and money invested by both partners. He especially emphasized the need for flexible funding arrangements to enable WOPs relationships to evolve, something he considered essential for a meaningful transfer of capacity. Dr. van den Top raised the urgent need to gather knowledge on WOPs successes and failures so that it could inform implementation. In closing, he called for clearer parameters around the practice of WOPs in order to convince donors of its impact.

“Utilities cannot work together unless they have a strong idea of where they want to go.”



Example from Latin America

Mr. Fernando Peñaherrera, Gerencia de Desarrollo Institucional, EMAAP-Q (Empresa Metropolitana de Alcantarillado y Agua Potable de Quito, Ecuador) and EPM (Empresas Publicas de Medellin, Colombia))

In the presentation which he made on behalf of both EMAAP-Q and EPM, Mr. Peñaherrera presented the activities, results and lessons learned from the WOP between the utilities of Quito and Medellin. Focusing on lessons that could be applied in the implementation of future WOPs, he highlighted the importance of enhancing the participation of professional staff in the WOP, systematizing documentation of WOP practices, improving the monitoring of activities during and following a WOP, and ensuring human and financial commitments on the part of participating utilities. Mr. Peñaherrera also made several recommendations to GWOPA for scaling up WOPs, including the development of a catalogue of best practices, increased use of social networking for knowledge exchange, and the more systematic sharing of WOPs practice documents.

“Although all WOPs are different, lessons can still be captured to help inform better WOPs design.”

Plenary Session I: WOPs Impacts

Part I: Presentations on WOPs continued



Example from Arab Countries

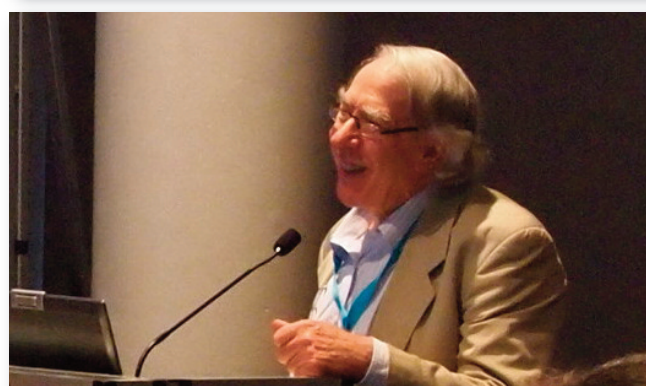
Mr. Samir Bensaid, Director General, ONEP-IEA (Institut International de l'Eau et de l'Assainissement de l'Office National de l'Eau Potable, Morocco) and Mr. Mohamed El Moctar M'Haimid, Deputy General Director, SNDE (Société Nationale des Eaux, Mauritania)

In this presentation, Mr. Bensaid, who spoke on behalf of both utilities, showed that WOPs do not necessarily need to be one-on-one partnerships. He explained that ONEP's commitment to the WOPs practice stems from its belief in sharing the knowledge it acquired through solidarity-based support from Northern utilities. In its WOPs activities, ONEP is still engaging its Northern partners in a North-South-South cooperation network. Mr. Bensaid highlighted the importance of engaging in long-term commitments to WOPs to overcome political obstacles and risks.

Key Success Factors for WOPs: Mr. Cesar Yniguez and Mr. Digby Davies, GWOPA Advisors

Mr. Yniguez and Mr. Davies presented the findings from GWOPA's impact-oriented case studies of three WOPs in Asia. Though the study is still ongoing, the following success factors were emerging through the case studies:

- An appropriate match between mentor and recipient operators
- A well-facilitated partnership agreement with clear partner roles
- well-defined, but sufficiently flexible, objectives and work plan
- frequent communication between partners
- commitment to the WOP by key personnel and managers
- confidence and trust
- funding for implementation



Plenary Session I: WOPs Impacts

Part II: Panel – How to Increase the Impact of WOPs?

Facilitator: Ms. Margaret Catley-Carlson, UN Secretary General’s Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UNSGAB). Panelists: Mr. Arie Istandar, Eco-Asia; Mr. David Boys, Public Services International; Dr. Ger Bergkamp, International Water Association; Dr. Gerhard van den Top, Vitens-Evides International

Following the WOPs presentations, UNSGAB’s Ms. Catley-Carlson convened a panel of experts to reflect on the cases presented and identify lessons that could help increase the scope and impact of WOPs.

Asked what was needed to draw greater funding to the practice of WOPs, Dr. Bergkamp pointed to clear, common WOPs models and vocabulary. In order to attract donor support, he suggested, it would also be important to make explicit links to how the poor benefit from the practice. Currently, the connection is implied, but inadequately demonstrated through practice.

Ms. Catley-Carlson commented that WOPs seemed like such a sensible solution, so why were they not receiving greater support from donors? Dr. van den Top suggested that there may still be significant skepticism about the capacity of public operators to deliver effective services to the populations. There is a slow-growing understanding about how WOPs could work, but investors need to see how these investments will bear fruit. If the WOPs brand is to be associated with quality technical assistance, we need to communicate the results from WOPs more clearly. He cautioned against confounding WOPs with small-scale twinning – a practice he believed had limited demonstrated impact and was unlikely to attract the needed investment.

Mr. Istandar contested the assertion that short-term WOPs were ineffective. In his view, WOPs were first and foremost catalysts for change that often led to further investments. In less stable environments with high turn-over, ‘quick-wins’ through WOPs can help mobilize the political will needed for further reforms.

Mr. Boys reminded the audience that problems and their solutions were more often political than technical. The poor are un-served because they have no political voice and most utilities lack good outreach mechanisms with the communities they are meant to serve. He called on utilities to make use of the water TAP (for transparency, accountability and participation) principles to enable better service provision.

Noting concurrence amongst panelists on the need for political will as a prerequisite for WOPs, Ms. Catley-Carlson posed the question: if we set political will as a requirement, are we then allowed to ignore utilities that have the misfortune of not being backed by willing politicians?

Dr. van den Top felt that the importance of political will underlined the need for a longer-term WOPs relationship. But ‘quick wins’ can help secure the political buy-in that is so key to transforming utilities. Supporters, he said, “need to see what’s possible before it’s going to happen.”

Acknowledging the importance of political support, Mr. Boys also evoked the critical role of civil society and labour in enabling lasting change. Because they have lower turnover than donors and upper management, their engagement helps ensure sustainability. Agreeing with the challenge of participation, Ms. Catley-Carlson suggested that helping utilities engage systematically would require tackling their multiple constraints, including lack of political support, fear or raising expectations, and professional fears about straying from an engineering approach.

Building on the observation that public utilities are often hindered from engaging in solidarity-based efforts by their geo-political boundaries, Mr. Boys noted that the problem is not limited to procurement rules. Foreign policy focus on commercial relations between countries tends to further hamper solidarity-based international efforts. How can GWOPA help WOPs implementers work around these obstacles?

Mr. Istandar identified goodwill between partners as a unique asset of WOPs that needed to be capitalized on in bringing WOPs to scale. Dr. Bergkamp suggested that extending the benefits of individual WOPs could be possible by fostering a sustainable network or exchange environment in which parties could continuously learn from one another. Regional training centres, which were currently out of development ‘fashion’, could be re-examined as a possible response.

To bring money to WOPs at the needed scale, Mr. Boys supported the idea, already being explored by GWOPA, of developing a public equivalent of the Public Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility, which would help “spread the risk” amongst donors. Dr. van den Top agreed that limits to impact are first and foremost financial. He reiterated the need for collecting, documenting and availing the experience on WOPs practice around the world to secure ownership of the approach from donor countries. Convinced of the effectiveness of the approach, he argued, investors would contribute 4-5% of their investment in WOPs-like capacity building to secure their outlay. He called on GWOPA to advocate for this approach.

While there is a clear need for more substantial, long-term WOPs, agreed Ms. Catley-Carlson, to what extent could operators’ know-how also be transmitted through packaged knowledge (“professionalizing documents”).

Plenary Session I: WOPs Impacts Part II: Panel Discussion continued

Dr. Bergkamp indicated that IWA's publishing work was increasingly focused on low and middle-income countries. Its Development Congress in Kuala Lumpur in September 2011 will be another opportunity to develop knowledge on these issues.

Rather than focusing on the creation of new materials, Mr. Boys proposed that what was needed was a good website that enabled actors to share existing information and communicate with one another. If designed appropriately, many of the ideas that work for the poor could be shared virtually. GWOPA's Programme Manager, Dr. Faraj El-Awar, then intervened to highlight the work the GWOPA Secretariat had embarked upon, both to gather and develop knowledge about WOPs, and create space to enable document sharing and social networking.

In closing the plenary, Ms. Catley-Carlson concluded with the recurrent message that WOPs need to be locally-owned and driven if they are to be successful and lead to transformation.





Thematic Session The Complementary Roles of WOPs and Training for Capacity Development

The main objective of this session, moderated by Mr. Tom Williams of the International Water Association, was to analyze how WOPs and training could be used complementarily for enhancing the capacity of water operators.

Even though the capacity gaps related to WASH have not been exhaustively mapped, they are known to be extensive and present a formidable obstacle to meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Dr. Darren Saywell of IWA said that training delivered is acknowledged to be inadequate – even often inappropriate – and provides insufficient opportunity to apply acquired skills.

WOPs can play a role in strengthening the institutional capacity of utilities through capacity development, and are particularly useful in bridging short term gaps, as pointed out by Dr. Hamanth Kasan of Rand Water. WOPs can include hands-on training, delivered by utility staff members and experts, and can contribute greatly to the creation of knowledge networks between different countries/utilities.

WOPs have contributed to the establishment of regional training centers integrated within utilities themselves, which are supporting the transfer of knowledge from champion utilities to less well performing ones. Mr. Guillermo Saavedra, the President of FESAN, presented the case of community learning centres in

Chile. Mr. Leo Nijland of DUNEA in the Netherlands presented a video demonstrating how WOPs has increased the capacity of utilities to deliver training.

The main recommendations emerging from the three case studies presented in the session were:

- Capacity building is a pre-requisite for any major or even medium sized infrastructure investment
- WOPs can play a role in capacity development specially because of the on-the-job and practical training they entail, but should be considered as part of a long-term approach
- Technical capacity and institutional strengthening should always be combined.



Thematic Session Harnessing the Potential of Civil Society and Trade Unions in Making WOPs Succeed



This thematic session, moderated by the Transnational Institute's Ms. Satoko Kishimoto, aimed to show through example how civil society and labour union engagement can improve WOPs outcomes. M.S. Vaidyanathan, President of the Centre of Excellence for Change in India, presented a case from Tamil Nadu in which a Total Community Water Management approach, applying the Water TAP (Transparency, Accountability and Participation) principles, had helped the community achieve a more reliable and equitable supply of water.

Mr. Héctor Rivero from the Spanish Association of Public Operators (AEOPAS) called for a new management approach – the water TAP – and social and environmental sustainability. He described AEOPAS' work with Aqua Publica Europea in supporting projects in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, including an example of social participation in a WOP between Spanish and Kenyan utilities.

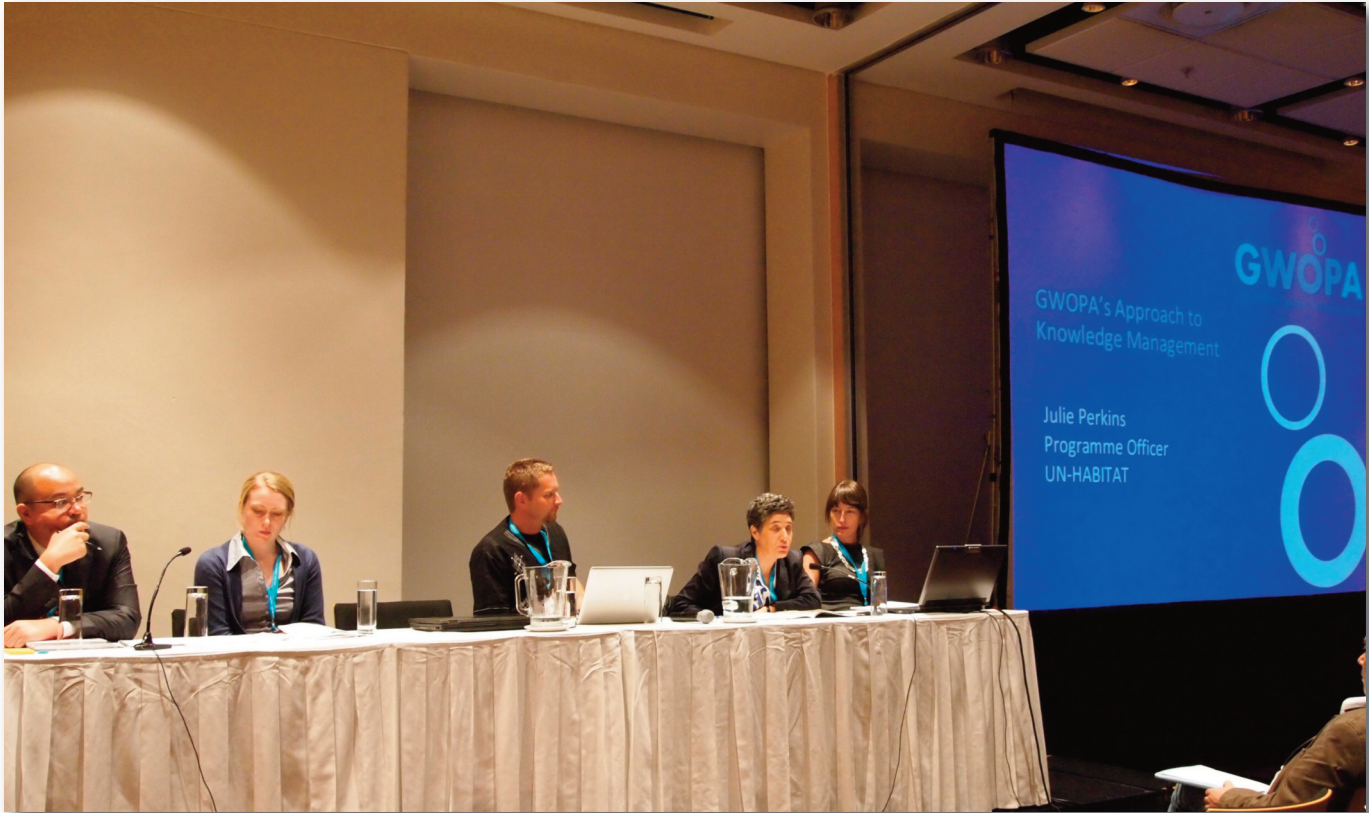
Mr. Julius Apale of the Kenya Local Government Workers' Union explained that in Kenya, where water and sanitation services are in public hands, the labour union supports WOPs, as they perceive strengthening the capacity of public entities as a safeguard against privatization. He attributed the success of some water operators to their engagement in worker participation. He explained that by improving the welfare of workers, they can become more engaged and responsive partners in service delivery.

Dr. Daouiz Uriarte shared experience from the public operator in Uruguay, OSE, in implementing a community-driven project that the operator had supported. Mr. Eloi Badia of Engineers without Borders' Spanish Chapter, described the role of NGOs in campaigning for financial and political support for WOPs. He argued that participation helps to build service ethics.

Through the presentations and discussion that followed between panelists and participants, the following points were made:

- Good governance (TAP) principles could help improve customer service by enabling a customer feedback system. Utilities that engage workers and communities in WOPs tend to be those that already have such feedback mechanisms in place, however WOPs can help to build participatory practices within a utility.
- NGOs can help utilities reach out in two-way dialogue to provide more appropriate services to marginalized people. This can include helping identify their needs and defining alternative service provision arrangements, but also helping the utility create awareness and acceptance within communities about ongoing reforms.
- Recipient utilities workers can act as a barrier to WOPs if they see little interest in changing their service delivery practices. Labour unions, by helping define worker motivations and incentives, can help bring this essential population on board.

Thematic Session Knowledge Management: What are the Priorities for Increasing WOPs Impact?



The purpose of the session was to introduce GWOPA's approach to Knowledge Management (KM) in WOPs, present the current KM activities of GWOPA and its partners, and seek feedback on the knowledge needs of Alliance members.

Ms. Julie Perkins of the GWOPA Secretariat presented KM as central to efforts to increase the scale and impact of WOPs happening around the world. Information related to WOPs – where and how it's happening and with what effect – tends to be scattered and inaccessible. It is the role of GWOPA to gather, distill and package this information, and make it accessible for those supporting and implementing partnerships. Key initial efforts include inventorying and maintaining active databases on WOPs globally, drawing lessons and trends from documented practice, providing models and templates to help operators design, implement and monitor WOPs, and availing social networking tools to facilitate exchange between operators. She called on all GWOPA members and WOPs practitioners to contribute to, and use, the tools GWOPA was developing.

Mr. Mark de Blois of Upande, who is preparing the web tools, led the audience through the GWOPA website, focusing in particular on the various interactive functions to help capture and share information about WOPs that have been introduced to the site since its launching in September 2010. The main features presented were spaces for GWOPA/partners to share resources, including video, audio, and documents, and the searchable databases of operator, association, employee and WOPs profiles. Participants were encouraged to participate in the in-depth presentation of these tools on the following day, and to contribute their data.

Mr. Arie Istandar of the main WOPs platform in Asia, WaterLinks, shared the KM activities around WOPs in the Asian region. WaterLinks has developed an on-line database to facilitate and monitor WOPs, as well as guidelines and template documents such as memoranda of understanding to support their implementation. In addition to knowledge on WOPs, WaterLinks also supports virtual knowledge exchange on best practices for utilities. These activities were reinforced by reports, toolkits, handbooks and applied research like *WaterNotes*, as well as outreach and promotion activities.

Thematic Session Knowledge Management continued

Ms. Josephine Tucker of the Overseas Development Institute spoke of the European Commission contracted report she led in 2010 which evaluated Public-Public (PUPs) and Private-Public Partnerships (PPPs) in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. Looking at a range of parameters, the report identified a number of advantages to not-for-profit partnerships, including high levels of trust between partners, enhancement of the virtuous cycle of capacity building, and good value for money. She suggested that an additional value of public-public partnerships was the potential of public entities to consider water issues holistically as part of a suite of public functions. The main pitfalls she identified were the unclear incentives for supporting actors, the constraints of policy, governance and finance, and the need for the involvement of all actors. Noting the relative dearth of existing data on public-public partnerships, she called for more systematic ways of documenting, collecting and analyzing WOPs so that actors can learn from experience.

Ms. Josefina Maestu, Director of the UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communications, the session facilitator, then called on a panel to react to the presentations. Mr. Digby Davies, Ms. Satoko Kishimoto of the Transnational Institute, and Mr. Steen Bjerggaard of the International Water Association, shared their views on the presentations and thoughts on Knowledge Management within WOPs. In the panel's response and interaction with the audience, the following points were highlighted:

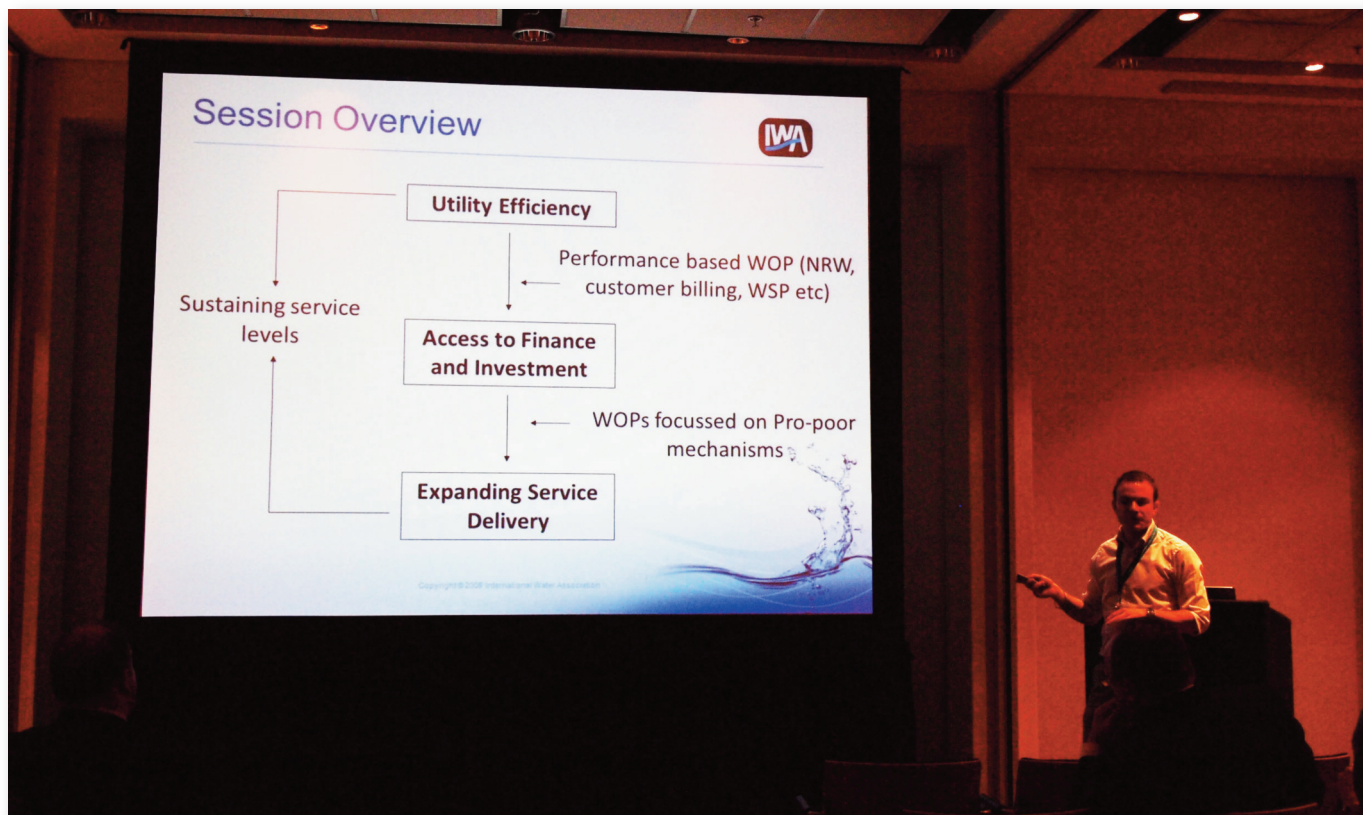
- Because there are public utilities involved in for-profit partnership and private utilities involved in not-for-profit partnership, the vocabulary of PPPs vs. PUPs should be revisited. Rather than the corporate nature of the partnering entities, future evaluations should

distinguish along the lines of profit-orientation. It was suggested that WOPs, with their explicit code-of-conduct including, notably, the not-for-profit principle, was a more reliable framework than PUPs.

- The most urgent knowledge required for WOPs is documentation of active WOPs and analysis of their impacts.
- Establishing a database about WOPs activities was also recognized as being helpful in ensuring that WOPs practitioners are adhering to GWOPA's guiding principles – a requirement for maintaining stakeholder confidence and support in the practice.
- Political and financial tools to support WOPs are more urgent than the technical tools.
- In order to fulfill its knowledge management expectations, the GWOPA secretariat will draw heavily on its global network to provide it with information and knowledge from the ground.
- GWOPA needs to encourage a culture of monitoring and reporting by sharing and promoting the use of monitoring and evaluation tools.
- Participants identified the need for knowledge products to support utilities in proposal writing, as well as the need for tools to help assess WOPs feasibility, taking into consideration internal as well as important external factors.
- GWOPA should be a repository for Knowledge resources related to WOPs.



Thematic Session Making WOPs Work for the Poor: from Efficiency to Expanded Access



This session, facilitated by the Sustainable Water and Sanitation in Africa's Mr. Dennis Mwanza, aimed to explore the progressive steps from increased utility efficiency to improved service delivery to the poor through WOPs. Introduced by IWA's Mr. Tom Williams, a model sequence was proposed, starting with WOPs that focused on efficiency improvement, for which the Utility Efficiency Assessment Matrix, presented by Mr. Jan Janssens, could be used to identify needs and monitor change. Having achieved greater efficiency, utilities can increase both their internal resources and their creditworthiness. Utilities also have access to a range of funds and facilities to develop their projects but remain dependent on their respective governments for major infrastructure extension.

Increased revenues can then allow utilities to redirect some of their resources to improved service delivery to the poor. As utilities often lack experience in this domain, WOPs focused on pro-poor delivery can be an effective way to develop the needed capacity. Presenting successful example from Maynilad in the Philippines and different cases in Latin America, Ms. Nerissa Jose, CSR Officer from Maynilad Water Services and Corinne Cathala of the Inter-American Development Bank stressed the importance of clearly setting targets and objectives. They cautioned, however,

that even so-called best practice does not fit all contexts; ownership and adaptation by the recipient utility is key.

In the panel discussion that followed, it was commented that although it is important to improve efficiency to serve the poor, "there is no systematic linkage" between efficiency and equitable access. There needs to be clear will to ensure efficiency gains translate to pro-poor benefits.

Yet, it was concluded, utilities have a lot to gain by providing better services to the poor, since in developing countries, the poor often represent the majority of customers. Covering poor areas also means taking better control of illegal connections, of quality of material and layout of the network, and reducing unaccounted-for-water, which leads to further efficiency gains. Engaging in WOPs and providing service to the poor can set utilities on a virtuous cycle of improvement.

Plenary Session II: Regional WOP Platform Sharing

Part I: Presentations on Regional WOP Platforms



Supporting and Linking Regional WOP Initiatives: GWOPA's Role

Dr. Faraj El-Awar of the GWOPA Secretariat gave an overview of the current status of the regional WOP platforms in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Arab region and South East Europe, and highlighted the role played by the GWOPA Secretariat in convening actors, identifying demand, supporting institutional foundations, directing funding for WOPs, and supporting resource mobilization. Dr. El-Awar also outlined the secretariat's transition from direct support of WOPs implementation within the regional processes to a more guiding role with knowledge management, advocacy and financial guidance for WOPs.

WOPs in Latin America and the Caribbean

An overview of the WOPs process in Latin America and the Caribbean was provided by Ms. Corinne Cathala, Senior Water Specialist at the Inter-American Development Bank, who also helps head up the WOP-LAC platform secretariat. Drawing from the 20 WOPs and strategic training workshops carried out or initiated by the platform in the last two years, Ms. Cathala shared her insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the platform and offered a number of concrete recommendations for WOP-LAC and other regional platforms for sustainably supporting WOPs.

Supporting Regional and Domestic WOPs in Asia

Mr. Arie Istandar of ECO-Asia presented on WaterLinks, the main WOPs platform in Asia. Since 2008, WaterLinks has been able to establish a knowledge management policy and tools, facilitate 40 WOPs and strengthen the capacities of over 700 practitioners. Currently, efforts are ongoing to prepare national associations of operators to facilitate WOPs at national level, particularly amongst small and mid-sized utilities. WaterLinks also shared its perceived strengths and challenges, highlighting the need to develop closer links with other regional platforms and GWOPA.

National WOPs Platforms: the case of Pakistan

Mr. Masroor Ahmad, Water and Sanitation Specialist from World Bank Water and Sanitation Programme (WSP) in Pakistan, exposed the challenges faced by water utilities in Pakistan where a new national-level WOPs platform was recently launched. According to Mr. Ahmad, the solution with the highest potential for addressing these gaps is networking and knowledge-sharing. In this regard, "a strong and robust national WOPs platform for Pakistan is the missing link", where support from GWOPA and the regional networks of utilities (SAWUN & SEAWUN), together with WSP, becomes essential.



Plenary Session II: Regional WOP Platform Sharing

Part II: Panel – How to Further Strengthen WOPs Platforms



Participants: Neils van Dijk, Moderator; Gerard Payen, UNSGAB; Roberto Olivares, ANEAS of Mexico; Rudolf Frauendorfer, Asian Development Bank; Cassilde Breniere, Agence Française de Développement; and Thomas Roberts, African Development Bank.

Mr. Neils van Dijk, the former coordinator of the regional WOPs platform in Asia, WaterLinks, moderated a discussion on the role of regional and national platforms in facilitating WOPs. As an introduction to the session, he outlined the various support roles that were required for WOPs to function at scale: advocacy, brokering, facilitation, coordination between WOPs, funding, information dissemination and training support.

Mr. Gerard Payen, the President of Aquafed, and member of the UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UNSGAB), reminded the audience that the practice of WOPs long predates the origin of the term. Previously, WOPs were supported by national and regional utility networks. He argued that WOPs facilitation should be an added feature of these existing utility networks, not distinct initiatives.

Mr. Roberto Olivares of ANEAS, the national water association in Mexico, pointed out the need for better and more extensive participation by national governments in efforts to improve utility performance. He shared the example of Mexico where turnover of general managers in utilities, disrupts strategic efforts to improve performance and service delivery. This situation is worsened by the country's predisposition to the extremes of climate change, which increase the vulnerability of its water and sanitation systems. In this light, Mexico sees WOPs as key to identifying collective problems, sharing appropriate solutions, and addressing political constraints.

Mr. Rudolf Frauendorfer spoke of the Asian Development Bank's involvement with WOPs through the WaterLinks platform. He spoke of growing interest in WOPs from the small and mid-sized utilities in the region, and the various national WOPs platforms emerging to meet the within-country demand. Mr. Frauendorfer proposed that this "scaling-down" – that is, from the regional to national level – held the potential to greatly expand the impact of WOPs.

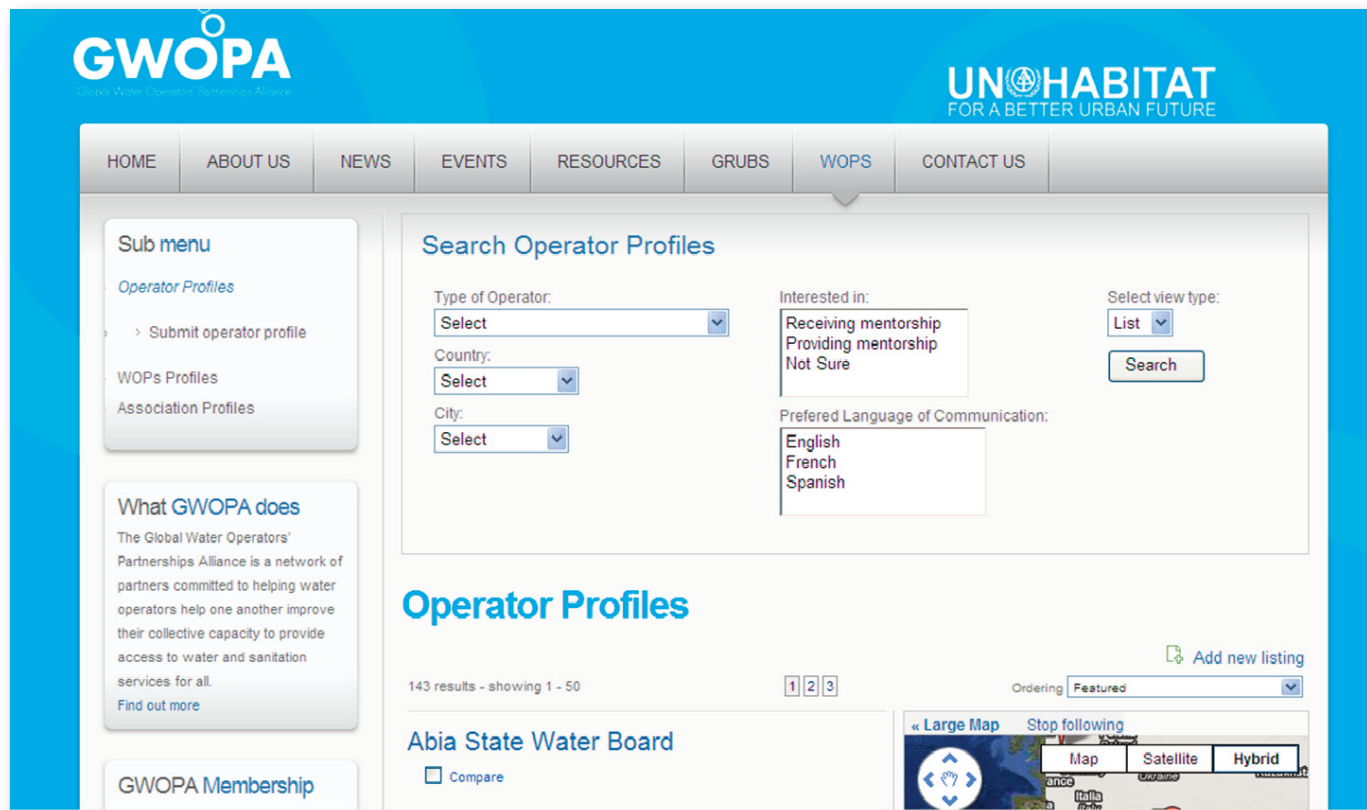
He explained that while the Asian Development Bank does not require its loan recipients to enter into WOPs, its use as a means to increase capacity to absorb investment was growing. As an example, he cited the case of MEDAN, a new recipient of an ADB sanitation loan, whose recent WOP enabled it to expand its sewage network. Mr. Frauendorfer encouraged GWOPA's ongoing efforts to develop electronic tools to enable greater exchange between operators and amongst staff.

Ms. Cassilde Breniere explained that the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) was also interested in WOPs as an approach to the capacity building components of its loans and grants to utilities. Comparing WOPs to classic technical assistance programmes, WOPs hands-on approach and direct exchange between professional peers was recognized by AFD as offering advantages over consultancy-based capacity building in many instances.

She explained that AFD is supporting WOPs by 1) backing the GWOPA Secretariat and 2) financing WOPs directly on a case-by-case basis. Recalling earlier statements, she stressed that exchanges should not be limited to utility managers but should aim to build the capacities of various levels of the utility's workforce. She advocated for making WOPs a capacity building requirement in loan preparation.

Mr. Thomas Roberts of the African Development Bank described how AfDB was supporting WOPs through the African Water Facility window as well as through various direct projects. He recommended stronger documentation of the impacts of WOPs, suggesting the use of IWA's Efficiency Assessment matrix, and tying WOPs in with national poverty reduction strategies in order to anchor the approach within broader country frameworks.

Utilities' Meeting – Exploring Tools and Opportunities for WOPs



This session, targeting participants from utilities and utility associations, served to introduce GWOPA's newly developed web-based tools for facilitating utility networking, WOPs and knowledge exchange.

The designer, Mr. Mark de Blois of Upande Ltd., demonstrated the GWOPA Website including its utility, association and WOPs profile pages, social networking system and its linkage to the Geo-referenced Utility Benchmarking System (GRUBS).

The suite of tools being introduced will support match-making between utilities, in addition to direct online peer support between utility professionals by facilitating the exchange of ideas and information. The platform also hosts a growing, searchable database that is compiling records on WOPs carried out around the world. Participants were encouraged to engage with, provide feedback on, and share the tools with others.

Potential mentor utilities attending the session then introduced themselves, touting their experience as mentors. Those utilities which had already registered their utility profiles on the GWOPA website then showed their profiles during this introduction period. Potential mentors then held tables to which they invited prospective partner utilities to discuss, exchange ideas and explore possibilities for partnership in a rare inter-regional WOPs 'matchmaking' session.



Development Partners' Meeting – Making the Most of the Alliance Approach to Support WOPs



The GWOPA Secretariat convened several development partners and stakeholders to this roundtable event to discuss the overall coordination role of GWOPA in support of WOPs on the global level, and to map potential respective roles of the partners in the general framework of the Alliance. Representatives of regional development banks, development agencies, civil society organizations, trade unions, and water sector professional associations were present.

Several recommendations to GWOPA resulted from the discussions:

- GWOPA and its partners should put more effort into convincing development agencies to include WOPs in their programmes, notably under their capacity development components, as pre-investment activities.
- Labour and civil society representatives should be more proactively involved in WOPs implementation to enhance transparency and facilitate utility workers buy into the practice. GWOPA should provide guidance on making WOPs more participatory, drawing on successful examples from different regions. Efforts should be made to develop WOPs indicators to gauge participation of civil society and labour.
- Efforts must be made to market WOPs through audience-specific communications materials, particularly through the GWOPA website.
- GWOPA must play a leading role in inter-regional exchange, rendering local experiences accessible to a wide audience and disseminating regional stories at the global level.
- The Agence Française de Développement's three-pronged support to WOPs which includes staff secondment to the GWOPA Secretariat, direct engagement of French utilities in WOPs and the adoption of WOPs in its pre-investment capacity building activity, presents a model of cooperation that could be replicated by other national development agencies.

1st GWOPA General Assembly

GWOPA Progress Report and Work Plan

Dr. Faraj El-Awar gave a presentation entitled “GWOPA Plans: Looking Forward” in which he explained that GWOPA has invested most of its efforts and resources in the past two years in supporting regional WOP platforms. In response to demand, GWOPA also recently supported the creation of National WOP platforms in Brazil, Mexico, and Pakistan.

Dr. El-Awar said that since most platforms are now up on their own feet, GWOPA is able to shift its priorities towards its global functions. Instead of providing direct institutional and operational support to specific platforms, GWOPA will redirect its efforts to activities from which all WOPs platforms can benefit, specifically to matchmaking (through electronic tools), benchmarking (GRUBS – Version2), knowledge management (impact oriented case studies, establishing a WOPs database, developing tools and templates, etc.), financial guidance (supporting regional resource mobilization activities, technical assistance for utilities in financial management, etc.) and Advocacy.

Dr. El-Awar also mentioned that the GWOPA Secretariat will further its efforts to broaden its substantive and financial partnerships base, seeking new partners from the watsan sector at both global and regional levels.

As an example of these ongoing efforts, he announced the recently established partnership with the Water Right Foundation based in Tuscany, Italy, through which the Secretariat hopes to draw on resources and expertise in supporting extended access to water and sanitation to the poor and to enhance Italian water operators’ involvement in WOPs.

Results of the GWOPA Steering Committee Selection Process

The new GWOPA Steering Committee (SC) members were selected following the GWOPA charter and selection guidelines. Participants from each of the SC categories gathered to collectively decide which member(s) would withdraw, and which new member(s) would be selected for SC membership for the next 4 year term, as needed.

As a result of the selection process, 12 new members were selected, bringing the total number of GWOPA SC member organizations to 28, including the representatives of the Alliance Partner organizations (which have permanent membership). Please refer to the table on page 18 for the full list of the new GWOPA Steering Committee.



1st GWOPA General Assembly

New GWOPA Steering Committee

Category	Organization
Public Utilities/ WOP Platforms	Africa Nairobi City Water & Sewerage Company (NCWSC)* WOP-Africa
	Arab Arab Countries Water Utilities' Association (ACWUA) Water Supply and Sewerage Authority Bethlehem (WSSA)*
	Asia Water & Sanitation Agency of Rawalpindi, Pakistan WaterLinks Secretariat*
	Latin America Aguas Bonaerenses Operator (5 de Septiembre S.A.) Asociación Nacional de Empresas de Agua y Saneamiento (ANEAS)* Obras Sanitarias del Estado (OSE)*
	North America Greater Moncton Sewerage Commission (GMSC)*
	North Europe Syndicat Interdépartemental pour l'Assainissement de l'Agglomération Parisienne (SIAAP)* World Waternet
	Pacific Pacific Water & Wastes Association (PWWA)*
	Southeast Europe Inter-institutional professional network of water sector in Serbia (IPM)*
	Civil Society Organizations Plataforma de Acuerdos Públicos Comunitarios (PAPC)* Reclaiming Public Water Network (RPWN)
Private Operators AquaFed (The International Federation of Private Water Operators) Sénégalaise des Eaux	
Labour Unions ABVAKABO FNV/PSI Public Service International (PSI)*	
Alliance Partners Asian Development Bank (ADB) Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) International Water Association (IWA) UN-HABITAT, Chair of Steering Committee United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	
Observer UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UNSGAB)	
Secretariat GWOPA Secretariat	

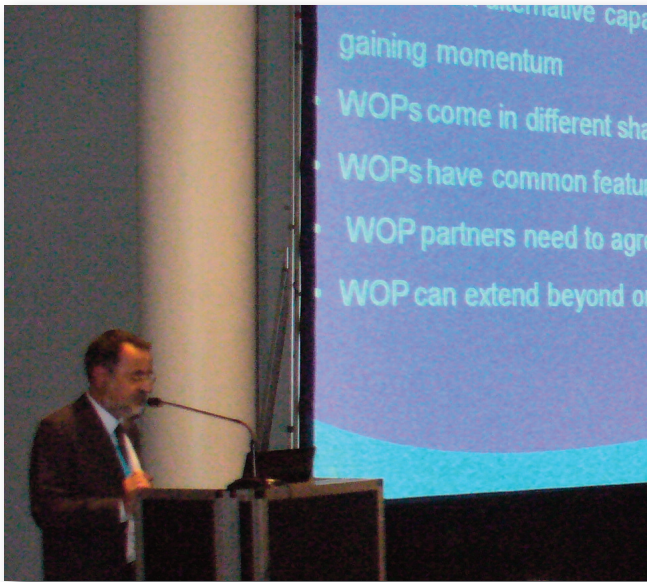
*new members

Closing Session

Summary of Highlights

Dr. Faraj El-Awar GWOPA Program Manager, UN-HABITAT

In his overview of the Congress proceedings, Dr. El-Awar presented the key themes and highlights that had emerged from the two days of discussion. Dr. El-Awar pointed to the mounting evidence that public utilities were not only capable of change but were increasingly interested and able to help their peers achieve it.



Special Address

His Royal Highness Prince Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands Chair of UNSGAB

In a moving address, His Royal Highness Willem-Alexander acknowledged the advances made by the global movement for WOPs, but encouraged its supporters to intensify their efforts. He noted that in order to implement WOPs at a scale proportional to the current needs, *“more systematic financing and legal mechanisms are required”*. He also recommended promoting innovative financing mechanisms like the Public Utilities Advisory and Financing Facility (PUAFF) being explored by GWOPA, the expansion of legal tools enabling utilities to apply revenues to cooperation, and Corporate Social Responsibility strategies that can leverage resources to help water operators to help one another.

Official Closing of the Global WOPs Congress and General Assembly

Dr. Joan Clos Under-Secretary General and Executive Director, UN-HABITAT

Dr. Joan Clos thanked the audience for their active participation at the event. The numbers of people attending and self-supporting, the engagement of participants and pledges from various partners all contributed encouraging signs of the growing global commitment to WOPs. Dr. Clos acknowledged participants' call for UN-HABITAT to now focus on more systematic documentation of WOPs experience, development of knowledge around the practice, and to work to attract the needed political and financial support.





Photos on page 1, 3, 7 and 19 courtesy of UN-HABITAT / WWD2011
Photo on page 8 courtesy of IWA
Photo on page 17 courtesy of ANEAS

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