

A large circular opening in a tunnel, looking out onto a construction site. Several workers in hard hats and work clothes are visible inside the tunnel, some standing and some sitting. A ladder is leaning against the wall. The scene is brightly lit from the opening, creating a strong contrast with the dark interior of the tunnel. The workers are engaged in some activity, possibly inspecting or working on the tunnel's interior. The overall atmosphere is one of industrial activity and infrastructure development.

GWOPA
Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

**Connecting
water utilities
for sustainability**



UN-Habitat founded the **Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA)** in 2009 to strengthen water utilities' performance globally through not-for-profit peer-support partnerships (WOPs).

| gwopa.org

The Alliance was the brainchild of the UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation who called for boosting water utility capacity through peer partnerships to meet the Millennium Development Goal targets on water and sanitation. Former UN SG, Kofi Annan asked UN-Habitat, the UN agency championing urban basic services, to lead this initiative.

Former Secretary General, Kofi Annan, on water and sanitation:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/water/unsgab/finalreport>



Through GWOPA, UN-Habitat has boosted the WOPs practice globally and increased the capacity of operators.

Since GWOPA was founded in 2009, over **300 partnerships** have been registered and approximately **390 million USD** has been mobilized, much of which comes from utilities themselves. These WOPs often attract, accompany or sustain much larger investments.

Operator database:

www.gwopa.org/en/operator-profiles

WOP profile database:

www.gwopa.org/en/wop-profiles

Case Study: Belize Water Services:

www.gwopa.org/en/gwopa-news/belize-urban-water



Sustainable Development Goals require strong water and sanitation utilities.

Utilities have leading roles to play in:

- Providing universal access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation (**6.1/6.2**),
- Increasing wastewater treatment (**6.3**),
- Using water efficiently and ensuring sustainable withdrawals (**6.4**),
- Safeguarding water ecosystems (**6.6**),
- Realizing climate resilient and adaptive plans for future water security (**11.5**),
- Furthermore, strong utilities underlie the achievement of almost all 17 interrelated Sustainable Development Goals.

| www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment



Water Operators' Partnerships help build capacity for the SDGs through "cooperation, participation and capacity-building" (6.a/6.b) and support the realization of the New Urban Agenda by "equipping public water and sanitation utilities with the **capacity to implement sustainable water management systems**, sustainable maintenance of urban infrastructure services, ... (and) the **universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water**, and adequate and **equitable sanitation and hygiene for all**."

New Urban Agenda paragraph 120:

www.habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda

Recommendations for water in the New Urban Agenda:

www.gwopa.org/en/gwopa-news/egm-urban-agenda



GWOPA provides guidance for successful partnerships and has developed **over 50 different knowledge products** (case studies, reports, tools and training) to help water operators learn better from, and with, one another.

Case Studies:

www.gwopa.org/en/gwopa-news/1826





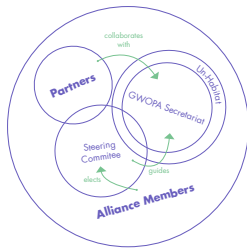
The Water Operators' Partnerships supported and tracked by **UN-Habitat** are a form of decentralized cooperation. **50%** of them are South-South.

Cities and their institutions are a growing source of both funds and human resources to development cooperation.

The Alliance, coordinated by UN-Habitat, is a growing network of some **490** water operators from all continents, as well as donors, regulators, NGOs, CSOs, unions and local, regional and national governments. The network is further amplified through regional and national platforms whose membership is made up of utility associations.

Regional WOP Platforms:

www.gwopa.org/en/wops-platforms





Water scarcity is an acute challenge in more and more cities. Water utilities can take the lead in averting **'Day Zero'** with a range of technical, financial and communication strategies. In the past decade, over **100 WOPs** have helped utilities increase their water use efficiency.

Interview with the Alderman Ian Neilson, Deputy Mayor of Cape Town, discussing drought, climate change and water resilience:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXJjLHJWpPA

A quarter of the world's urban population live in slums where they pay more for water services of unreliable quality, and where sanitation services are poor or lacking. UN-Habitat's GWOPA helps utilities **"leave no one behind"** by supporting them to establish dedicated units to address the unique challenges of informal settlements.

Mapping Inequalities in Nairobi:

<http://access-to-water-in-nairobi.gwopa.org>



Over 10,000 water professionals' capacity has been improved through GWOPA's work. In WOPs, increased staff capacity is progressively translated into improved practice and overall utility performance, as strong utilities mentor their partners to make sustainable change.

Highlights from the Global Congress:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pqmWak3fW4

UN-Habitat influences policy in favour of strong utilities and better local water management.

The Alliance has been a consistent advocate for the **1%** water and sanitation solidarity levy, has helped shape the SDGs and their monitoring frameworks, the New Urban Agenda and global compacts such as the Daegu-Gyeongbuk Water Action for Sustainable Cities, among others, to mobilize the political energy for improving utilities.



There is a growing momentum among water utilities to localize the global sustainability goals and help utilities around the world to do the same.

Do you want to be a part of it?

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