

# THE GLOBAL WATER OPERATORS' PARTNERSHIPS ALLIANCE ASSEMBLY



2—3 November 2024 | Cairo, Egypt



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Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development



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Image: Members and partners of the Alliance at the GWOPA Assembly.



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# THE GWOPA ASSEMBLY

The Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA) Assembly is one of the three bodies constituting the organizational structure of GWOPA: the Assembly, the Steering Committee and the Secretariat.

Held every two years, the GWOPA's Assembly is open for all institutional and individual members to attend. It offers an opportunity for members to contribute to shaping the priorities of the Alliance. The Assembly provides leadership and overall direction to the Alliance, takes stock of significant progress, as well as presents and reflects on the remaining challenges to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Over the last 15 years, GWOPA has championed the role of operators as the first and foremost providers of sustainable water and sanitation services. As a platform to convene the whole membership in the strategic direction of GWOPA, the Assembly is an opportunity to reflect on past achievements and seek to confront today's greatest challenges from climate change, urban growth and increasingly unstable contexts.

The first edition of the Assembly under the new GWOPA Charter, was held in Cairo on 2 and 3 November 2024 prior to the 12th World Urban Forum convened by UN-Habitat in collaboration with the Government of Egypt. Outcomes and recommendations are found in [Annex 1](#) and the Assembly Agenda in [Annex 2](#).

The Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance Assembly  
2 – 3 November 2024 | Cairo, Egypt

# OPENING OF THE ASSEMBLY



## OPENING BY THE CHAIR

### Dr. Rose Kaggwa

Senior Director, Business and Scientific Services, National Water and Sewerage Corporation, Uganda  
and Chair of the GWOPA Assembly

Dr. Kaggwa, Chair of the Assembly, opened the Assembly and highlighting the vital role of water in addressing global challenges. She outlined the objectives of the Assembly: to introduce the Alliance to new members and to engage in strategic discussions aimed at strengthening the future of the Alliance.

Dr. Kaggwa emphasized that over a quarter of the global population still lacks access to safe water and recognized the contributions of WOPs movement in supporting utilities through international collaboration and recognition.

She provided an overview of the Alliance's achievements, noting the participation of 117 countries in WOPs to facilitate knowledge and improve performance of peer utilities. Additionally, she shared key figures demonstrating the impact of these partnerships: 58 million people have benefited from WOPs and over 3,500 utility workers have enhanced their skills and capacity through 474 partnerships.

[Watch | GWOPA 15-year Celebration Video](#)



Image: Dr. Rose Kaggwa opened the Assembly.

## WELCOMING STATEMENTS

### Ms. Anacláudia Rossbach

United Nations Under-Secretary General, Executive Director of UN-Habitat,  
and Chair of GWOPA Steering Committee

Ms. Rossbach praised the efforts of GWOPA, emphasizing its innovative and collaborative approach as a model for the future. Highlighting the new UN-Habitat Strategic Plan, she underscored the agency's focus on housing, land and basic services amid challenges like climate change, conflicts and structural poverty.

Ms. Rossbach stressed the critical role of water and sanitation in human development, noting that over 2 billion people lack access to water, and 3.5 billion face inadequate sanitation. Achieving universal access to these services is fundamental to the 2030 Agenda and improving the lives of over 1 billion residents in informal settlements. She highlighted the growing urbanization challenge, with 70 per cent of the global population expected to live in cities by 2050.

Drawing from her experience in Brazil, where the programme, which she led, improved housing for 7 million people, Ms. Rossbach shared how proper housing and water access empowered women, enabling them to save time, care for families and achieve financial independence.

She commended GWOPA's collaborative spirit of the Alliance through its peer-to-peer guiding principle and its gender strategies, thanking the Chair, the Government of Egypt hosting the conference, the Government of Germany, the Directorate-General of International Partnerships of the European Commission, and all GWOPA members for their support and engagement in advancing these vital initiatives.

Image: Ms. Anacláudia Rossbach,  
the Executive Director of UN-Habitat,  
welcomed the participants at the Assembly.

### Ms. Katja Dörner

Host City, Lord Mayor of Bonn

Ms. Dörner addressed the Assembly, highlighting Bonn's role as an exceptional host city for GWOPA and a hub for collaboration. She emphasized that Bonn provides an excellent platform for networking and joint efforts, citing the Bonn Water Network as an example. The network facilitates a multi-level, multidisciplinary exchange on water, positioning the city as a leading hub for sustainable development and resilience. With its strong base local and global stakeholders, Bonn offers a unique environment for GWOPA to advance its mission of supporting water operators worldwide.

Ms. Dörner reflected on the success of the 5th Global WOPs Congress hosted in Bonn in 2023, which brought together 500 participants to exchange knowledge, to network and discuss critical issues related to water and sanitation utilities. She expressed pride in Bonn's active commitment to sustainability, including its participation in the Making Cities Resilient Initiative of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNDRR) and its progress towards climate neutrality. Looking ahead, she welcomed participants to the 6th Global WOPs Congress, which will once again take place in Bonn in 2025.





## VOICE OF UTILITIES

### Ms. Massaba Keita

Youth Representative, National Public Water Supply Company, SOMAGEP, Mali

Ms. Keita highlighted the challenges that West Africa faces with lack of resources and increasing water scarcity. She stressed that the lack of good quality education deters youth from obtaining professional training for building their careers. Though they are met with obstacles, Ms. Keita reminded the crowd that the African youth are determined to face challenges and actively engaged in preservation and management of resources.

She commended GWOPA for its proactive efforts in engaging women professionals from the water sector. She emphasized the importance of empowering women to drive positive change, advocate for their collective interests, and bring new dynamism to the water sector. She affirmed her determination and her commitment to work hand in hand with all GWOPA members to promote gender equality for a sustainable and equitable water and sanitation sector.

Image: Ms. Massaba Keita, emphasized the importance of empowering women in utilities to drive positive change.



## WELCOMING STATEMENT

### His Excellency Prof. Hani Sewilam

Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation, Egypt (World Urban Forum Host Country)

The Honourable Minister commended GWOPA for fostering collaboration to improve access to clean water and sanitation. Welcoming participants to Egypt, he stressed that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in areas such as poverty reduction, food security, education, health and energy is unattainable without sustainable water management, reliable water supplies and improved sanitation.

He outlined Egypt's Vision 2030, emphasizing human-centered development of a cornerstone of successful development. The Minister highlighted the challenges of managing the Nile, Egypt's sole source of water and shared innovative government initiatives and programmes, providing water to rural areas using renewable energy and usage of artificial intelligence technology for water canal management. As President of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), he underscored Egypt's commitment to partnerships across Africa, focusing on infrastructure financing and capacity development.

He spotlighted Action on Water Adaptation and Resilience (AWARe), launched at the Climate COP27 and hosted in Egypt with 30 Member States, that has trained 250 water professionals from Africa and secured funding to train 3,000 more in the next three years in collaboration with different organizations. He urged the water and sanitation sector to work with young professionals and nurture them for sustainable development.

Image: His Excellency Prof. Hani Sewilam welcomed the participants to Egypt.



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**AGENDA ITEM 1**  
**UPDATES ON**  
**GWOPA'S GOVERNANCE**

# GOVERNANCE OF THE GLOBAL WATER OPERATORS' PARTNERSHIP ALLIANCE

## Why an Alliance, Why Stronger Together?

### Ms. Åsa Jonsson

Head of GWOPA Secretariat, UN-Habitat

Marking GWOPA's 15th anniversary, Ms. Jonsson underscored the Alliance's foundational principle of solidarity, which shapes its collaborative approach. She outlined the key components of GWOPA's governance structure and emphasized the importance of members contributing to collective goals, including the analysis of impact of different WOPs to guide the coming years of work.

Ms. Jonsson extended a warm welcome to both longstanding and new members, at both institutional and individual levels, and offered congratulations to the newly elected Chair of the Assembly and Steering Committee members for their pivotal roles in advancing GWOPA's mission.

### Panel Discussion

## GWOPA Governance Channels: Ways of Working Together

### Ms. Mai Flor

Executive Director, Waterlinks (WOP Regional Platform Asia)

Ms. Flor shared the history of Waterlinks, a regional WOP platform that has been facilitating WOPs since before GWOPA's establishment. She suggested that GWOPA strengthen collaboration with regional platforms by hosting events that enhance membership appeal, particularly targeting the thousands of Asian utilities not yet part of the global alliance. Additionally, she advocated for greater opportunities for regional platforms to learn from one another and called for stronger coordination between the GWOPA Secretariat and platforms on regional plans and activities.

### Mr. Thomas Odongo

Managing Director, Kisumu Water and Sanitation Company, Kenya (Utilities)

Mr. Odongo reflected on Kisumu's long experience with WOPs, transitioning from mentee to mentor – an example of the ripple effect of WOPs. As a champion for African utilities in GWOPA, he emphasized Africa's diverse institutional arrangements across Africa and his role in representing GWOPA in fora, such as the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) and the African Water and Sanitation Association (AfWASA), as well as government fora within Kenya. With African utilities increasingly embracing functions up the whole sanitation service chain, while facing greater climate challenges, he highlighted the importance of WOPs in supporting utility transitions.



Image: Ms. Anne Bousquet, Human Settlements Officer, GWOPA Secretariat, moderating the panel discussion on GWOPA Governance Channels.



Image: Ms. Mai Flor, Executive Director, Waterlinks.



Image: Mr. Thomas Odongo, Managing Director, Kisumu Water and Sanitation Company, Kenya.



### Mr. Igor Santiago Ruiz

President, Federación Nacional de Cooperativas de Servicios Sanitarios (FESAN), Chile (Community Operators and Cooperatives/National WOPs)

Mr. Ruiz highlighted the critical role of rural community operators globally, particularly in Latin America, where in some countries over 8,000 of them serve growing rural and peri-urban populations. He stressed their contributions to local development despite lacking recognition and resources, such as the ability to collect revenues to maintain quality services. FESAN has successfully facilitating community WOPs, including indigenous operators together with WOP-LAC and is working with GWOPA to expand experience-sharing opportunities. Additionally, FESAN has produced best practice literature and strives to establish a learning and capacity development centre for community operators, fulfilling the vision of its late president, Mr. Guillermo Saavedra.

### Mr. David Boys

Deputy General Secretary, Public Service International (Trade Unions)

Mr. Boys, reflected on his long experience with GWOPA, beginning with its origins as an idea of the UN Secretary General's Advisory Board for Water and Sanitation in 2006. He commended the Alliance's long-term vision and commitment. He highlighted GWOPA's role in ensuring decent working conditions, as defined by the International Labour Organization, emphasizing its pillars of respect, dignity, safety and fairness. Mr. Boys underlined workers' rights, enshrined in the Universal Human Rights Charter, are essential to achieving the SDGs. Recognizing the critical knowledge and expertise of workers, he called on the Alliance to strengthen partnerships with trade unions.

### Ms. Martha Owiredu-Baah

Personal Assistant to the Executive Director, Integrated Social Development Center, Ghana (Civil Society Organizations)

Ms. Owiredu-Baah outlined the role of civil society in defending the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation. She emphasized the importance of inclusive dialogues, diverse representation and partnerships to ensure accountability and transparency within GWOPA and among operators.

### Mr. Neil Dhot

Executive Director, International Federation of Private Water Operators (AquaFed), (Private Operators)

Mr. Dhot highlighted AquaFed's initiatives to promote respect, dignity, safety and fairness in the workplace. He shared the Federation's on gender equality and developing the utility workforce of the future, inviting members to explore AquaFed's recently completed study on the utility workforce.

Image: Q&A at the Assembly.



Image: Panelists of the first agenda item: updates on GWOPA's governance.



# ASSEMBLY DISCUSSIONS ON GWOPA'S GOVERNANCE

## Core Values and Principles

Participants identified inclusiveness, 'mutual benefit' and 'solidarity' as the most valued GWOPA principles. These values were seen as complementary, relevant and crucial to achieving the common goals of the Alliance. To quote one of the many responses "together, these values ensure that water management initiatives remain ethical, equitable and sustainable, reflecting a deep commitment to both social responsibility and environmental stewardship."

## Unique Aspects of GWOPA

Key attributes that distinguish GWOPA include 'peer-to-peer support' and 'helping build the capacity', which were consistently highlighted as the Alliance's strengths. These align with main motivations highlighted for joining the Alliance (networking, connection and capacity development through WOPs/solidarity with peers). However, advocacy for global water and sanitation rights was ranked lower, suggesting this mission has yet to reach its full potential.

## Membership Benefits and Representation

More than 80 per cent of the respondents found the benefits of GWOPA membership to be clear, with expectations around capacity-building, networking and peer learning largely being met. However, some stakeholders were perceived as missing in eligible categories of membership, including water consumers, start-up and entrepreneurs, tech innovators and social enterprises (stakeholders from the innovation ecosystem), informal workers, local government associations, water resources management agencies, urban planners, water ministries, central governments, and water resources management agencies were listed as missing in the eligible categories of members. While some are already eligible, this perception highlights areas for improved outreach and the potential for fostering strategic partnerships.

To better understand and address member needs, consultations, respondents prioritized constituency-led consultations by Steering Committee members, followed by surveys and regular town hall meetings.

## Governance Clarity and Areas of Improvements

Most respondents agreed that GWOPA's governance structure is clear, and none of its core elements were fundamentally questioned. However, only 68 per cent of participants indicated familiarity with GWOPA's Charter, and some called for updating some elements (membership rules, guiding principles, assembly and steering committee functions).

## Global Advocacy and Engagement

Many respondents expressed willingness to engage more actively in general and asked for opportunities and support to do so. Suggestions include:

- o Strengthened communications for advocacy and a stronger presence at national, regional and international fora, as well as in regular policy dialogues on emerging issues, and 'continuous engagement especially cross-learning and exposure sessions'.
- o Crafting messages that emphasize 'Collective Intelligence, leadership and storytelling, especially towards non-water people'.
- o Building stronger connection with regional platforms and national utility associations.

Suggestions also emphasized starting at local level by supporting governance reforms at country level and institutionalization of WOPs at different government levels. Respondents highlighted the need of 'helping utilities understand their political potential, working with local stakeholders, and communicating on accomplishments to strengthen the support in the communities'.

**AGENDA ITEM 2**

# FRAMING GWOPA'S STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS



## LOCALIZING THE SDGs: UTILITIES IN THE HOME STRETCH OF AGENDA 2030

### Ms. Shipra Narang-Suri

Chief, Urban Practices Branch, Global Solutions Division and Senior Focal Point,  
Local Governments and SDG Localization, UN-Habitat

Ms. Narang-Suri opened by noting the historic significance of hosting the GWOPA Assembly in conjunction with the World Urban Forum (WUF) for the first time, providing an entire ecosystem of urban actors and stakeholders required to achieve the SDGs and to implement the New Urban Agenda. She highlighted that UN-Habitat recognizes water and sanitation utilities as integral to this ecosystem, with their impact extending beyond SDG 6 to influence multiple other SDGs.

Encouraging members take actively participate and network during WUF, which saw more than 30,000 registered participants, making it the biggest organized event of its kind ever, Ms. Narang-Suri underscored the relevance of the theme, 'It All Starts at Home', resonating strongly with the mandate of utilities. She reminded the audience that cities cannot function without water, which is vital to urban life, and that access to safely managed sanitation is fundamental to dignify. These basic services are not only central to SDG 6 but are also key to achieving SDG 11 on inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities, and to realizing the Human Right to Adequate Housing.

She stressed that while UN Member States have committed to the 2030 Agenda, the actual realization of the SDGs depends heavily on local service providers, such as GWOPA's utility members, who serve as SDG localizers. Concluding, Ms. Narang-Suri introduced the session's objective: exploring the role of utilities in achieving the SDGs and informing next GWOPA Strategic Framework, before inviting the panel to share their perspectives.

Image: GWOPA Assembly participants.



Image: Ms. Shipra Narang-Suri, UN-Habitat's Chief, Urban Practices Branch opened the second session on framing GWOPA's strategic directions.



## Panel Discussion

**Ms. Elin Adolfsson**

Policy Consultant Global Water Affairs, Global Commission on the Economics of Water, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Ms. Adolfsson presented the objectives of the latest report by the Global Commission on the Economics of Water, which outlines a framework for transformative approaches to valuing and governing water. Central to this vision is the hydrological cycle – encompassing blue, green and gray water – as a common good that demands collective stewardship across borders and scales.

Two major aspects highlighted were resilience and equity. Operators need to adapt to the disruptions caused by an unbalanced hydrological cycle, such as water scarcity, drought and flooding. This requires investing, inter alia, in water catchment protection deploying green infrastructure, while resilience needs to be an inspirational goal contributing to conserving green water. To achieve this, new partnerships between local governments and utilities need to be fostered.

Equity, Ms. Adolfsson stressed, is essential alongside efficiency. The Commission prioritizes focus on marginalized communities through frameworks that integrate informal service providers and support their transitions. Partnerships among water operators can ensure dignified access to adequate water and sanitation and decent housing.



Image: Ms. Elin Adolfsson, Policy Consultant Global Water Affairs, Global Commission on the Economics of Water, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

**Ms. Bernardia Irawati**

Secretary-General of United Cities and Local Governments Asia-Pacific (UCLG ASPAC)

Ms. Irawati reaffirmed UCLG ASPAC's commitment to deepening its partnership with GWOPA, recognizing the critical role of collaborative efforts in ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation services. She highlighted that the participation of GWOPA in UCLG ASPAC Assembly marked a positive signal regarding this collaboration.

She positioned public service provision and recognition of the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation as integral elements of a new social contract. Achieving this goal requires political will and coordination between local and central governments. In the Asia-Pacific region, where achieving SDG 6 could take 42 years at the current pace, UCLG ASPAC is determined to equip local governments in 16 countries with the adequate capacity to include the local level in global agendas regarding SDG 6 through advocacy and peer-to-peer learning exchanges, integrating the SDGs in local development plans.

She also highlighted UCLG ASPAC's collaboration with UN-Habitat on local voluntary SDG reviews (LVRs), of which 20 reviews have been completed in the region, and municipal sanitation programmes, stressing the importance of innovative financing, while supporting local governments to develop by-laws to conduct participative stakeholder consultations, and engaging in peer learning, which included for example 280 municipal leaders notably on Citywide Inclusive Sanitation (CWIS). Advocacy from local to national levels remains key in mobilizing resources and engaging with local leaders.



Image: Ms. Bernardia Irawati, Secretary-General of United Cities and Local Governments Asia-Pacific (UCLG ASPAC).



**Mr. Pireh Otieno**

Programme Management Officer, Urban Basic Services, UN-Habitat  
(representing Mr. André Dzikus, Chief, Urban Basic Services, UN-Habitat)

Mr. Otieno traced the origins of GWOPA back to 2009, initiated under the guidance of the late United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation. The Board came to three key conclusions: the societal indispensability of public water and sanitation operators, their struggle to meet global development targets and the immense potential for mutual support through peer partnerships, which led to the birth of Water Operators' Partnerships (WOPs).

Fifteen years later, not-for-profit peer partnerships have facilitated improvements for hundreds of utilities worldwide. Water and sanitation associations, multilateral development banks, governments, United Nations agencies, international governmental organizations continue to adopt the approach, establishing new WOP programmes and platforms, recognizing that WOPs not only build capacity to improve performance, but facilitate much-needed investments. As the global convener for WOPs, GWOPA has leveraged its UN-Habitat mandate to champion sustainable local water service providers, promote their role in achieving localized solutions for the SDGs.

Mr. Otieno highlighted the centrality of water solidarity and resilience in The Pact for the Future, adopted at the UN 2024 Summit of the Future, emphasizing WOPs as a key tool for localizing the SDGs, delivering on the UN System-wide strategy and positioning UN-Habitat's GWOPA Secretariat as the global convener, catalyzer, advocate and knowledge broker for WOPs within its growing global alliance.

At the UN 2023 Water Conference, over \$330 billion in pledges, with the potential to leverage close to \$1 trillion worth of services to achieve SDG 6, reinforced the urgency of building institutional capacity for sustainable water investments. GWOPA has committed to mobilize partnerships between water and sanitation operators through its network to improve health, livelihoods, water and food security and well-being for 100 million people by 2030, stressing the need for intensified collaboration to meet this critical goal.

Image: Mr. Pireh Otieno, Programme Management Officer, Urban Basic Services, UN-Habitat.

**Mr. Anton Earle**

Global Coordinator, Water Systems, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

Mr. Earle underscored the shared commitment ICLEI and GWOPA to peer exchanges as a powerful tool for attaining SDG 6. He emphasized the critical role of local governments in implementing national commitments on water and sanitation. Raising awareness at the local level, particularly about the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation, pivotal for human dignity, is essential to empower municipalities to fulfil their mandates. While commitments are made at the national level, they are realized locally, requiring strengthened support and capacity development for local decision makers.

ICLEI, with its network of 2,500 members, actively facilitates pathways to achieve SDG 6. Mr. Earle highlighted non-accounted-for water as an accessible starting point for fostering a dialogue between mayors and utilities. He also noted that many city planners and city managers lack sufficient understanding of their local hydrological cycles, underscoring the responsibility of local governments to manage water resources effectively – from the catchment areas to downstream users – within the brief hydrological cycle timeframe.

Drawing from Egypt's evolution in water management, Mr. Earle illustrated how countries need to transition from focusing on technical aspects, along with engineering and hydrological skills to integrating advanced skills, such as data management and artificial intelligence, and to optimize water use, including reuse strategies. He further highlighted the opportunity to link wastewater treatment with energy production, leveraging cross-sector synergies in food, health, transport and housing to tackle water challenges comprehensively.

Image: Mr. Anton Earle, Global Coordinator for Water Systems at ICLEI.





Image: Mr. Azuan Ahmad Zahdi,  
Chief Corporate Officer,  
Indah Water Konsortium (IWK), Malaysia.

### **Mr. Azuan Ahmad Zahdi**

Chief Corporate Officer, Indah Water Konsortium (IWK), Malaysia

Mr. Zahdi illustrated how national commitments, such as taken in Indonesia, are translated into local action by stakeholders like IWK. In Malaysia, significant reforms in the water sector led to the establishment of a national regulator, ensuring adherence to regulations and alignment with SDG targets through clear guidelines and action plans.

Malaysia's water sector features multiple state-level operators and a single, national wastewater operator, with the obligation to report every five years on key performance indicators, often related to SDG 6 targets.

Managing 7,000 sewerage treatment plants servicing about 30 million people, alongside 1.3 million septic tanks, IWK has developed comprehensive action plans to connect new urban developments to modern sewerage networks and worked with the Government to develop adequate institutional and regulation frameworks on construction norms, service and maintenance of septic tanks, e.g. requiring desludging every two to three years.

IWK has also addressed the needs of underserved communities in remote areas by tailored technologies and balancing affordability through cross-subsidies, especially after a 28-year tariff freeze. As a main SDG localizer, IWK also collaborates with stakeholders, including latrine emptiers, which is crucial to achieve SDG 6.

As a proud member of GWOPA, IWK mentors an Indonesian operator, fostering mutual learning and sharing expertise to advance sustainable water and sanitation solutions.

## PREPARATIONS FOR GWOPA'S 2026-2030 STRATEGY

**Ms. Åsa Jonsson**

Head of GWOPA Secretariat, UN-Habitat

Ms. Jonsson's presentation provided both a reflection on GWOPA's progress and a roadmap for its ongoing and future endeavors: She began by revisiting the current strategy, highlighting key takeaways from the [Mid-Term Review](#). These insights provided a snapshot of progress and identified 10 concrete recommendations for improvement. Among these was the revised Results Framework presented to the Assembly.

The session also highlighted insights and recommendations from the European Union-funded Water Operators' Partnerships Programme (EU-WOP) Mid-Term Review, recognizing the Programme's strong design, while emphasizing the need to refine its results framework and enhance stakeholder engagement at the country level, among others.

Ms. Jonsson presented the Steering Committee's recommendations for GWOPA's 2024 priorities, ensuring operational alignment and strategic focus as the organization moves forward. She reaffirmed GWOPA's commitment to the global Water Action Agenda, linking its work to international water and sanitation objectives. Recent UN initiatives, including the launch of a UN system-wide strategy for the future and outcomes from the Summit of the Future, were discussed as critical platforms for advancing global collaboration. She stressed the need to mobilize the Alliance for more joint and impactful advocacy and an assessment of the impact of WOPs.

Ms. Jonsson concluded by highlighting the preparatory efforts for GWOPA's 2026-2029 strategic cycle, which will strengthen water and sanitation collaboration. The new strategy will align with the UN-Habitat's 2026-2029 strategy and focus on providing adequate housing, land and basic services for all.



Image: Ms. Åsa Jonsson,  
Head of GWOPA Secretariat, UN-Habitat,  
presented a reflection on GWOPA's progress and roadmap.







## GWOPA's Unique Value as a Network

Respondents identified several attributes that set GWOPA apart:

- o 'Knowledge sharing', 'capacity building', and 'peer-to-peer partnerships', emerged as a core strength.
- o GWOPA's role in 'connecting utilities on a single platform', fostering a 'global voice' and providing a 'common language' for operators was widely acknowledged.
- o The network was also recognized for facilitating 'diversity', creating 'connections between cities and operators' and aligning with 'wider global/UN needs'.
- o GWOPA's ability to 'connect and create opportunities' and strengthen a 'global network' were noted as significant contributions to the water and sanitation community.

## Key Emerging Trends for WOPs

When asked about emerging priorities, respondents highlighted:

- o 'Climate change' and 'digitalization', particularly the integration of 'artificial intelligence', as urgent issues.
- o 'Financing', 'localization' and the 'low-income/pro-poor agenda' as critical areas.
- o 'Emerging contaminants', 'multilevel governance' and 'newly created utilities' as pressing issues.

Additional trends identified included:

- o Circularity and sustainability: water circularity, circular economy principles and the wastewater-energy nexus.
- o Social inclusion and workforce development: gender equality and social inclusion, youth employment and workforce capacity building.
- o Linking water to broader systems: synergies between urban planning and water management, environmental, social and governance (ESG) principles and stronger connections to investments.
- o Governance and partnerships: regulator partnerships, multilevel governance frameworks and addressing emerging conflicts.

Some responses called for addressing institutional gaps, improving mentorship structures (e.g., multiple mentees) and exploring innovative financing mechanisms to ensure sustainability.



Image: Q&A at the Assembly.

## Advocacy Strategies for WOPs

Respondents emphasized the importance of advocacy at local, national and global levels to elevate the role of WOPs. Key strategies included:

- Promoting WOPs in global policy formulation and raising their profile on platforms like the World Urban Forum.
- Embedding WOPs into the DNA of central governments to ensure long-term institutionalization.
- Advocating for capacity development as a core element of large-scale infrastructure projects, positioning WOPs as tool for sustainable investments.
- A broader, holistic approach focusing on creating liveable cities, not just water issues.
- Documenting and sharing tangible outputs and outcomes to demonstrate success.
- Aligning to collective action ahead of milestones like the 2026 UN Water Conference, and engaging donors at the highest levels.

## Generate Funds for WOPs

On funding strategies, respondents emphasized the importance of:

- Showcasing success stories to attract development partners and demonstrate the clear impacts to build confidence in the WOPs model.
- Pursuing co-financing and collaborations with a wider range of partners, including the private sector, and involving private water utilities and service providers more actively.
- Advocating for capacity development to be integrated into large-scale infrastructure projects
- Positioning WOPs as investment area for development banks, rather than mere fundraising efforts.
- Highlighting the leverage effect of WOPs as tools for maximizing investments, rather than standalone funding needs.
- Strengthening engagement with UN mechanisms and tapping into climate funds as significant opportunities to secure additional resources.

## Knowledge Needs for WOPs

- Respondents highlighted the need for practical, actionable knowledge, including:
- Case studies and lessons learned from best and worst practices.
- Economic valuation of WOP impacts and strategies for mobilizing investments.
- Practical guidance such as on structuring WOPs, assistance in preparation and management processes, including a matchmaking toolkit to facilitate connections between partners.
- Interest in emerging trends such as Sanitation-focussed WOPs (SWOPs) for deeper exploration and knowledge sharing.

Image: Q&A at the Assembly.



**AGENDA ITEM 3**

**STATE OF UTILITIES:  
EMERGING TRENDS AND  
CAPACITY NEEDS**



# THE STATE OF WATER AND SANITATION UTILITIES: HIGHLIGHTS FROM AN EMERGING GLOBAL REPORT

## Mr. John Butterworth

Director, IRC Global Programme

Mr. Butterworth introduced GWOPA's forthcoming global report, *The State of Water and Sanitation Utilities*, which aims to provide a comprehensive overview of water and sanitation utilities worldwide, and to examine their scale, key characteristics and performance. The report will explore how utilities contribute to the local realization of the SDGs, featuring impact stories that highlight the multiple benefits of utility services.

The report will also identify gaps and opportunities for utilities to further advance SDG achievement, offering solution pathways and practical actions. It emphasizes the importance of innovation and adopting new approaches at both the utility and system levels to address challenges such as financial sustainability, operational capacity and climate resilience.

Expected to be launched in 2025, the report will be designed to engage stakeholders in its application. Mr. Butterworth invited participants to join related discussions, including the event on resilient water and sanitation services in African cities at WUF12, co-organized by GWOPA/UN-Habitat and UCLG Africa.



Image: Mr. John Butterworth, Director, IRC Global Programme.



Image: Panel speakers of resilient water and sanitation services in African cities at WUF12.

## ESPRESSO PRESENTATIONS

The Assembly included a series of engaging Espresso Presentations, offering participants fast-paced insights into transformative water and sanitation strategies, such as South-South and triangular WOPs, financial linking, operationalizing SWOPs, full water-cycle WOPs, and strategic collaboration and vision

### Services in Low-Income Settlements

#### Ms. Faustina Boachie

Chief Manager Low-Income Customer Support Department, Ghana Water Company Limited

Ms. Boachie highlighted the challenges utilities face in reaching low-income communities, including regulatory and financial barriers. Despite these obstacles, utilities are finding innovative solutions, such as mobile payment systems, to improve accessibility. She emphasized the role of GWOPA in elevating such initiatives on a global scale by advocating for fair tariffs and inclusive models.

### Climate Adaptive Solutions

#### Mr. Ignatius Jean

Executive Director, Caribbean Waste and Water Association

Mr. Jean discussed the collaborative efforts of Caribbean nations to enhance climate resilience, inspired by the WOPs model. Through monthly meetings, they share strategies and employ mutual and parametric insurance backed by a joint resilience fund. He showcased how the Barbados Water Authority (BWA) accessed the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to upgrade wastewater systems to tertiary treatment levels, fostering reduce, reuse and recycle practices.

### Post-Disaster Recovery

#### Ms. Lusia Sefo-Leau

Chief Executive Officer, Pacific Water and Wastewater Association

Ms. Sefo-Leau outlined the dual priorities in post-disaster recovery in water and sanitation: rebuilding systems and fostering resilience to ensure functionality during crises. She highlighted significant challenges, such as limited initial access to water and sanitation, the increasing frequency of climate-driven natural disasters, financial instability among utilities, and the loss of skilled workers to better opportunities.

## Digitalization for Effective Utilities

#### Dr. Sophie Naue

Urban Innovation and Technology Specialist,  
United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities (UNITAC)

Dr. Naue shared UNITAC's work in developing digital tools to enhance integrated urban planning. Through demand-driven, open-call projects, such as the Hargeisa Water project, UNITAC collaborates with utilities to create impactful applications. Key technologies include digital twins, participatory governance tools and applied research to improve utility performance and efficiency.

## Gender and Inclusion

#### Ms. Leticia Ackun

Gender Specialist, African Water and Sanitation Association (AfWASA)

Ms. Ackun addressed the gender disparities within African water utilities, where women make up only 17 per cent of board members, 21 per cent of engineers and 14 per cent of technicians. To tackle this, AfWASA's initiatives include implementing a gender strategy, forming gender committees with focal points in utilities (10 established to date), and building women's networks for mentorship and leadership development. She called for GWOPA's collaboration to expand these initiatives.



Image: Panellists for the espresso presentation session on the state of utilities.

**AGENDA ITEM 4**

**STATE OF S/WOPS:  
EMERGING TRENDS  
AND PRIORITIES**



# OVERVIEW OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE ON WATER OPERATORS' PARTNERSHIPS

**Ms. Julie Perkins**

Programme Management Officer, GWOPA Secretariat, UN-Habitat

Ms. Perkins presented the special issue on WOPs of Journal of Water, Sanitation & Hygiene for Development, which highlights emerging topics and priorities in the field. The journal emphasizes the critical role of partnerships in enhancing utility performance and fostering collaboration across diverse contexts.

## ESPRESSO PRESENTATIONS

### The Opportunities of South-South and Triangular WOPs

**Mr. Subekti**

Director, Association of Indonesian Water Supply Companies, PERPAMSI

Mr. Subekti presented PERPAMSI's experience with two WOPs conducted in collaboration with the Australian Water Partnership. He highlighted the advantages of South-South WOPs, citing proximity and contextual similarities as factors that make partnerships low cost and practical. Such collaborations enable realistic matchmaking between utilities of similar scale and size. He also advocated for more funding and stronger government support for South-South WOPs.

Image: Panellists for the espresso presentation session on the state of S/WOPs.

## Financial Linking

**Ms. Zoé van den Bossche**

Programme Officer, Water Team, Directorate General for International Partnerships, European Commission

Ms. van den Bossche underscored the importance of linking WOPs to financing mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of utility performance improvements. She stressed how the European Investment Bank integrates financial sustainability into investment projects, with WOPs serving as a successful approach. Strengthening financial linkages enhances scalability and ensures that infrastructure investments are complemented by capacity development.

## Operationalizing SWOPs

**Mr. Golden Manyanga**

Branch Manager, Luapula Water and Sanitation Company, Zambia

Mr. Manyanga summarized key points from the GWOPA sanitation workshop on operationalizing SWOPs. He highlighted that institutionalizing SWOPs is vital for advocacy and scaling efforts, particularly to increase access to water and sanitation services. Discussions stressed the unique aspects of SWOPs, including their focus on the sanitation value chain and diverse stakeholder engagement. He noted that South-South and triangular partnerships are especially effective in tackling sanitation challenges.

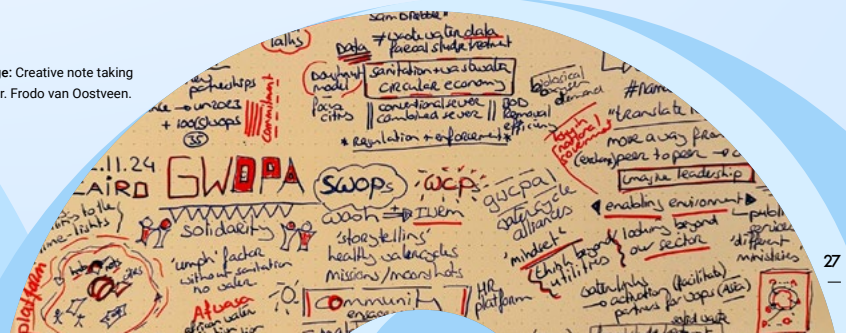
## Full Water-Cycle WOPs

**Mr. Frodo van Oostveen**

CEO, World Waternet, Netherlands

Mr. van Oostveen addressed the emerging challenges in the water sector, particularly those driven by climate change. He highlighted the importance of effective stakeholder and Water-Cycle management within WOPs to tackle these challenges. He introduced, besides WaterWorX (Water Operators), the Dutch water sector's Blue Deal (Water Authorities), to expand partnerships to river basin management and broader water cycle initiatives.

Image: Creative note taking by Mr. Frodo van Oostveen.



**AGENDA ITEM 5**

**ACCELERATING JOINT ACTION  
TO SCALE UP WOPS TOWARDS  
ACHIEVING SDG 6  
(BREAK-OUT GROUPS)**



Image: Break-out group.

## ACCELERATING JOINT ACTION TO SCALE UP WOPs TOWARDS ACHIEVING SDG 6

Group discussions took place in the room and online to deliberate on how GWOPA can further enhance effectiveness in advocacy, alliance building and knowledge management:

1

### Advocacy

How to collectively build political support for utilities and WOPs?

2

### Alliance Building

How do we work together? Opportunities to engage, fundraise, lobby and achieve our 2030 water pledge.

3

### Knowledge Management

What knowledge and tools are needed to support effective WOPs at scale?



## Discussion Summary

## ADVOCACY AND ALLIANCE BUILDING

### Strengthening Collaboration and Engagement

- **Platforms and networking:** leverage the Global WOPs Community for virtual coordination; establish national WOP platforms for better regional engagement.
- **Knowledge exchange:** promote South-South peer learning through national and regional partnerships, cross-regional WOPs and thematic matchmaking.
- **Visibility and outreach:** showcase successful WOPs through webinars, best-practice presentations and benchmarking visits to engage utilities outside WOPs.
- **Stakeholder mapping:** expedite partner matching by grouping utilities by strengths and conducting stakeholder analyses.

### Advocacy and Recognition

- **Policy integration:** align WOPs with national policies and SDGs to ensure scalability and institutional support.
- **Regional champions:** appoint advocates in each region to champion WOP initiatives and raise awareness.
- **Recognition mechanisms:** encourage healthy competition through acknowledgment of best-performing utilities.
- **Targeted messaging:** use 'finance' and 'SDG' language to engage diverse stakeholders effectively.

### Achieving the 2030 Water Pledge

- **Strategic goals:** set measurable targets (e.g., 20 new WOPs by 2025), ensuring coordination from grassroots to international levels.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** develop KPIs aligned with the 2030 Water Pledge, report progress, and share updates with stakeholders.
- **Communication and awareness:** amplify storytelling through social media and community engagement to build alliances and support.
- **Scalable models:** highlight examples like Indonesian Government-managed WOPs as templates for broader implementation.

### Fundraising and Resource Mobilization

- **Funding opportunities:** map and promote funding sources, including grants from developed countries and innovative low-cost WOP models.
- **Donor engagement:** develop joint proposals emphasizing the economic and collective impact of WOPs to attract donor support.
- **Incentives and evidence:** provide clear incentives for utilities and donors by showcasing financial and economic benefits of WOPs.



Image: Break-out group.

## Discussion Summary

## KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

### Developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

- **Procedure:** define clear, replicable processes for initiating and managing WOPs, ensuring consistency across all partnerships.
- **Documentation:** standardize documentation of best practices and lessons learned from failures to serve as a comprehensive knowledge repository.
- **Localization:** engage local stakeholders to tailor SOPs to regional contexts while maintaining a global framework.

### Enhancing GWOPA Tools

- **WOP design and implementation:** develop user-friendly guides for designing WOPs, accessible through the GWOPA platform and regional networks.
- **Regional platforms:** share tools and resources with regional platforms to ensure decentralized support and engagement.
- **E-Learning modules:** create accessible online courses to train utilities, mentors and mentees on WOP processes and thematic areas.

### Data Collection and Diagnostics

- **Local expertise:** prioritize data collection through local teams rather than external consultants to build ownership and reduce costs.
- **Funding for diagnostics:** mobilize resources to fund diagnostics, enabling utilities to identify gaps and strengths comprehensively.
- **Independent evaluation:** conduct evaluations of WOP actions in different regions to refine methodologies and validate outcomes.

### Mentor and Mentee Capacity Development

- **Mentor selection and training:**
  - Vet mentors to ensure technical expertise in relevant thematic areas.
  - Provide in-depth training for mentors, emphasizing cultural, governance, and financial contexts.
- **Mentee evaluation:**
  - Assess the mentee's capacity, needs, and governance structure before pairing.
  - Match mentors and mentees based on alignment of goals, capacity, and thematic focus areas.
- **Communities of Practice (CoPs):** foster CoPs to document and align best/failure practices with specific WOPs, encouraging peer learning.

### Tools for Assessment and Rapport Building

- **Evaluation tools:** develop robust tools to evaluate mentors and mentees individually, including technical, financial and cultural capacities.
- **Rapport building:** facilitate pre-WOP interactions to build trust and mutual understanding between mentors and mentees.

### Knowledge Sharing and Metadata

- **Centralized database:** create a metadata repository to consolidate information on successful WOPs, mentors, mentees and regional experiences.
- **Thematic matchmaking:** use metadata to streamline mentor-mentee pairing and enhance thematic collaboration.

### Communication and Outreach

- **Storytelling and visibility:** use social media and case studies to highlight impactful WOPs and their scalable models.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** promote collaboration through webinars, workshops and cross-regional learning exchanges.

The Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance Assembly  
2 – 3 November 2024 | Cairo, Egypt

**AGENDA ITEM 6**

**WAYS FORWARD  
FOR THE ALLIANCE**



# WAYS FORWARD FOR THE ALLIANCE

## Plenary Discussion on the Outcome Note

The session focused on charting the path forward for the Alliance, emphasizing the collective commitment to advancing the Water Action Agenda and implementing it effectively. The discussion centered on key strategies to achieve shared objectives and sustain momentum.

### Key Areas

- |   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Scaling and Strategy</b></p> <p>Set clear goals, involve the right stakeholders, and ensure coordination from international to grassroots levels.</p> | <p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Financing Strategy</b></p> <p>Develop a robust strategy to fund the Water Action Agenda pledge.</p> | <p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Storytelling</b></p> <p>Leverage social media to build alliance awareness.</p> | <p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>2025 Goals</b></p> <p>Establishing a smaller team to lead efforts with targets like adding 20 new WOPs by 2025 and laying groundwork for further scale-up.</p> |
|---|---|--|--|

## Alliance Messages to WUF12, COP29, COP16 and Beyond

### Lothar Mikulla

Senior Communications and Advocacy Consultant, GWOPA Secretariat, UN-Habitat

Mr. Mikulla presented the key messaging framework for GWOPA as a proposal for the Alliance members, highlighting four core themes. He emphasized the central role of water and sanitation utilities in achieving SDG 6 and protecting human rights, GWOPA's global impact through peer-to-peer partnerships, the transformative potential of WOPs in enhancing utility performance and resilience, and the critical importance of local action for sustainable urban development, supported by initiatives like the '100 utilities for 100 million people' Water Action Agenda pledge.



Image: GWOPA Assembly.

The Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance Assembly  
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# SIDE EVENTS

## SIDE EVENTS

The GWOPA Assembly in Cairo kicked off with an array of side events on 2 November, including an Integrity Training and a pivotal workshop on Operationalizing Sanitation-focused Water Operators' Partnerships (SWOPs). Prior to the Assembly, the Sunday morning started with a women's networking breakfast hosted by the Stronger Together! Coalition.

1

Empowering Women at the "Stronger Together!" Breakfast

2

Integrity Workshop for Water and Sanitation Utilities

3

Operationalizing Sanitation-focused WOPs (SWOPs)



Image: Participants arrived at the side event of the Assembly.



# EMPOWERING WOMEN AT THE STRONGER TOGETHER! BREAKFAST

The Stronger Together! Coalition unites regional and global women's networks and organizations dedicated to empowering professional women in the water and sanitation sector. Since its establishment in 2022, the coalition has become a vibrant platform for collaboration, advocacy and professional growth, driven by its core membership of women-led and women-focused networks.

As a **new supporting partner** of the Stronger Together! Coalition, GWOPA is committed to creating space and opportunities for the empowerment and career advancement of women in the water and sanitation workforce. The GWOPA Secretariat hosted a dynamic speed-mentoring session, providing attendees with an opportunity to exchange insights, build connections and gain actionable strategies for career growth.

## Members and Representatives

### Dr. Leticia Ackun

Gender Specialist, African Water and Sanitation Association (AfWASA), representing the African Network of Women Professionals in WASH.

### Ms. Schalla Mwakazanga

Director of Infrastructure at Nkana Water Supply and Sanitation, Zambia, representing the African Women Sanitation Professionals Network.

### Ms. Dahlia Sabri

MEYAH-Arab International Water Foundation, Egypt.

## Goals of the Stronger Together! Coalition

### Empowering Women in the Sector

Supporting career growth and leadership development for women at all levels.

### Fostering Collaboration

Strengthening networks within the sector to facilitate knowledge-sharing and mutual support.

### Advocating for Gender Equality

Promoting policies and practices that address gender disparities in the water and sanitation workforce.



Image: Participants at the women breakfast.

Women's Networking Mingle

Stronger Together! is made up of

36

Women's Networks Supporting Partners

# OPERATIONALIZING SANITATION-FOCUSED WOPS (SWOPS)

The SWOPs workshop, attended by 30 participants, emphasized the value of peer learning to tackle critical sanitation service gaps, especially in low- and middle-income regions. Aligned with GWOPA's commitment to launch at least 35 sanitation-focused partnerships by 2030, the workshop explored challenges, opportunities for peer learning and opportunities for peer partnerships and capacity development.

## Key Points

### Institutionalizing SWOPs

Participants recognized the importance of advocating for SWOPs at the national level.

### Diverse Partnership Modalities

Participants concluded that SWOPs require broader stakeholders involvement than traditional WOPs, including informal service providers, to foster collaborative peer learning.

### Links to Housing and Wastewater Monitoring

A dedicated session featured a dialogue with UN-Habitat experts, focusing on linking utilities with housing and wastewater monitoring initiatives.

Insights from the workshop will inform an expert meeting to refine SWOP design and funding models.

## Key Takeaways

- Sanitation is a public good.
- Lack of data is a key challenge.
- Institutionalizing WOPs and SWOPs is key to sustainability.
- WOPs and SWOPs should be included in national urban policies.
- Working with a wider group of stakeholders in sanitation is important.
- Sanitation should be an integral part of urban development.
- Triangular and South-South partnerships are the way forward.
- More emphasis on design of the partnerships should be made.
- Global database for peer exchange is needed.

Image: Discussions at the operationalizing sanitation-focused WOPs (SWOPs) meeting.



# INTEGRITY WORKSHOP FOR WATER AND SANITATION UTILITIES

The workshop, held in collaboration with the [Water Integrity Network \(WIN\)](#), a GWOPA Steering Committee member, highlighted the critical need for ethical management practices to combat corruption in the water and sanitation sector.

## Key Points

### Corruption in Water and Sanitation

Participants explored how corruption undermines service delivery, erodes public trust and violates human rights.

### Defining Corruption

While there is no universally accepted definition, corruption is commonly understood as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain.” This includes financial bribes, nepotism, favouritism and other non-financial abuses, such as influence or sexual favours.

### Tools for Integrity

The training introduced methods like integrity risk assessments and compliance monitoring, emphasizing transparency and accountability as essential for sustainable operations.

### Interactive Discussions and Integrity Dilemma Group Work

Participants engaged in real-life case studies, discussing ethical dilemmas.

This training reaffirmed the importance of integrity in achieving sustainable and equitable water and sanitation services, a key priority for GWOPA, its members and partners.

### What is Water Integrity?

Water integrity is the use of vested powers and resources ethically and honestly for the delivery of sustainable and equitable water and sanitation services in the public interest (WIN, 2021).

## Utility Integrity Dilemmas

The training featured group discussions on real-life integrity dilemmas, offering participants practical insights into ethical decision-making:

### Unauthorized Connection

There is an unauthorized connection to the network of your utility company. This is happening because residents of an informal settlement have very insecure access to water, so they have installed unauthorized hoses and pumps to more easily bring the water closer to their homes. What do you do?

### Disconnection for Non-payment

A single mother with three small children is not able to pay her water bill. She is in a financially precarious position, and while the utility has the right to disconnect for non-payment, vulnerable groups should be protected. What do you do?

### Facilitating Participation

The utility is required to implement a gender analysis in order to receive a large grant to extend its network. One key aspect of this is facilitating the participation of women in the community. However, the men in the community are dominating the consultation process, making it difficult for women’s voices to be heard and their perspectives considered. What do you do?

Image: Discussions at the integrity workshop.





The Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance Assembly  
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# ANNEXES

## ANNEX 1

# OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The GWOPA Secretariat will operationalize the outcomes related to governance. The recommendations will be shared for final review from members and then submitted to the UN Habitat Executive Director as Chair of the Steering Committee.

OUTCOME NUMBER	OUTCOMES
1	The GWOPA Charter is adopted.
2	A Seat of Francophone Africa Public Utility is opened on the GWOPA Steering Committee.

**\*FOR BREVITY:** Members: GWOPA Members | Platforms: Regional and national WOP platforms | Secretariat: GWOPA Secretariat | Steering Committee: GWOPA Steering Committee

NUMBER	RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBILITY FOR FOLLOW UP*
<b>AGENDA ITEM 1: UPDATES ON GWOPA’S GOVERNANCE</b>		
1.1	Support and encourage water and sanitation utilities to respect the <a href="#">ILO Conditions of Decent Work</a> .	Secretariat, Platforms, Members
1.2	Intensify efforts to engage with unions in addressing water and sanitation challenges, notably as partners in WOPs and encourage them to join the Alliance membership.	Secretariat, Steering Committee, Members
1.3	Expand collaboration with civil society organizations to collaborate with operators for human rights advancements.	Secretariat, Members
1.4	Support more national utility associations to establish WOP platforms, noting that national or domestic WOPs have their specificity and are very useful.	Secretariat
1.5	Maintain and strengthen GWOPA’s support to regional WOP platforms to convey the needs and voices of the utilities from their regions in the global forums.	Secretariat, Platforms

1.6	Organize regional processes to monitor progress of Alliance's objectives at regional level.	Secretariat, Platforms
1.7	The GWOPA Secretariat should more systematically involve/inform regional platforms when WOPs are taking place in their regions.	Secretariat
1.8	Facilitate more exchange between regional WOP platforms.	Secretariat, Platforms
1.9	Improve coordination and communication between WOP actors on regional activities.	Secretariat, Platforms, Members
1.10	Consider GWOPA institutional membership eligibility for water consumer associations and the non-utility private sector (informal workers, start-up, tech innovators, social enterprises and other stakeholders from the innovation ecosystem).	Steering Committee
1.11	Unite and coordinate GWOPA members to play an active role and contribute as One Alliance to global advocacy efforts.	Secretariat, Members
1.12	Identify and allocate clearly the role each institutional members of GWOPA is handling either in a country or region, identify the challenges and support them to achieve GWOPA's Vision.	Secretariat, Members
1.13	Help utilities to understand their political potential and to work with local stakeholders, and communicate on accomplishments to strengthen community support.	Secretariat, Members
1.14	Consult and continually refine the value proposition of what GWOPA offers its membership ensuring it meets the needs of the members.	Steering Committee Members
1.15	Promote further awareness of the Charter among members.	Secretariat, Members, Platforms

## AGENDA ITEM 2: FRAMING GWOPA'S STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

2.1	Reflect water and sanitation as integral components of the Right to Housing in the new 2026-2029 UN-Habitat Strategic Plan.	Secretariat
2.2	Emphasize in the GWOPA advocacy narrative the role of utilities as SDG localizers.	Secretariat, Steering Committee, Members
2.3	Institutionalize WOPs: get support through diplomatic channels, notably Member States, reaching out to higher levels of decision making with the objective of having WOPs reflected in national policies; at local/city level, reinforce the link between utilities, urban design and urban planning, making local governments strong advocate for WOPs.	Secretariat, Steering Committee, Members
2.4	Collaborate with global networks of local government, such as UCLG and ICLEI, to promote the role of utilities in achieving localized solutions for SDGs.	Secretariat, Steering Committee, Members
2.5	WOP practitioners to look beyond their usual sectors and include other actors and sectors, both upstream and downstream, in WOPs, for example water catchment authorities, or local government units in charge of solid waste management.	WOP Practitioners
2.6	Supporting local governments to provide equitable services is not only a technical issue but also a governance and political issue. Therefore, GWOPA should work more closely with local governments and foster dialogue with utilities, such as on common challenges like non-revenue water.	Secretariat, Platforms, Members



2.7	Elevate the voice of utilities within the UN system and seize the opportunity of the intensified initiatives on water within the UN system, for example the 2026 Water Conference and embrace the issue in GWOPA's Strategy 2026-2029.	Secretariat, Platforms, Members
2.8	Members requested by the Secretariat to connect their communications teams with the Secretariat to convey messages and stories from across the Alliance in its communications channels, such as the quarterly newsletters, the new website and social media channels.	Members
2.9	Members to make a more dedicated effort to bring information on domestic and international WOPs to the Secretariat's attention to enable a more complete populating of the Global WOPs Observatory and reporting progress on GWOPA's UN 2023 Water Action Pledge "100 utilities for 100 million people".	Members
2.10	GWOPA must redouble efforts to explore partnerships with bilateral and multilateral development banks to fund WOPs in a more systematic manner and have a stronger push at higher level.	Secretariat, Steering Committee Task Forces

### AGENDA ITEM 3: STATE OF UTILITIES: EMERGING TRENDS AND CAPACITY NEEDS

3.1	Contribute and promote the Global Report on the State of Utilities being prepared by GWOPA with IRC (to be launched in 2025).	Secretariat, Members
3.2	Support utilities to advocate fair tariffs at local level, without compromising access to water and sanitation as a human right.	Secretariat
3.3	Facilitate WOPs and joint learning on key challenges of climate change, including mitigation and adaptation, noting that adaptation covers resilience to crises, maintaining services and eventually rebuilding water and sanitation infrastructure following crises.	Secretariat
3.4	Explore collaboration and opportunities to work with the United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities (UNITAC), including digital tools for integrated urban planning through WOPs.	Secretariat
3.5	Support efforts to close the gender gap in water utilities' leadership and staff positions, for example by working with the African Water and Sanitation Association (AfWASA).	Secretariat, Members

### AGENDA ITEM 4: STATE OF S/WOPS: EMERGING TRENDS AND PRIORITIES

4.1	Prioritize support for South-South and triangular WOPs.	Secretariat, Platforms
4.2	In celebrating 15 years, GWOPA to review the impact and WOPs, with their different results being reviewed, to ascertain the success or failure factors of WOPs.	Secretariat, Members, Platforms
4.3	Operationalize the design and funding models of sanitation-focused WOPs (SWOPs) to tackle critical sanitation service gaps and meet GWOPA's commitment to start 35 SWOPs by 2030.	Secretariat, Members, Platforms
4.4	Strengthen the linking of WOPs to financing mechanisms of development banks investments.	Secretariat, Platforms

### AGENDA ITEM 5: ACCELERATING JOINT ACTION TO SCALE UP WOPS TOWARDS ACHIEVING SDG 6 (BREAK-OUT GROUPS)

5.1	Leverage the Global WOPs Community for increased virtual coordination.	Secretariat
5.2	Align WOPs with national policies and SDGs to ensure scalability and institutional support.	Secretariat, Members

5.3	Leverage the support of civil society organizations to influence governments.	Secretariat, Members
5.4	Leverage UN-Habitat convening power to institutionalize WOPs at governmental level.	Secretariat
5.5	Communicate more about the value of utility work, including by encouraging youth and social media influencers to create momentum.	Secretariat, Platforms, Members
5.6	Amplify storytelling through social media and community engagement to build alliances and support, and showcase successful WOPs through webinars and best-practice presentations.	Secretariat, Platforms, Members
5.7	Build evidence around WOPs' impact on performance and showcase financial and economic benefits of WOPs (proof of concept).	Secretariat, Platforms, Members
5.8	Map and promote funding sources, including grants from developed countries and innovative low-cost WOP models.	Secretariat, Platforms
5.9	Develop user-friendly guides on WOP design and implementation.	Secretariat
5.10	Engage local stakeholders to tailor Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for WOPs to regional contexts, while maintaining a global framework.	Members
5.11	Share tools and resources with regional platforms to ensure decentralized support and engagement.	Secretariat
5.12	Mobilize resources to fund diagnostics, enabling utilities to identify gaps and strengths comprehensively.	Secretariat
5.13	Vet mentors to ensure technical expertise in relevant thematic areas and provide in-depth training for mentors, emphasizing cultural, governance and financial contexts.	Secretariat, Platforms
5.14	Assess the mentee's capacity more rigorously, needs and governance structure before pairing.	Secretariat, Platforms
5.15	Foster Communities of Practice (CoPs) to document and align best/failure practices with specific WOPs, encouraging peer learning.	Secretariat
5.16	Promote South-South peer learning for knowledge exchange, national and regional partnerships, cross-regional WOPs and thematic matchmaking.	Secretariat, Platforms

## **AGENDA ITEM 6: WAYS FORWARD FOR THE ALLIANCE INCLUDING MEETING THE 2023 WATER PLEDGE "100 UTILITIES FOR 100 MILLION PEOPLE"**

6.1	Develop key performance indicators aligned with the 2023 Water Pledge, report progress and share updates with stakeholders.	Secretariat, Platforms, Members
6.2	Create a Task Force drawing on the Membership to lead efforts with annual targets up to 2030, such as adding 20 new WOPs by 2025, laying groundwork for further scale-up.	Secretariat
6.3	Develop a strategy to fund the 2023 Water Pledge as part of GWOPA's Resource Mobilization Strategy.	Secretariat, Platforms, Members
6.4	Leverage social media to build alliance awareness on the GWOPA Water Pledge in lead up to the 2026 Water Conference.	Secretariat, Platforms, Members

# ANNEX 2

# AGENDA

07:45 – 08:45 **Stronger Together! Women’s Networking Breakfast**

09:00 – 09:45 **OPENING OF THE ASSEMBLY**

09:00 – 09:10 **Opening of the Assembly**

Dr. Rose Kaggwa | Senior Director, Business and Scientific Services, National Water and Sewerage Corporation, Uganda and Chair of the GWOPA Assembly

09:10 – 09:15 **GWOPA 15-year Celebration Video**

09:15 – 09:25 **Welcoming Statement by UN-Habitat**

Ms. Anacláudia Rossbach | United Nations Under-Secretary-General, UN-Habitat Executive Director, and Chair of GWOPA Steering Committee

09:25 – 09:35 **Welcoming Statement by GWOPA Host City**

Ms. Katja Dörner | Lord Mayor of Bonn (Video Message)

09:35 – 09:40 **Voice of Utilities**

Ms. Massaba Keita | Youth Representative, National Public Water Supply Company, SOMAGEP, Mali

09:40 – 09:45 **Welcoming Statement by Egypt, World Urban Forum Host Country**

His Excellency Prof. Hani Sewilam | Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation, Egypt

09:45 – 11:00 **AGENDA ITEM 1: UPDATES ON GWOPA’S GOVERNANCE**

09:45 – 10:00 **Governance of the Global Water Operators’ Partnerships Alliance  
Presentation by the Secretariat: Why an Alliance? Why are we stronger together?**

Ms. Åsa Jonsson | Head of GWOPA Secretariat, UN-Habitat



10:00 – 10:35

**GWOPA Governance Channels: Ways of Working Together****Moderator**

**Dr. Anne Bousquet** | Human Settlements Officer, GWOPA Secretariat, UN-Habitat

**Representatives of GWOPA's Steering Committee**

**Ms. Mai Flor** | Executive Director, Waterlinks (WOP Regional Platform)

**Mr. Thomas Odongo** | Managing Director, Kisumu Water and Sanitation Company, Kenya (Utilities)

**Mr. Igor Santiago Ruiz** | President, Federación Nacional de Cooperativas de Servicios Sanitarios, Chile (Community Operators and Cooperatives/National WOPs)

**Mr. David Boys** | Deputy General Secretary, Public Service International (Trade Unions)

**Ms. Martha Owiredu-Baah** | Personal Assistant to the Executive Director, Integrated Social Development Center, Ghana (Civil Society Organizations)

**Mr. Neil Dhot, Executive Director** | International Federation of Private Water Operators (AquaFed), (Private Operators)

10:35 – 10:55

**Q&A on Governance Topics**

Facilitated by the Chair

10:55 – 11:00

**Conclusion and Adoption of the Charter**

11:00 – 13:15

**Group Photo Session and Coffee/Tea Break**

11:15 – 13:00

**AGENDA ITEM 2: FRAMING GWOPA'S STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS**

11:15 – 12:15

**Localizing the SDGs: Utilities in the Home Stretch of Agenda 2030****Moderator**

**Dr. Shipra Narang Suri** | Chief, Urban Practices Branch, Global Solutions Division; Senior Focal Point, Local Governments and SDG Localization, UN-Habitat

**Speakers**

**Ms. Elin Adolfsson** | Global Commission on the Economics of Water

**Mr. Hezekiah Pireh** | WASH Team Lead, UN-Habitat

**Ms. Bernadia Irawati** | Secretary-General, United Cities and Local Governments Asia-Pacific (UCLG ASPAC)

**Mr. Anton Earle** | Global Coordinator, Water Systems, Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI)

**Mr. Azuan Ahmad Zahdi** | Chief Corporate Officer, Indah Water Konsortium (IWK), Malaysia

12:00 – 12:15

**Preparations for GWOPA's 2026-2030 Strategy**

**Ms. Åsa Jonsson** | Head of GWOPA Secretariat, UN-Habitat

12:15 – 12:30

**Mentimeter and Open Discussion**

Ms. Julie Perkins | Programme Management Officer, GWOPA Secretariat, UN-Habitat

13:00 – 14:00

**Lunch Break**

14:00 – 14:45

**AGENDA ITEM 3: STATE OF UTILITIES: EMERGING TRENDS AND CAPACITY NEEDS**

14:00 – 14:15

**The State of Water and Sanitation Utilities: Highlights from the Emerging Global Report**

Mr. John Butterworth | Director, Global Programme, IRC

14:15 – 14:45

**Espresso Presentations****Services in Low-income Settlements**

Ms. Faustina Boachie | Chief Manager Low-Income Customer Support Department, Ghana Water Company Limited

**Climate Adaptive Solutions**

Mr. Ignatius Jean | Executive Director, Caribbean Waste and Water Association

**Post-disaster Recovery**

Ms. Lusia Sefo-Leau | CEO, Pacific Water and Wastewater Association

**Digitalization for Effective Utilities**

Dr. Sophie Naue | Urban Innovation and Technology Specialist, United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities (UNITAC)

**Gender and Inclusion**

Ms. Leticia Ackun | Gender Specialist, African Water and Sanitation Association

**Open Discussion**

Including other critical issues for utilities

14:45 – 15:30

**AGENDA ITEM 4: STATE OF S/WOPS: EMERGING TRENDS AND PRIORITIES**

14:45 – 15:00

**Overview of Special Issue on Water Operators' Partnerships**

Ms. Julie Perkins | Programme Management Officer, GWOPA Secretariat, UN-Habitat

15:00 – 15:30

**Espresso Presentations****The opportunities of South-South and Triangular WOPs**

Mr. Subekti | Director, Association of Indonesian Water Supply Companies (PERPAMSI)

**Financial Linking**

Ms. Zoé van den Bossche | Programme Officer, Water Team, Directorate General for International Partnerships, European Commission

**Operationalizing SWOPs**

Mr. Golden Manyanga | Branch Manager, Luapula Water and Sanitation Company, Zambia

**Full Water-Cycle WOPs**

Mr. Frodo van Oostveen | CEO, World Waternet, Netherlands

**Open Discussion**

Including other critical issues for utilities

15:30 – 15:45

**Coffee/Tea Break**

15:45 – 16:45

**AGENDA ITEM 5: ACCELERATING JOIN ACTION TO SCALE UP WOPs TOWARDS ACHIEVING SDG 6 (BREAK-OUT GROUPS)****Two parallel breakout sessions and one for online participants****Advocacy** | How to collectively build political support for utilities and WOPs?**Alliance Building** | How do we work together? Opportunities to engage, fundraise, lobby and achieve our UN 2023 water pledge**Knowledge Management** | What knowledge and tools are needed to support effective WOPs at scale?

16:45 – 18:00

**AGENDA ITEM 6: WAYS FORWARD FOR THE ALLIANCE**

16:45 – 17:15

**Plenary Discussion on the Outcome Note****Renewed Endorsement and Implementation of Water Action Agenda**

17:15 – 17:30

**Alliance Messages we are bringing to WUF12, COP29, COP16 and beyond**

Mr. Lothar Mikulla | Senior Advocacy and Communications Consultant, GWOPA Secretariat, UN-Habitat

17:30 – 17:50

**Closing Mentimeter: Reflections and Commitments**

17:50 – 18:00

**Closing Statement**

18:30 – 20:00

**GWOPA Evening Reception**

Dr. Rose Kaggwa | Chair of the Assembly

Dr. Alexander Solyga | Country Director, GIZ Egypt





# THE GLOBAL WATER OPERATORS' PARTNERSHIPS ALLIANCE ASSEMBLY

2—3 November 2024 | Cairo, Egypt



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