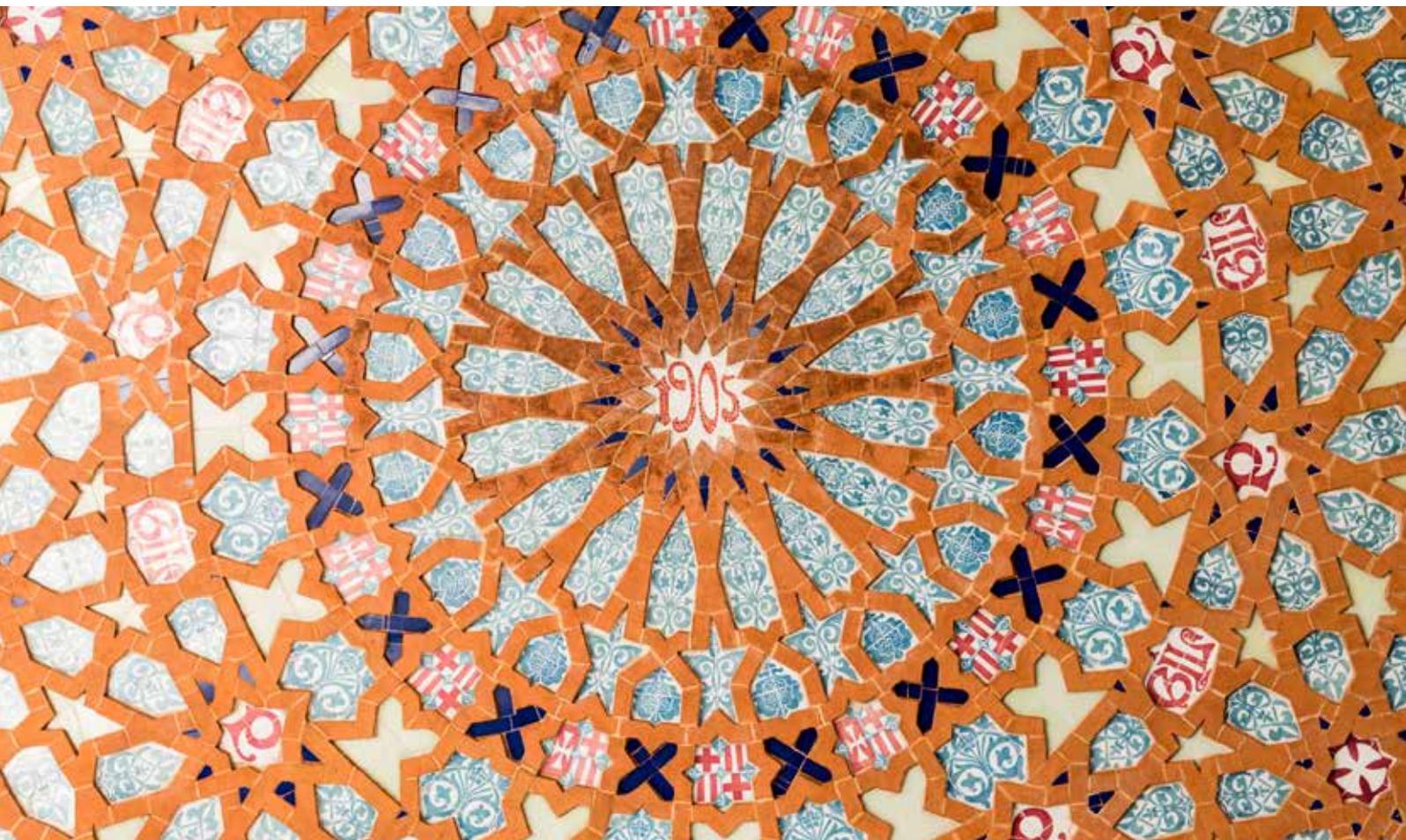


# Third Global WOPs Congress and GWOPA General Assembly

Water Operators and the Sustainable Development Goals

16–18 September 2015 – Barcelona, Spain



3<sup>rd</sup> Global Water Operators' Partnerships Congress Summary Report

Published in Barcelona, January 2016

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HS/036/16E

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**Photos:** GWOPA/UN-Habitat

# Message from the GWOPA Secretariat

We are happy to bring you the Report of the 3rd Global Water Operators' Partnerships Congress, held here in Barcelona, Spain, on September 16-18th, 2015. The report offers an overview of the various plenary and parallel discussion sessions that took place over the course of the 3-day event.

Water Operators' Partnerships are peer-support arrangements between two or more water operators, carried out, on a not-for-profit basis, in the aim of developing their capacity to sustainably serve their populations. The Global WOPs Congresses are held once every two years to gather the growing WOPs community in discussion about how best to address the challenges faced by the world's public water and sanitation operators, and to learn from one another's solutions.

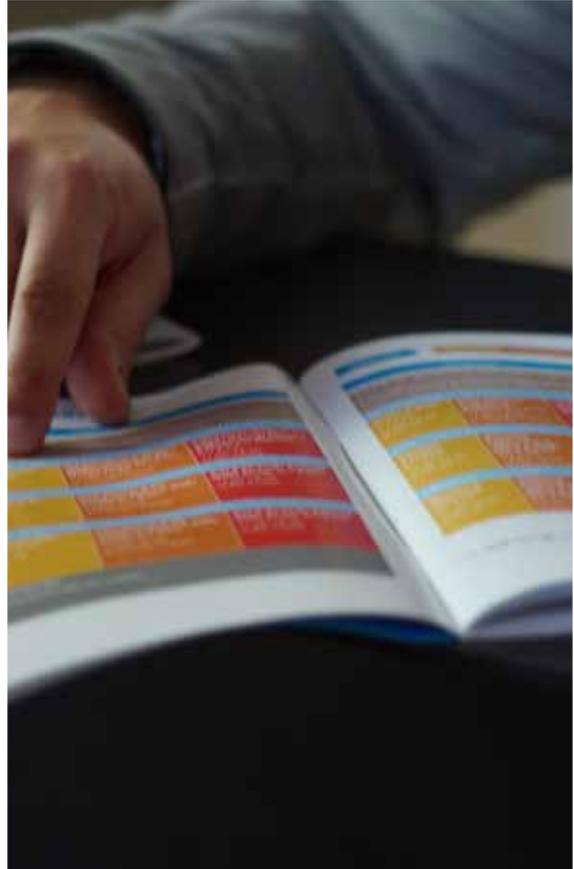
Boiling down what was said in the 17 sessions of the Congress into a short summary would be impossible, if only because of the diversity of perspectives: the over 400 participants represented water service providers, users, regulators, funders, managers, scientists, workers and entrepreneurs from over 80 countries. The Congress also covered a lot of ground – from operators' roles in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to how WOPs are working in the different regions, to how to design effective WOP contracts and results frameworks. Rather than summarize, then, we prefer to highlight new ideas, points of general consensus or, to the contrary, points of opposing views that were mentioned during the congress.

The fact that water and sanitation utilities are positioned at the crux of many of the most pressing global challenges was a recurrent theme. Utilities are being impacted directly by phenomena like climate change and rapid urbanization, and their capacity to embrace

these phenomena will have enormous bearing on local outcomes. In one extreme scenario, utilities will be overwhelmed by the challenges facing them, and their failure to respond will have crippling effects on society. In the other, operators will be equipped to rise up to face these challenges as safeguards of sustainable, universal water and sanitation service provision, with the health, well-being and dignity that such services support.

In the weeks after the Global WOPs Congress, the SDGs were adopted, as hoped, by the UN General Assembly, bringing hard-won dedicated water goal and dedicated urban goal into being, together with a handful of other goals closely tied to water. Still, a lot remains to be done to turn these goals into reality, starting with the identification of indicators and targets, and the articulation of national strategies to roll them out. Many participants at the Congress called for water operators to get involved in articulating these actions and measures, since they will need to be key players in realizing the goals. Panelists also called on operators to 'take over' the Cop-21 climate change conference in Paris that happened in December, as operators will bear the brunt of non-action.

Effectively taking on these complex urban challenges will require operators to get out of their tidy boxes and engage more with other actors. The importance of working across scales and across sectors with a range of stakeholders within a city was highlighted in many sessions. Several presenters called for utilities to join forces with city planners to anticipate urban growth and implement sound planning which will not only make cities more livable, but could make water and sanitation service provision more efficient. WOPs, many recommended, should engage those urban actors whose participation will make a stronger and more impactful outcome.



Financing, 'the dirty subject that we have to address' as one participant called it, was discussed with predictable vigor. The old question of which is the right mix of Ts (taxes, transfers and tariffs) to finance sustainable operators was back on the table, with calls for exclusive reliance on tariffs on the one hand, and a more balanced spread of the three sources (the approach applied by most countries that currently enjoy universal access), being proposed on the other. Despite differences of opinion, a few key principles emerged.

- Making the most out of the money operators' have access to is undeniably wise. In that sense, sustained efforts to help utilities collect their due revenues and increase efficiency in ways that do not compromise quality and sustainability are needed, and WOPs should continue to play a role here. Included in strategies for improving efficiency of existing resources was the cutting out of corrupt practices through a focus on integrity, which should be given consideration in all WOPs.
- Second, donor funding is likely to comprise a smaller fraction of funds available for utility improvement, so increased domestic funding will be needed to meet the gap. Helping countries increase the availability of, and access to, domestic funds should involve improving transparency and effectiveness of tax systems for local resource mobilization and improving financial markets to enable contribution of private finance where appropriate.
- Finally, finding the best recipe for sustainably financing operators' activities needs to take into account their social and environmental roles as well. A utility that keeps accounts balanced by foregoing service to the poorest areas, decent conditions for its workers or proper wastewater treatment should not be considered a 'sustainable operator' sustainable operator. Policy makers need to recognize and properly value utilities' many societal roles, with their range of positive and negative externalities, in considering how to ensure operators have the funds they need to do their work.

Whatever the recipe used, there are enough options available that don't require pitting financial goals against social ones. As the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to Water, Mr. Leo Heller, summed it up: "We mustn't forget financial sustainability, however it can be achieved without leaving the poorest people behind."

We heard about many WOPs that were helping utilities make impressive technical improvements, especially in terms of increasing energy and water efficiency. The sessions on WOPs from Asia, Africa and LAC were replete with such cases. From the point of view of many, however, still too few WOPs explicitly focus on increasing access to the poor. WOPs now have an established track-record for supporting technical improvement, however the assumption that such improvements will naturally (or at least, quickly) bring about an increase in access has not borne out. Furthermore, where access is increased through WOPs, there is little evidence that the new connections are to poor households or communities. This can and must change: taking an explicitly human rights-based approach to WOPs by targeting efforts at the most vulnerable populations is essential, and can be taken on in parallel with exchange on technical aspects that support longer-term, sustainable change. The Congress also revealed that many operators in the Global WOPs Alliance have expertise in working to realize the Human Right to Water in their communities which they should be supported to share with others.

There were other new ways that WOPs were being used. Examples of WOPs to put in place plans to reduce risks to water resources, protect watersheds or adapt to climate change, pointed to an exciting trend: utilities are increasingly supporting one another to address global phenomena (climate change, resource risks, etc.) by introducing generic approaches (such as Water Safety Plans (WSP), climate change adaptation measures, etc.), tailoring them to their local situation, and rolling them out. This represents an innovation from WOPs that focus on technical aspects with assumed global application. It shows that WOPs can also be effective in supporting operators to respond with local solutions to global changes.

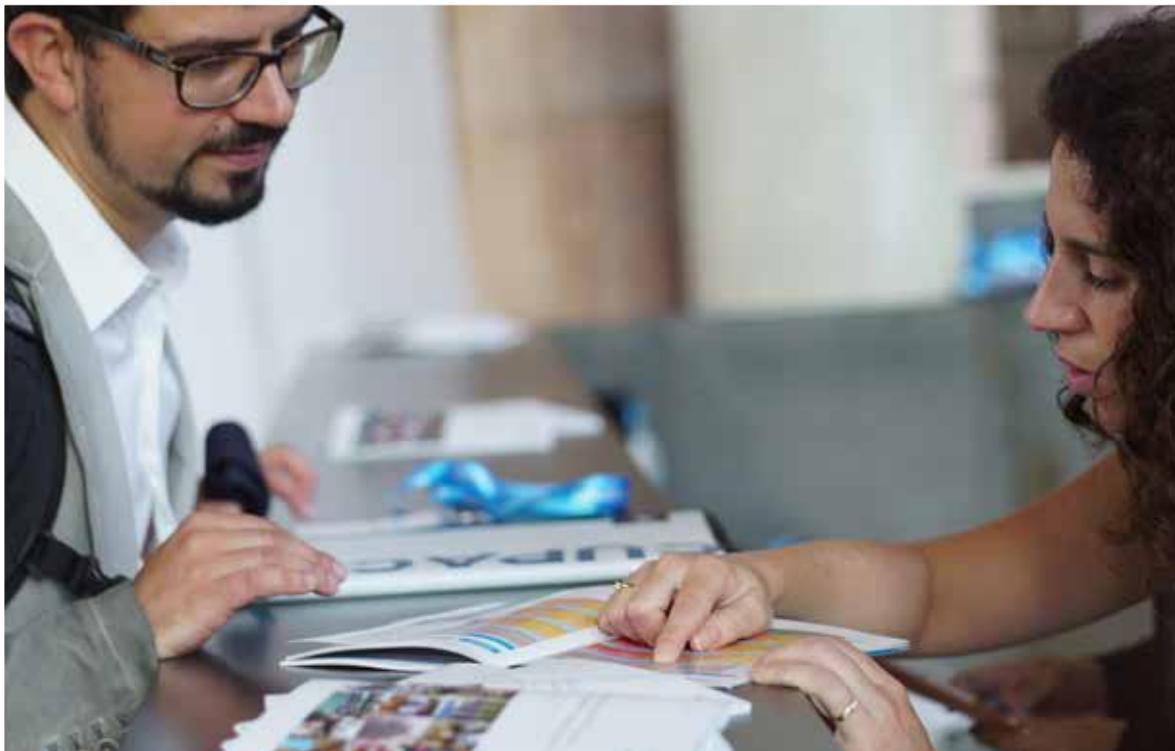
Indeed, with climate change, water scarcity and urbanization imposing the need to shift the way utilities manage water in urban contexts, WOPs are well positioned to play a big role in speeding up the spread of new knowledge, technologies and approaches that will help prepare utilities. Notions about which utilities are “ahead” of others will now need to be reconsidered, however. Instead of copying outdated, linear water management models from the North, fast-growing cities have the opportunity to leapfrog towards modern-day modalities that emphasize water efficiency, reuse and resiliency by learning from others that have already adopted such innovations. Identifying utilities that are ahead of the game in these areas and willing to share their capacity with others will need to be a priority for GWOPA.

The Congress also heard loud calls for broader participation in WOPs, not only from groups that felt excluded, but often by utilities themselves who commented that their efforts to improve would benefit from greater input and support from the community on the one hand, and

governments on the other. Operators, and the WOPs they undertake, seem to do better when outside groups, needed for applying, scaling up or advancing any of the improvements realized through WOPs, also have a say in them. Institutional, regulatory and stakeholder groups should be invited to play a role in any WOP that will affect them.

Local appropriateness also needs to be kept in mind. Ensuring that any given response will transfer elsewhere, with its own host of political, economic, social and ecological contexts, is obviously critical to WOPs being effective, and partner operators need to be sensitized to survey the landscape for receptivity before launching. The message for WOPs has always been the same: knowledge mustn't be transferred blindly; rather, carefully assessed and adapted at each turn.

In nearly every Congress session, we heard someone comment on the critical role of leadership in enabling improvement. In the public sector, this includes upper management but also political decision makers. Should we get politics out of water, as one speaker suggested,



or should politics play a central role in water management? The session on Local Authorities and Integrated Urban Water Management both showcased examples where local government leadership was championing outstanding improvements in water and sanitation service delivery. As urban water management takes sustainability in its wider sense to heart and gets more sophisticated at city level, the role of local government in coordinating local actors and functions becomes critical. At the same time, sessions on finance and governance featured stories of corrupt politicians derailing operators' genuine efforts to improve and extend services. Elsewhere, politics were blamed for the continued investment bias towards high-over low-income areas. The false dichotomy of the debate was nicely summed up in the closing remarks: "When we say 'get politics out of water' what we really want is to get rid of peddling, corruption, nepotism and patronage in the water sector. But water operators do not exist for themselves. They exist to integrate the political will of the citizens, for the public, the environment, the community." The suggestion is that we must sharpen our focus

on problem and not confuse bad government with government as a whole. The political realm has to better reflect the will of the people.

The 3rd Global WOPs Congress 2015 was a break-through in terms of deepening the reflection about the WOPs practice. This reflection was made possible because of the diversity of stakeholders represented in the Congress and the genuine input of experience and insight that they were willing to share over the 3 days. Current developments in the international agenda such as the adoption of the SDGs have triggered new reflection and raised expectations on how WOPs should contribute to addressing these global challenges. All the recommendations, ideas and inspiration generated during the Congress have injected renewed enthusiasm, focus and rigor in the practice of WOPs and are of great value to our collective work. For that, we thank you all.

[The GWOPA Secretariat Team](#)



# Plenary Sessions

## OPENING SESSION

Ms. Janet Sanz, Deputy Mayor of Barcelona for Environment, Urban Planning and Mobility welcomed visitors to Barcelona and congratulated them for coming together in the effort to achieving universal water access. Defending the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation should not only be part of GWOPA's work, she said, but part of the day-to-day work of managing public water. Thanks to a massive social movement (Right 2 Water), the European Parliament is now recognizing water as a human right. Catalonia has long experience in public water management and she expressed contentment that the region's operators were present to share their experience during the Congress. She wished participants a fruitful discussion and an enjoyable stay in Barcelona.

Ms. Laura Lopez de Cerain Salsamendi of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo – AECID) told the audience that as water and sanitation are fundamental for sustainable development, they are also main priorities of the Spanish cooperation support internationally. In light of the new dedicated and comprehensive Sustainable Development Goal on water, water needs to be addressed holistically, considering integrated management, access to water and sanitation, as well as governance. AECID has invested in water and sanitation initiatives in more than 80 countries, especially through its 1.3 million euro Water and Sanitation Cooperation Fund (Fondo de Cooperación para Agua y Saneamiento) to impact coverage and maintain a dialogue in Latin America and the Caribbean. AECID, she told the audience, is pleased to support GWOPA's work because of the importance of operators in providing these essential services, and the value of peer support partnerships for

exchanging knowledge between them. She finished by issuing a warm welcome to all participants to Spain.

The welcoming message from the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Mr. Joan Clos, focused on the linkage between water operators and urbanization. For centuries, water provision has been closely linked with the establishment of local governments, and much has been learned from this coevolution of water and cities that stand to serve us over the next 30-50 as the current urban population practically doubles to 6.5 billion. Urbanization today employs a model that is not environmentally sustainable and has mixed results on social and economic sustainability. Mr. Clos said that as we prepare for Habitat III, we need to review our performance on all three fronts, and consider what our cities should look like if we want them to be truly sustainable. In building the cities we need, local governments must make use of the instruments at their disposal: legal, planning, and financial tools, all of which are also applicable to urban water operators. "What will be the role for water operators in this urban challenge?" he asked. Mr. Clos ended by calling for win-win relationships between water operators and local authorities.

**"How can operators and planners team up for better cities?"**

– Joan Clos, UN-Habitat

## OPERATORS AND THE SDGS

Mr. Faraj El-Awar, Head of the GWOPA Secretariat, thanked everyone for making the trip and taking time out of their schedules to attend, and thanked the City of Barcelona and the Government of Spain especially for supporting GWOPA's work and enabling the Congress to take place. He stressed the importance of operators' work, locally but also globally. He reinforced the purpose of Congress, underlining the aim to connect the concrete operational concerns of operators with those pressing global challenges – climate change, risks to freshwater systems, water scarcity and quality concerns, conflict prevention, human health and development – in order to bring attention to the importance of operators' task.

GWOPA, he recalled, was created by the United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Board (UNSGAB) in 2006 to support operators on the understanding that they were critical players in achieving the Millennium Development Goal on Water and Sanitation and required support. The same reasons that prompted UNSGAB to recommend WOPs in 2006 are, according to Mr. El-Awar, still valid today. He added that although the practice of WOPs and the Global WOPs Alliance has grown, we need to persist in making space for solidarity-based support between operators so we can all benefit from better services and water management.

He concluded by recalling the purposes behind these biannual Congresses: to advocate for operators and WOPs, increase knowledge, and build the WOPs community. This 3rd edition would, he recalled, focus on the Sustainable Development Goals to be discussed and adopted hopefully in their entirety the following week at the UN General Assembly in New York.

Ms. Uschi Eid addressed the Congress in one her final interventions as Chair of UNSGAB, the initiative created in 2004 to support Millennium Development Goal implementation that would wrap up, along with the goals, at the end of 2015. The Board's final task, she informed, was to see that the post-2015 Sustainable

Development Goals included a dedicated water goal that would extend and advance upon the WASH goals of the MDGs. While the ambitious agenda generated much debate, all parties agreed that the new goals must now also concern themselves with 'developed' countries, and take the environment into much greater account.

She highlighted that the MDGs also provided lessons to be taken into account in setting up SDG monitoring systems: the goal must not be confused with the indicator, and systematic reporting biases (for example the underreporting of urban access challenges) need to be addressed. Operators, as important players among a wider set of water and sanitation actors, have various tasks in contributing to the meeting of these targets – notably, delivering efficient, sustainable, financially responsible services, and providing data to monitor progress. As a parting message from UNSGAB, Ms. Eid called for a global platform that would support member states in designing and implementing policies that contribute to the achievement of the water SDGs. Finally, those working on water, which will be most affected by climate change, need to be more vocal in combatting it, she said. The workers 'dealing with the shit on the ground' also need to have more voice and a greater role in setting the agenda.

Mr. Timeyin Uwejamomere, Senior Policy Analyst for urban water and sanitation services and current Country Representative for Nigeria of Wateraid, told the audience about the process of establishing the SDG water goal. The Rio+20 Conference was, he said, the first event to consider the period beyond the MDGs and what a post-2015 set of goals might look and it was at this time that an Open Working Group was formed to forge a place for water within the SDGs, and their objective quickly became to ensure that water and sanitation become a goal in itself. The group worked for 18 months to develop a draft that was then pared down by an inter-governmental panel. Once the SDGs are adopted, he informed participants, each country would be required to develop an SDG implementation strategy. Operators, he

stressed, must inform and support their national governments in articulating strong strategies to achieve the goals at country level.

Mr. Guy Fradin, alternate Governor of the World Water Council opened by saying that the fact that the MDGs for water were met means that such global efforts can work! He however warned that the SDGs are even more ambitious than the MDGs: they have a more global view, connect North and South, and link water with other activities within a country. Furthermore, SDG 6 (the dedicated water goal) is not the only goal related to water; goals on food security, gender, oceans, cities and others are intimately connected with water. The World Water Council has long supported an integrated approach that recognizes these important connections, so for Mr. Fradin, it was uplifting that the SDG has embraced this view. He highlighted that conceptual work is not yet finished as indicators need to be developed to give targets to the goals and cities and local governments will be central to translating this vision into practice. He urged UN-Habitat make water a priority, as at the next World Water Forum will make cities a focus.

Ms. Celia Blauel, Chairwoman of Eau de Paris and Deputy Mayor for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Water at the City of Paris said that cities are at the heart of the major issues discussed under the SDG process. She recalled that they represent over 50% of the population, are responsible for around 70% of greenhouse gas emissions, and are the main cause of resource scarcity, including water. This responsibility, combined with their proximity to the ground and links with citizens, means that cities have a central role to play. Social and environmental issues now need to be seen as part of the same issues, she said, evoking the water crisis in California, and this calls for a global approach pursued with the help of legal, technical and financial mechanisms. A sustainable water policy needs to be based on strong values: governance, transparency, accountability, non-profit dynamics, environmental as much as social concern, and public to public partnerships. On the road to

the Convention of Parties on Climate Change, she called on participants to remember the importance of solidarity.

Mr. Bai-Mass Taal, Executive Secretary of the African Ministers' Council on Water, recounted how water was gaining recognition among African politicians, who are coming to appreciate its importance to their countries' sustainable development. In May 2014, the African ministers made the Dakar Declaration on water and sanitation which, among other things, committed to upholding human dignity by stopping open defecation. In Africa, he said, we need to put our pride aside and talk about partnership, because the issues that need addressing are too big to be tackled alone. The Sustainable Development Goals will need, in his view, to develop a new set of indicators that will allow water ministries to report annually to heads of states. He concluded by adding that at the African Union summit, African leaders aim to make a commitment on the implementation of the SDGS on the continent.

[Download the session presentations](#)

## OPERATORS IN AN URBAN ERA

While continued global urbanization offers challenges for water management, it also presents opportunities. This panel asked how water managers were confronting this phenomenon and what they could do to place the opportunity ahead of the constraints.

Ms. Julie Perkins, Programme Officer from the GWOPA Secretariat with UN-Habitat looked at the link between urban water service challenges and current urbanization trends. She underlined that many countries experiencing rapid urbanization are not yet embracing the phenomenon as a potentially positive force and prefer to turn a blind eye, allowing cities to burgeon unplanned into slums and sprawl. In terms of water management, these urban forms can be destructive to the resource, and tend to increase the cost of service provision as well as aggravate service inequalities. Some of the

effort put into servicing slums and sprawled communities at greater expense post-facto, could be redeployed to prevent the development of costly types of urbanization before they occur. Utilities should therefore join forces with city planners in anticipating and embracing the positive aspects of population growth in cities.

Ms. Barbara Anton, Sustainable Resources, Climate and Resilience Coordinator from ICLEI, said that we must not ignore unplanned settlements, but map them and get to know their needs so they can be integrated within a comprehensively planned service. Spatial planning is critical, but it must be flexible and recognize informality, including the small operators doing water and sanitation business in the gaps left by the formal service providers. She added that the poor continue to pay a very high price for a poor quality water and a poor service and local governments have to be the 'spider in the web' coordinating the different players, and ensuring synergies between their respective roles and responsibilities.

19th century urban water management principles, which involve bringing water long distances to the city, using it once with the same high quality for all purposes, then dumping it out again as wastage, are unaffordable and unacceptable in light of global environmental changes. Mr. Kala Vairavamoorthy from International Water Management Institute (IWMI) argued that this supply-based approach, developed for the West, cannot simply be reapplied to developing countries. A major shift is required that involves matching different grades of quality with different uses (drinking, gardening, personal hygiene, toilet flushing ...). He proposed moving from a fragmented to an integrated distribution cycle, applying new innovation in technology, but also changing perspective in order to see wastewater as a valuable source of energy, nutrients, and of course, water. As water is heavy and energy-intensive to move, scale is also important, and smaller, decentralized systems will be better able to apply this new perspective. Utilities, with their legacy of large infrastructure, have to be

prepared to respond to new, smaller operators who are entering the scene, better positioned to seize the productive-use perspective and capture value from different waste streams. He concluded by suggesting that utilities need to think about how they can embrace this transition towards a 21st century water management model.

Ms. Christiane Franck, Director General of Belgian utility, Vivaqua, and Chief Executive Officer of Aqua Publica Europea, shared Belgium's efforts to address the most pressing urban phenomena in the European capital. In response to flood risk, a growing issue in rainy Brussels under climate change, the solution was to create 25000 m<sup>3</sup> of tunnels under the roads to serve as buffers in times of such events. Vivaqua also has a service to support residents put in place domestic protection against flood risk. The utility, like many others in Europe and elsewhere, is also confronted with having to replace aging, leaking infrastructure, and this has required them to enact a rate hike in the midst of an economic crisis. In a city with much wealth but also a vulnerable poor population, the utility put into place a solidarity tariff for households that struggle to pay their bills. In allocating the tariff, the company makes use of a national registry which profiles the household and tracks the number of occupants. Ms. Franck highlighted that Vivaqua also engages actively in international solidarity, with 3 eurocents for each cubic metre of water sold dedicated to supporting water projects in the South.

Ms. Marianne Kjellen, Programme Director at the Stockholm International Water Institute, recalled that urban development also offered a huge opportunity for a more sustainable development, especially given the scale of city-building yet to come. The first challenge for urban water operators is, according to her, the long-standing goal to reach full coverage. Investments tend to go to production rather than to the more costly distribution system that is needed to connect all areas of the city to the public supply, leaving great swaths of the population to access water from alternative sources at greater expense. Not limited to Africa, but also relevant in Asia,

Latin America and even Europe, she proposed that the challenge is a political one that requires revising the current bias to invest more per capita in high – than low-income areas. A further challenge is that current urban water systems rely on increasingly distant sources of water: an unsustainable trend. Making more of existing water by reusing and recirculating is crucial to combatting the rising consumption of fresh water sources, and the practice needs to be massively up-scaled. Ms. Kjellen recognized that considering issues such as equity and the environment imposes a much higher set of expectations and responsibilities on operators than what is strictly prescribed by their mandates. Yet she implored operators to not ignore them. Rather, operators need to participate actively in the shaping of a future for the common good.

Mr. Dinesh Mehta, Professor at the Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology University University (CEPT) in India focused on what the new 'Urban' SDG, calling for inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities, implies for water service provision. With the exception of a few outstanding examples like eThekweni in South Africa, he noted, most cities do not venture to extend their piped networks into slum areas, preferring to let these communities be served by kiosks, however service is not necessarily adequate, even for 'improved' water sources. Service levels need to be re-examined under the SDGs, to take into account affordability, quality, reliability, etc. He further commented that resiliency is another priority within the Urban SDG given that the water cycle will be transformed by climate change in coming years, meaning urban water and sanitation providers need to prepare themselves for a range of water stress scenarios, from floods to scarcity. He drew attention to the fact that sanitation remains a challenge that many operators are reluctant to undertake, yet water and sanitation issues need to be tackled together. For example, in response to the issue of open defecation, India is aiming to ensure everyone has a toilet, yet operators need to be involved in thinking about where the water would come from, and how it would be collected, treated and discharged.

Participants from the floor contributed with questions and comments. Two audience members asked about how to build capacity to address sanitation and wastewater shortcomings. Ms. Kjellen (SIWI) responded that investment in human resources is essential and there is a particular need to build capacity to deal with wastewater.

Asked whether insufficient tariffs over the years were to blame for the failure to progressively reinvest in the water network, Ms. Franck (Vivaqua) replied that it was more than tariffs, and pointed to the correlation between management models and leakage rates. Referring to recent European examples and a recent study on the subject, she argued that when the public sector is in charge of the entire network, including service provision, maintenance and investment, there is a tendency to have lower losses.

Further comments from the panel noted the strong link between land tenure and service access challenges in informal settlements. The trend is to attempt to guarantee land rights before considering service access. Peri-urban communities are also much more diverse than they are presented, and this lack of understanding is reflected in poor public policy. Mr. Mehta responded that in India, the decision not to make landownership a requirement for benefitting from a connection, has led to remarkable increases in access.

Mr. El Awar of UN-Habitat asked if it was desirable for water to be the organizing principle for the urban planning agenda? Many have suggested that decentralized service provision (for communities of around 30-50,000 people) is the most efficient scale for taking advantage of innovative capture and reuse models, however does this model carry the risk of creating islands of provision in a sea of unserved? Ms. Kjellen (SIWI) responded by stating that there has to be room for both centralized and decentralized systems, but the focus should be on coordination between them within an integrated master plan. Mr Vaivaramoorthy (IWMI) said that developing

countries struggle to expand services because the centralized system inherited from colonization does not have the capacity to respond to today's needs. He suggested limiting the centralized systems and looking at other zones as clusters where various types of solution can be proposed. A counter example was provided by Mr. Mehta (CEPT) who shared the requirement in India for developers of any new settlement with more than 500 families outside the perimeter of the centralized utility to ensure water services as well as wastewater treatment on the premises. The result is decentralized systems with high levels of service quality surrounded by informal settlements without facilities. This is leading to high spatial inequities.

Ms. Anton (ICLEI) maintained that there was space for both formal and informal water service providers, so long as strong public local authorities convened and coordinated local actors to plan and address the environmental, financial and social issues in a holistic and integrated manner.

In conclusion, the moderator, Ms. Rhodante Ahlers (independent), noted that political will seemed to be the decisive consideration, and that politicians need to be moved to commit to serving the unserved areas.

## SUSTAINABLE FINANCING FOR SUSTAINABLE OPERATORS

Even when focused on water service alone, financing is already a major challenge for many utilities. If there is not enough money to finance operation and maintenance costs, operators begin 'cannibalizing' their assets and service provision only get worse, began Mr. Maarten Blokland, the session moderator and former professor at UNESCO-IHE. However utilities also need to continue investing, particularly if they want to contribute fully to the various facets of Sustainable Development Goal 6. Furthermore, utilities do not only provide access to water and sanitation services, they also need to take care of discharge of unwanted substances into the environment, as well as social considerations.

Mr. Blokland addressed the following questions the panel: what are the internal and external reasons that water utilities are struggling financially? Which key measures are required to ensure sustainable utilities? What are the sustainable sources of funding? And should new or less conventional funding approaches be considered?

Mr. Dick van Ginhoeven Senior Advisor Water and Sanitation Water Energy Climate and Environment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (DGIS) told the audience that the SDGs would impose big changes for water operators, because they call on them to look beyond access, to water quality and integrated management, without forgetting sanitation, sewerage and solid waste. Operators, he said, need to get out of their comfort zones if they are to reach these goals as meeting these goals requires talking about the 'dirty thing': money. Given that the financial landscape is changing and overseas development assistance is decreasing, he proposed that when planning for WOPs and investing in improvements, we need to look principally at domestic resource mobilization rather than continued reliance on donors. Many developing countries have huge growing capital markets that should be tapped for development.

Mr. Mecuria Assefaw, Chief Financial Analyst for Water and Sanitation of the African Development Bank (AfDB) suggested that the water sector, in its search for sustainable financing, draw inspiration from the development of the telecom industry, which initially relied on government funds but are now privately run, without government support. Operators, he argued, should move away from reliance on taxes and transfers, towards exclusively tariff-based revenues and in order for this to be possible, operators need to focus on efficiency. In terms of innovative financing approaches, he suggested greater attention be given to bond markets, capital markets, and pension funds, all of which are seeking sustainable and cost-effective investments. In conclusion, he called for making the sector more



cost-effective, and for developing bankable and robust business plans that can be presented to the private sector or commercial banks for financing.

In the view of Mr. Walid Mehailen from the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), sustainable utility financing needs to come from a combination of traditional financing, including traditional development assistance, as well as tariffs. While there is a consensus today that users have to pay for services, he expressed reserve about tapping into financial markets to finance essential services that some are too poor to pay for. The dilemma, he explained, is to find a good compromise between financially sustainable and socially acceptable tariffs. While entrusted with the responsibility of providing services, and maintaining and operating infrastructure, water utilities in many countries have little say in the planning of investments or setting of tariffs. Operators need to be involved in the financial decision making in order to have the means to reach the increasingly demanding targets that have been set for them. Development finance institutions, which should still have a role, especially in middle and low income countries, should shift attention gradually from water and sanitation service provision, to integrated approaches and other issues like water safety plans and water quality.

Mr. Antoine Saintraint, Policy Officer at European Commission, drew his insights from Europe Aid's 35 grant-based projects to strengthen water operators' capacity in African, Pacific and Caribbean countries. On internal impediments to utility financing, he pointed to inefficiency, particularly water losses; lack of motivation and overstaffing; and ill-adapted technologies that failed to consider maintenance capacity. Systems must be conceived to be maintained by local resources (in terms of personnel, workshops or spare parts). He also noted that water prices are often too low, or tariffs not adjusted. Often with the complicity of the water service providers, state institutions are not paying their due – a consumption which in some projects can represent up to 40% of the total billing. Mr. Saintraint cited "political interference" as

a constraint and called for this to be addressed through modification of the tariff structure, greater accountability in billing and revenue collection, increased personnel efficiency, and physical improvements to the networks. In his concluding word, he added that EuropeAid project leaders called for a shift to give operators more dedicated time to strengthen their capacity. Investments too often become the focus, overshadowing the organizational strengthening objectives.

**"Utilities need more dedicated support to strengthen capacity before investments happen."**

– Antoine Saintraint, Policy Officer at the European Commission

Ms. Natalia Gullon, Technical Advisor for the Spanish Fund for Water and Sanitation (AECID) called for a more holistic and global vision of sustainable services. For the Spanish cooperation, sustainability means choosing solutions that are adapted to local capacity and focus on the most vulnerable. Spain's development assistance focuses on scaling-up integrated water management and non-conventional water sources, but also going beyond infrastructure to consider governance and capacity within a broader concept of service provision. As the benefits of water and sanitation services go beyond the direct cost of supplying them, some aspects of financing should go beyond the responsibility of the operator. She concluded by adding that sustainable financing must not only consider infrastructure investment, operation and maintenance, but also needs to include the cost of raising awareness and building capacity.

Mr. Nizar Zaied, Acting Division Manager at the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) agreed with the points made by other panelists and raised leadership as a further reason that utilities struggle. With good leadership, he asserted, citing the reform of Phnom Penh Water Supply

Authority in Cambodia under the leadership of Ek Sonn Chan, major utility improvement is possible. Like panelists before him, he argued that politicians often inhibit utilities from recovering costs through tariffs by opposing politically-unpopular tariff hikes. He pointed to the local financial markets as a good opportunity to finance the sector because you borrow and pay back in local currency yet in many developing countries, the financial markets are either inexistent or inefficient, so there is need to support financial sector reform to permit the development of structured financial markets from which utilities can access finance. In conclusion, he said that a well-run utility should never have financial problems; to the contrary, bankers will be begging utilities to lend to them.

Mr. Blokland then turned his attention to the audience, calling on representatives of GWOPA's stakeholder groups to respond. Mr. Samir Bensaid from the Office National de l'Electricite et de l'Eau Potable (ONEE) in Morocco commented in regards to the presentation of Mr. Zaied. Sustainability is the keyword, he said, and we cannot only rely on donors for sustainability but must top-up the financing ourselves. Member states now need to translate commitments to the SDGs and the Human Right to Water into concrete policies, measures and financing, and governments must make water and sanitation financing a priority by mobilizing domestic resources. Finally, he concluded that we must select appropriate technologies for developing countries; centralized systems are no longer viable, especially in new cities.

**“A third financing source is water integrity. There are a lot of opportunities to leverage money by reducing waste and corruption...”**

– Samir Bensaid, ONEE

Ms. Maria Enchelian, from the International Water Institute wondered whether, given the enormous challenge of reaching full coverage, it would be better to focus on increasing the number of connections, rather than on reducing staff. Noting that there was much discussion about tariffs, she pointed out that the first exclusionary barrier for the poor is connection. Connections fees are sometimes inappropriately used as a source of financing, but the demand is so high that corruption can become an important issue. Mr. Zaied (IsDB) responded with some options to consider, such as paying for connections through installments over a 2-3 year payback period, or where that fails, cross-subsidies.

Mr. Mamadou Dia, President of Aquafed pointed to the need for good governance, transparency and optimization of the network in order to achieve sustainable financing. He wondered whether a tax on telecom companies to finance the water sector could be considered. Other audience members suggested that pension funds be used to fund water companies, targeting those that cannot afford to pay.

Mr. David Boys, Deputy Secretary General of Public Services International recalled that private investors like pension fund managers demand high returns and low risks on their investments, and have hidden management costs. He called for extreme caution in putting too much faith in such investors for expanding water and sanitation services in developing countries. He also criticized the suggestion that the telecom industry could provide a model for the water industry, given the social and environmental nature of the good. He suggested looking to overt monetary financing of deficit to build the infrastructure needed to improve and raise our conditions. He called on donors to help countries to build tax systems that make the rich and multinationals pay their 'fair share'.

**“Which country has [ever] built a complete water and sanitation system based on market actors and dynamics, on tariffs alone?”**

– David Boys, Public Services International

Mr. van Ginhoeven (DGIS) recalled that operators should be planning 40 to 50 years ahead and draw more heavily on domestic resources. Mr. Saintraint (European Commission)

concurred that while overseas development assistance will not dry up, it represents a drop in the bucket of what is needed, so there is a need to seek and build on alternative sources. Overseas development needs to be targeted at disadvantaged groups, while the donors’ job is to build self-sufficiency in order that countries can do their job independently, using a combination of the domestic resource types that have at their disposal.

[Download the session presentations](#)



# Regional Sessions

## AFRICA REGIONAL WOPs SESSION

Africa has the fastest rate of urbanization in the world and water utilities in African towns and cities face a major challenge in meeting the growing demand for clean affordable drinking water and proper sanitation services. WOPs offer an important opportunity to help utilities meet that challenge. As a result, there is a vibrant WOPs development scene in a number of countries across the African continent. This session aimed to showcase some of these ongoing WOP initiatives including the set of Performance Improvement Plans (PIP WOPs) directly sponsored by GWOPA with OFID funding, the current work of WOP Africa and some WOPs promoted by other partner organizations. The session

concluded with a lively panel discussion involving key donors and development partners on lessons learned and future directions for WOPs in Africa.

Ms. Anne Bousquet, Programme Officer from the GWOPA Secretariat introduced the session and set the scene.

A series of presentations was made on WOPs facilitated by GWOPA with support of the OPEC Fund for International Development, in which utilities were mentored to achieve some short-term improvements while developing a medium-term Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The first presentation was made by Mr. Teddy Gounden of eThekweni in South Africa on his utility's WOP with Lilongwe Water Board of Malawi. Ms. Shuntelle Gow of Rand Water and Ms. Kadiva



Hamutumwa of Namwater in Namibia then described their WOP, followed by Mr. Jules Arba Ouedraogo from Burkina Faso's L'Office national de l'eau et de l'assainissement (ONEA), who spoke on the two WOPs his utility mentored with the water operator of Togo – Togolese des Eaux and the Chadian water company – Societe Tchadiene des Eaux. Representing Togo and Chad's utilities, Mr. Hemou Som and Mr. Mahamat Lamine Kosso (respectively) shared their insights with participants on the WOPs. The session continued with a presentation by Ms. Dorothy Kobel of Uganda's National Water and Sewerage Company on their support to the Nigerian WOP Platform and two Nigerian utilities, Ogun State and Port Harcourt State Water Corporations.

Following a presentation by Mr. Emile Temgoua on an urban sanitation WOP between municipalities from Benin and Cameroon, Mr. Simeon Kenfack of the African regional platform provided delegates with an update on the current status and activities of WOP Africa. Two case study examples concluded the presentations, one made by Ms. Minazola Miantuadi on the WOP between Belgium's Société Wallone des Eaux (SWDE) and ONEA of Burkina Faso, and another on the WOP between Amiens, France, and Camara Municipal de Santa Caterina in Cape Verde, delivered by Mr. Francisco Tavares.

Five panelists were then gathered: Mr. Taal (AMCOW), Mr. Assefaw (AfDB), Ms. Amanda Roberston, Water Advisor, USAID, Ms. Anne-Laure Ullmann, Task Team Leader for the French Development Agency (AFD,) and Mr. Mehailen (OFID).

It was clear from the discussions that operators are strongly motivated in their WOPs, that WOPs have gained a real momentum in Africa and that they are diverse in terms of their technical focus, duration and funding mechanism, with some WOPs even being self-funded. The presentations and ensuing discussions elicited a range of insights, including challenges and success factors, how best to bring about capacity

development through WOPs, implementation modalities including finance, and how to sustain, monitor and measure results.

A recurring theme was the need for commitment. eThekwini, Rand Water and Namwater representatives stressed the need for commitment, particularly from the top management level. Their experience also showed that administrative arrangements, including finance and logistics, need to be addressed between mentor, mentee and facilitator before the work begins.

The importance of partners involved in a WOP looking beyond the partnership was also highlighted. Whether it is a strategy for wrapping-up the WOP, continuing it, or transitioning to a different type of support such as a longer-term mentoring arrangement to accompany a new capital investment programme, what comes next must be kept in mind. In terms of support for moving to a future step, the GWOPA Performance Improvement manual which was applied in the OFID funded WOPs facilitated by GWOPA between 2014 and 2015, was considered by participants to have been a useful tool.

Various donors remarked that the capacity developed through these WOPs was bound to enhance the sustainability of investment in the sector, however there is a need to now build on these encouraging results and look long term. Mr. Assefaw (AfDB) said that while the WOPs presented are very encouraging, the PIPs now need to be implemented and expressed its commitment to continuing to support the regional platform to facilitate WOPs that can build capacity in line with the financing of infrastructure. USAID also stated its intention to continue supporting the WOPs practice.

Mr. Slvain Usher, Executive Director of the African Water Association (AfWA) noted that investment projects always comprise a capacity building component. He called for donors to specify that this capacity building support should be implemented through WOPs.

On the selection of WOP partners, Ms. Ullmann (AFD) noted that the best WOPs seemed to be ones without a facilitator but which came together of the partners' own volition. Events like the WOPs Congress are useful for enabling a natural coming-together of utilities will something to offer one another. Having supported WOPs not only in Africa, but also in Asia and with GWOPA, Ms. Robertson (USAID) noted that USAid's most successful WOPs have been those in which the mentor and the mentee were identified as part of a larger capacity development effort. Mentee utilities, she also noted, must have a minimum capacity in place to be able to really benefit from the WOP and make use of its recommendations.

Successive speakers from the floor raised the importance of civil society, and the need to link improvements in technical performance to actual improvement in service delivery, especially to poor and disadvantaged groups. The panelists shared the view that WOPs was a strong approach among the range of available tools and strategies available to strengthen operator capacity. Panel members, including OFID, commented that WOPs focused on developing management capacity showed great potential in ensuring the security and sustainability of investments in African utilities. Yet donors' tough conditions for financing WOPs in the medium and long term appear to make it difficult for the most needy countries and operators to get external support, leaving the responsibility of financing the water sector to local or national governments.

A number of recommendations for making WOPs more effective were advanced by participants:

- More advance planning, including more attention to selection criteria for mentors and mentees and more sharing on current development partner activities.

- Anticipate PIPs finance and exit strategy to mitigate WOPs suspension impact when initial budget is over and to maximize contribution of WOP activities to ultimate WOP objectives, such as the SDGs, which operators may need years to manifest.
- Allow for more time and support from facilitators/funding agencies such as GWOPA during the selection and set-up of WOPs. There should be more guidance through an improved version of the GWOPA PIP Manual.
- Building in a degree of flexibility in the WOPs process, to be balanced against the need for quality assurance.
- Improved ways of measuring WOPs contributions to the MDGs or SDGs, while recognizing that such changes can only be the result of long term and integrated action to reduce inequalities.

*"I have heard 'change management' mentioned many times but I haven't heard anything about the need to change utility management to give the customers more say in the decisions that affect them."*

– unnamed Congress participant

*"If you want to go fast, walk alone. If you want to go far, walk together."*

– Mr. Teddy Gunden, eThekwin

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## LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN REGIONAL WOPS SESSION

The Latin America and the Caribbean region is one of the most active WOP regions. With a WOP-LAC platform revitalized in recent years by new hosting by ALOAS (Latin American Association of Water and Sanitation Operators) and a round of new funding by the Inter-American Development Bank, this session was rich with the sharing of operators' challenges in the region and recent WOP experience.

In his introduction to the session, Mr. Fernando Reyna Guzmán of Mexico's Asociación Nacional de Empresas de Agua y Saneamiento (ANEAS) urged the audience to think about the importance of the choices water operators need to make in the face of such rapid urbanization. Decisions around where investments are made – whether in expansion of coverage, new infrastructure, etc. – and when and how to prioritize and define actions to improve water supply and sanitation are critical and require us to look at both the water cycle and the biological cycle. The final message he delivered was that we need capacity development and training, which is why GWOPA plays an important role in facilitating the resolution of water and sanitation problems across the globe.

Mr. Israel Macario of the Empresa Municipal Aguas de Xelaju (EMAX) in Guatemala, and Mr. Raul Bello of the City of Zaragoza in Spain, presented on the WOP between the cities' water service providers. The WOP is facilitated by ECODES/Alianza por el Agua and GWOPA. The mentee attributed the successes of the WOP to effective information sharing and citizen participation. As for the mentor, Mr. Bello highlighted the importance of maintaining an ongoing relationship between the partners (through continuity of the WOP) and providing reliable and clear information. For the WOP's next steps, it is scheduled to wrap up in 2016 after which the mentor plans to evaluate the mentee's results. However both partners are keen to keep the WOP going.

Ms. Schembri from Companhia de Saneamento de Minas Gerais (COPASA) in Brazil, apologized that her counterpart, Mr. Alberto Ordoñez, from Empresa Municipal De Saneamiento Básico Ambiental (Emsapuno) in Peru was not able to attend. Presenting on behalf of both utilities, she noted the contrast in size between the operators – with the Brazilian mentor providing water to 4.1 connections and EMSAPUNO ensuring fewer than 40,000 connections – was not an obstacle in this WOP. The 6-month WOP sought to prepare a Water Safety Plan (WSP) in Puno, Peru to identify risks, optimize investments and processes, and reduce treatment costs. Through the WOP, the utilities transferred WSP knowledge (concepts and methodology), identified new interventions, and COPASA evaluated EMSAPUNO's WSP. The WOP, which was facilitated by WOP-LAC, Cap-Net and GWOPA, benefitted from an attitude on the part of both mentor and mentee that facilitated open exchange, despite the distance between the partners.

Ms. Ana Gabriela Castejón from Aguas de Puerto Cortes in Honduras on behalf of the Honduran Association of Water and Sanitation Operators (AHPSAS) presented the partnership between her association and ANEAS, facilitated by WOP-LAC. As a fairly new association (founded in 2013), Ms. Castejón explained the value for AHPSAS of learning from ANEAS' 35 years of experience. The WOP aimed at bolstering the new Honduran association in three areas: institutional, technical and commercial. Ms. Castejón identified challenges to the exchange – lack of time and missing technical information which would have aided the diagnosis. Nevertheless, commitment on behalf of both parties, ANEAS' experience, the financial support from the Inter-American Development bank (IDB), World Bank, and WOP-LAC, as well as the involvement of national authorities and civil society helped make the exchange useful.

Mr. Jordi González Sánchez of Aigües del Prat in Spain, gave an overview of this Water Safety Planning-focused WOP between the small Catalan operator and Aguas Santafesinas

in Argentina, facilitated by WOP-LAC, Cap-Net, GWOPA and the Asociación Española de Operadores Públicos de Abastecimiento y Saneamiento (AEOPAS). The specific objectives included protecting watersheds, training in reverse osmosis, reducing water losses and controlling tariffs. Mr. González considers this ongoing WOP to be bilateral in that there is a real two-way knowledge transfer. On practical results, his counterpart from Argentina, Ms. Maria Jose Ugalde, reported on the installation of water meters, NRW reduction, sectoralization of water distribution networks, specific points related to the WSP, and further technological solutions that are currently under study. The final WSP will be wrapped-up in the final months of 2015. Mr. González concluded that the most important thing was to keep projects on the table; the financing, he said, will come and meanwhile you can continue working.

Ms. Nicolyn Parks of Belize Water Services, presented on the WOP her national utility has been doing with Contra Costa Water District in California, USA, with support from IDB, the Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility (PPIAF) and GWOPA. She explained the relationship between the partners, which shared a similar number of connections and employees, despite the significant differences in their working context. The WOP focused on safety, operations, engineering, water quality, and public outreach. She concluded by listing financing challenges, the success factors and key outcomes. Ms. Parks affirmed: "Staff members were revived. The WOP increased their confidence, boosted their moral and the way they felt about their jobs". She said Belize would like to maintain the relationship it has with Contra Costa as they continue to improve and advance in work plan implementation. Ms. Parks realized that



no additional funding was now needed for the WOP, as the partnership can continue to grow with support of both partners.

The 5-year WOP between Castries in Saint Lucia and the Syndicat Intercommunal Centre et Sud Martinique (SICSM) on the French Caribbean island of Martinique is supported by the European Union. It began in 2011 following hurricane Thomas, which hit Saint Lucia in 2010. Mr. Vincent Hippolyte of Water and Sewerage Company Inc Saint Lucia (WASCO), Saint Lucia, explained that this WOP, which aimed to reduce the operator's vulnerability, involved joint diagnosis, field meetings, group-work sessions, and the exchange of data and information. Now, as Saint Lucia is experiencing severe drought, it's trying to acquire tools to improve asset management, prepare guidelines for risk management planning and generally build its resilience to the extremes the island is subject to. The main changes that have occurred are improved management, the development of a master plan, integrated training, facilitation of attitude towards change, as well as practical understanding of risk and vulnerabilities at the functional level and collaboration with regulatory agencies. However, challenges include insufficient involvement of key local stakeholders and limited personnel resources. The partners see opportunities for continuing the partnership long-term.

José Luis Martin Bordes of the GWOPA Secretariat and session moderator invited donors to the panel.

Ms. Corinne Cathala, Senior Water and Sanitation Specialist of the Inter-American Development Bank outlined the region's key challenges: low coverage rates, lack of efficiency, high levels of non-revenue water (NRW), and governance. Every 3 years IDB prepares a document that develops the work plan for the period. The current document lays out its priorities as: 1) access to quality water, 2) sectoral water governance and management, 3) efficiency and sustainability, 4) protected watersheds and 5) clean spaces through

wastewater treatment and solid waste collection. Asked how WOPs line up with IDB's investment priorities, Ms. Cathala pointed to the example of Belize and Contra Costa where partners suggest they won't need financial aid in the future. This shows the sustainability of the WOP. Another example came from the WOP between Aguas del Norte from Argentina and CAESB from Brazil, because they both presented a work plan including a financing plan from IDB, but also financing from both parties (50%-50%).

Asked about the challenges and next steps that AECID will face in the implementation of the Spanish Water and Sanitation Fund, Ms. Natalia Gullon, gave an overview of AECID's work in the region since 2008, in which 79 programs worth EUR 800 million have been developed in partner cities. The priority is sustainability and reaching the most vulnerable, which is why their work is focused in rural and peri-urban areas. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) lay out an important set of priorities, but for AECID, the most important guiding framework is the Human Right to Water, which she observed had not come out clearly as an objective in the WOP presentations.

Mr. Omar Falvino of the WOP-LAC Secretariat said that WOPs were now well accepted in the region but awareness about them needed to grow. A challenge persists in spreading the word about the opportunity for WOPs through the national platforms. He believed that WOP-LAC has benefitted from the professionalization of WOPs, making use of media attention, communication around the WOPs vision, and maintaining an active network. The platform will continue to make use of these approaches to expand the practice.

Mr. Cyprian Gibson of the Cari-WOP Secretariat explained how Caribbean operators were responding to challenges in the island and coastal sub-region. WOPs, he said, have provided a boost to the over 25 years of informal peer-to-peer cooperation that has gone on between the small countries of the Caribbean.

In Mexico, Mr. Reyna Guzmán (ANEAS) explained that knowledge is considered the basis for achieving universal access and efficiency. They consider WOPs as an effective medium for transferring this knowledge, because this knowledge is both formal and explicit, and informal and tacit, capable of being passed on most effectively through hands-on training and joint work. Partnerships, he said, are a very important way of building this essential knowledge that is at the core of all good utilities.

Mr. Bordes (GWOPA) concluded by informing the audience on the performance measurement frameworks being developed through the BEWOP project that will support a better understanding of the different impacts of WOPs in the LAC region.

**“I don’t want this WOP to end.”**

– Mr. Raul Bello, Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza (Spain)

**“What we have [in this WOP] is a powerful two-way exchange of technical knowledge.”**

– Mr. Jordi González Sánchez, Aigües del Prat (Spain)

**“This WOP allowed us to take a pause on operational procedures and give us a look back to ourselves. Twinning really does support self-reflection.”**

– Ms. Nicolyn Parks, Belize Water Services (Belize)

**“Los hermanos no comparten las ideas, pero sí comparten los sueños.”**

– Ms. Natalia Gullon, Spanish Cooperation Agency (AECID) (Spain)

## ASIA & THE PACIFIC REGIONAL WOPS SESSION

This session was co-organized by WaterLinks and GWOPA. Asia is one of the fastest growing economies in the world today, but arguably the world’s most water-stressed continent. By 2025, almost all of Asia will face economic water scarcity. It will also be home to 60% of the world’s population in a few years, the majority of whom will live in towns and cities, and contribute to continued rapid economic expansion. By 2050, Asian towns and cities are expected to be home to 3.3 billion people. The pressures on scarce water resources will be immense, and efficiency will, of necessity, be the new paradigm. It is in this context that USAID through WaterLinks and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have facilitated over 70 WOPs across Asia and the Pacific since 2008.

In sum the main challenges for water management and governance (water utilities and government) in the Asia Pacific region in the current and near-by future are related to the pace of urbanization and demographic growth, and the water regimes shifts affected by climate change.

Mr. Rudie Kusmayadi is the Chair of PDAM Kota Denpasar and PERPAMSI, the national WOP platform in Indonesia. The mission of this 420-member-platform is to broker and facilitate WOPs. Well performing utilities are requested to support those performing less well on a voluntary basis. 34 national WOPs were facilitated between 2011 and 2014, mostly focusing on reducing non-revenue water. The costs of these WOPs are very low, with only around 170 000 US\$ sustaining 34 national WOPs! A standardized approach is applied, consisting of exchange visits, classroom and on-the-job training, with the ultimate objective of providing better services. Through the WOPs conducted during this period, 50,000 people are considered to have received improved service, and 12 utilities in the country have been upgraded to ‘well-performing’ according to the Indonesian government’s ranking.

[Download the session presentations](#)

One challenge PERPAMSI faces in its ongoing WOP facilitation work is that demand for WOPs is much higher than the number of mentors available in Indonesia, and the organization is struggling with how to incentivize them and raise their capacity to share their knowledge more effectively. PERPAMSI however considers that WOPs have many positive aspects: solidarity, the good relationship they foster between managers, and their ability to launch with little or no money. Their next steps to advance the approach will be to foster sister city partnerships; focus on fewer, but higher quality WOPs; and to put one mentor in charge of a group of mentees.

Mr. Gusti Alit Mahawintang, of PDAM Kota Denpasar in Indonesia and Mr. Zainuddin Ghazali of Ranhill Water Services in the Philippines presented on a WOP between the two utilities focused on non-revenue water (NRW) and connecting the poor in the Indonesian city. Facilitated by WaterLinks and funded primarily by USAID, this partnership also included a private company, Borouge, which granted pipes to the project. The 18 month-long WOP cost around 65 000\$, and consisted of a diagnostic visit, a reciprocal visit, class-room and on the job training and the establishment of a pilot project. The results were many: non-revenue water was reduced in the pilot area and three kilometres of pipe was replaced enabling further connection and increasing hours of supply and pressure. Organizationally, staff increased their knowledge, a NRW unit was created and overall NRW awareness increased. Among the factors to which the partners attribute their success, they named management commitment, readiness to listen to and apply recommendations, geographical proximity between the partners, and the effective support of third parties and the ease of communication. The mentee will continue work on three existing DMAs, and will complete six more. The relationship with the mentor will continue beyond the completion of the WOP.

Ms. Rachel Beja of the Philippines' Cagayan de Oro Water District presented on a national WOP between her provincial provider and Maynilad (Philippines) in the giant capital,

Manila on Hydraulic Modeling. The WOP, at a cost of 25 000 US\$ over 11 months, was made been possible thanks to funds from USAID and facilitation by Waterlinks. Its objectives, to support Cagayan de Oro Water District make improvements in pressure management, hydraulic modelling, GIS and metering, were all achieved despite resource limitations – time, human resources, equipment for monitoring and above all info and data about the network and the state of assets and infrastructure. Good commitment by both operators was strengthened by the close coordination of the facilitator, who served as a permanent bridge. Focus is key, they said; when time is a constraint, better to get the most out of one topic than get spread too thin. “The WOP is actually a very good tool for managing changes, something that is very difficult to do by yourself.” As for next steps, the mentee is implementing a 10MUS\$ NRW program for which it has received an 800 000 US\$ support grant from USAID.

A WOP between South Korea's National provider, K-Water, and Puerto Princesa City in the Philippines stood out because of the considerable size difference between the mentor and the mentee. Mr. Antonio Jesus Romasanta of Puerto Princesa and Mr. Chang Hyun Jo of K-water presented on this Water Quality Management – focused WOP, facilitated by WaterLinks and funded by USAID at a cost of 35 000 US\$. The WOP was a wide-reaching one, addressing water quality management, supply improvement and distribution network management. Within two years, Puerto Princesa had increased production capacity by 20%, adopted new protocols to remove turbidity, and was able to keep up continuity of supply even during floods. At the end, the utility submitted a proposal to the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for funding of a water supply improvement project.

In reflecting on the experience, the presenters noted that prioritizing efforts can be a challenge (quality or quantity first), as can be the language barrier. But willingness to cooperate, full management, technical and financial support

saw the WOP through in the end, and now the partners are trying to implement the innovations it identified. They suggested that WOPs focus on short term solutions first, and later they can perform feasibility studies to develop medium – to long-term plans. Another piece of advice was for the WOP to be flexible enough to allow for adjustments and adaptations to local needs, context and environment that came to light as the WOP evolved.

Mr. Sunil Kumar Das, of the Department of Water Supply and Sewerage in Nepal (DWSS) presented on its WOP with Maynilad, Philippines, on non-revenue water. The WOP was funded by the Asian Development Bank, together with the World Health Organization in Nepal. Over the course of 24 months, with a budget of 50,000 USD, the partners took part in joint diagnosis, on-the-job training, classic training and online communication on non-revenue water reduction through district metering areas, water safety planning, and leak detection. The representative from DWSS commented: “At the beginning of the WOP we did not know what NRW was, so we could not do anything about it”. Results are diverse, but include an upgrade of the meter testing lab and a training of trainers’ workshop, etc. There were minor setbacks due to scheduling, but regular communication, personal investment and financial capacity of the mentee to implement the recommendations worked in the WOP’s favour. The WOP helped to centralize knowledge in a training center that then can be used to train others, including in small town water systems. They call this “a model to capacitate one organization so that this organization is ready to capacitate other organizations locally.”

Mr. Tevita Mau of the Water Authority Fiji gave an overview of his utility’s recent WOP with Hunter Water (H2O), Australia. The WOP cost 50 000 US\$ and took place over the course of a year. Its focus was on non-revenue water, wastewater treatment, laboratories, water models, business case planning and energy efficiency. Although the partners admitted to having been a bit ambitious in addressing so many themes, most expected

results were achieved, especially in terms of the implementation of efficiency measures, improving financial management, and effectively training water modelers. The main challenge was the lack of steady funds. One of the WOP’s unique success factors was the frequent use of video conferencing for remote training and ongoing communication, helping overcome the kilometres of ocean separating the partners. Inclusiveness, participation, and openness of staff also helped build ownership. In the end, both parties wanted to go beyond the simple collaboration in order to maximize the outcomes of the WOP.

[Download the WOP case study](#)

Mr. Hidetake Aoki of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) shared WOPs that his agency had facilitated. These WOPs were between Phnom Penh PPWSA of Cambodia and Kitakyusyu-City, Japan on the one hand, and Bangkok MWAIT in Thailand with several Japanese cities on the other. He started by showing an overview of JICA’s activities. 900 engineers from 60 Japanese operators have been involved in supporting developing countries utilities since 1990, focusing on daily operations, experience sharing, creating good practice, and adopting the “lead runner” method. The approach follows a number of steps: plan formulation, infrastructure improvement, capacity development through technical cooperation, followed by dissemination. In Phnom Penh there were very impressive improvements realized on key performance indicators and the project has received support from many other donors. Moving to the Thai case between their Provincial and Metropolitan Waterworks Authorities, Mr. Aoki observed: “the mentors first have to listen to the needs and not throw them away”. He emphasized the importance of tying together infrastructure development with capacity building and knowledge dissemination, stating that JICA was able to provide funds for both. The Japanese Agency also strongly supports strategic planning, the enhancement of leadership and ownership, the lead runner method, networking,



and incentives toward autonomous progress. It plans to scale things up by promoting these opportunities for knowledge sharing among Japanese waterworks and linking these WOPs to business cooperation and enhanced networking between water associations.

The Panel discussion that followed was moderated by Mr. Bert Diphorn (formerly UN-Habitat) and featured speakers Ms. Yolanda Gomez from WaterLinks, Mr. Masroor Ahmad of the Water and Sanitation Programme of the World Bank, Mr. Dwiki Riantara from PERPAMSI, and Mr. Hidetake Aoki from JICA. Ms. Gomez told the audience about Waterlinks' extensive WOP facilitation work in the region, through which more than 40 WOPs have already been enabled, and more are in the works. The NGO also develops tools and master classes for operators in the region. When asked directly why the World Bank was not funding WOPs while the regional development banks were, Mr. Ahmad explained that the World Bank is facing major changes in the water and sanitation sector with a new President, a new structure, a new global team, etc. There are now 20 billion US\$ under the responsibility of the Water global team covering not only water and sanitation supply, but also hydropower and more. Currently the World Bank is looking at how knowledge can be generated, packaged, localized and sustained. He highlighted the creation of a network, as in Pakistan which can be a vehicle for knowledge transfer. "The reason I'm here is to get impressed, see how WB can participate, and to network."

For Mr. Riantara, the Congress was an opportunity to promote national WOPs. There are very few water associations in the world, even in Asia, that facilitate national WOPs and he said that he'd like to encourage the establishment of national-level WOPs platforms, and collaboration between them through GWOPA. He also called on participants to be more forthcoming about their failures. He surmised that perhaps only half of PERPAMSI's WOPs have produced good results, but there is much to learn from those that

did not. The role of the facilitator is therefore very important, he said, and urged the BEWOP project to put more attention on their role.

Mr. Ahmed of the World Bank said that the presentations show evidence that WOPs build capacity. Certain areas required more focus, such as sanitation where many people remain without access to very basic facilities. Donors and politicians still want infrastructure when what they actually need is institutional and policy reforms. WOPs should package this knowledge, then adapt and disseminate it.

One audience member commented that partnerships formed on the basis of one-way flows of knowledge did not sound productive, and wondered if the terminology of mentor and mentee might be limiting a more constructive dynamic. Another audience member wondered if the involvement of private firms would compromise the important element of trust in the WOP, being a partnership arrangement that relies heavily on the ability to share information freely. Another speaker asked to hear more about the private operators' experience in WOPs and what has been learned from their involvement.

## WATERLINKS AWARDS

At the end of this session, two WaterLinks Awards were presented for the WOP between Nepal's Department of Water Supply and Sewerage (DWSS) – specifically its Central Human Resource Development Unit (CHRDU) and the Lekhnath Small Town Water Supply and Users Committee (LSTWSSUC) – as recipient, and Maynilad Water Services through the Maynilad Water Academy, as mentor. The WOP resulted in the establishment of the National Water Supply and Sanitation Training Center equipped with a water laboratory and a meter test bench. A second award was given to the WOP between PDAM KOTA Denpasar of Bali Indonesia (mentee) and Ranhill Water Utilities of Malaysia (mentor) for its work on NRW management and expanding services by connecting poor households to the water supply system.

Officers and representatives from each of the four recognized utilities accepted their plaques, presented to them by WaterLinks Senior Partnership Coordinator Yolanda Gomez.

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*“The WOP is actually a very good and important tool for managing changes, something that is very difficult to do it by yourself. Sometimes you don’t want to go out your comfort zone, but with external help; opening up our eyes, and show us possibilities foster the buy-in. It has helped us a lot.”*

– Ms. Rachel Beja Cagayan de Oro Water District (Philippines)

*“At the beginning of the WOP we did not know what NRW was, so we could not do anything about it.”*

– Mr. Sunil Kumar Das, Department of Water Supply and Sewerage (Nepal)



# Thematic Sessions

## SANITATION, WASTEWATER SERVICES & SWOPS

Sanitation-focused WOPs (SWOPs) are growing in number and this session, the first dedicated exclusively to topic in a WOPs Congress, aimed to stir the interest of operators in sanitation and to understand the challenges related to service provision. Opening the session, Ms. Cléo Lossouarn of SIAAP (France) welcomed participants and stressed the potential for the WOPs approach to be equally successful in the sanitation sector.

Mr. Christophe le Jalle, Deputy Director of PS-Eau provided participants with a brief history of sanitation services across the globe, making particular reference to global development frameworks such as the MDGs. He stated that sanitation involves a range of processes and responsibilities, not only installing latrines and providing access but collection, evacuation and treatment while also keeping in mind the complementarity between collective and non-collective systems. He further emphasized the need for a step-by-step approach to the achievement of ambitious Sustainable Development Goals related to sanitation and suggested developing short-term realistic/achievable goals with a timeline and adapted methodologies. He called for greater dialogue between urban planners and those working in sanitation as they two must work collectively. He ended by informing participants of the numerous resources available for operators and other actors working in the field to support their work.

Ms. Raquel Mendes represented the World Health Organization and presented on Sanitation Safety Plans. She began by highlighting the complexity of water quality problems globally: pollution of water resources, growing water scarcity and public health risks among others. Sanitation Safety Plans are a structured, step-by-step health risk-based approach to sanitation

planning and management to minimize the effects of risk and disaster. The approach can be used by a wide range of actors from operators of all sizes, according to Ms. Mendes, and she provided an overview of the steps involved when making a sanitation safety plan. She concluded by stressing that the sanitation safety plan approach requires understanding of and from all stakeholder groups as well as good data and a multi-disciplinary view.

Mr. Diop Papa Samba, Technical and Development Director, ONAS (Senegal) highlighted that their recent WOP with ONAD (Ivory Coast) was their first experience of a coaching for his organization. He said that the experience of mentoring was enriching for the organization as it stimulated reflection within the mentor on its own working methods and became a learning experience.

Mr. Kouame Andre N'Guessan of ONAD Ivory Coast reinforced the win-win nature of the partnership and provided a detailed overview of the steps that allowed the WOP to be effective: needs evaluation, planning and clear objectives, among others. He highlighted that the governance of the two operators and willingness to cooperate were major success factors in this South-South cooperation.

Mr. Arba Jules Ouedraogo, from ONEA Burkina Faso provided an overview of the SWOP conducted with SIAAP with the support of the Agence Française de Développement. Following a diagnosis, it was decided that collective sanitation and treatment centres would be the focus of this SWOP as the mentee had already made progress at the individual access level. Mr. Jean-François Moisan of the mentoring SIAAP completed the presentation of Mr. Ouedraogo by providing additional details of the approach used for the lab-centered training.

Questions from the floor called for greater detail on the measuring mechanisms that will be put in place for the SDGs related to sanitation. Mr. Jalle (PS-Eau) commented that the indicators have not been defined but will be adopted early 2016. The session then moved to the panel discussion with Mr. Graham Alabaster of UN-Habitat, Mr. Simon Lippi, Sanitation Expert representing the Water Right Foundation and Mr. Hachmi Kennou of the Mediterranean Institute for Water.

Speaking of his experience of SWOPs in India, Mr. Lippi highlighted that with very simple activities and trainings, it is possible to achieve significant gains at operational level. One of the main challenges that arose in this WOP was data regarding volumes and usage.

Mr. Graham Alabaster noted that SDG 6, to “ensure availability and sustainable management to water and sanitation for all”, in particular, Target 6.3 “by 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and increasing recycling and safe reuse globally”; expanded the scope of sanitation as defined in the previous MDGs. He suggested that monitoring of issues such as water quality and wastewater, for example, will go beyond the current protocol of the Joint Monitoring Programme, the initiative that led the international MDG monitoring for WASH targets. There is, therefore, a need to expand current approaches to include remote sensing methods and the use of community-based and other non-scientific methods, especially in areas where monitoring is challenging.

He furthermore suggested that national monitoring systems need to be linked to global monitoring standards and work closely with statistical offices for validation/clearance of national data and consider segregated monitoring approaches. Mr. Alabaster spoke of the GEMI initiative, a monitoring framework to replace the Joint-Monitoring Programme for the SDGs, which will seek to have a global baseline by 2017 and invited participants to keep track of the initiative’s progress.

Mr. Hachmi Kennou, Director of the Mediterranean Institute for Water (IME) and President of the Sanitation Taskforce of the World Water Council, highlighted the three pillars that have allowed sanitation to progress over the past 40 years: newly acquired and increased political recognition, increased budget and finance and developments in technology. He stressed that in the case of SWOPs, it is particularly important to ensure that knowledge is adapted to specific contexts to maximise impact but, overall, commended the potential of this approach.

Mr. Alabaster (UN-Habitat) stressed the important role that operators will play in the measuring of the SDGs related to sanitation, especially in areas where measuring mechanisms are not yet in place. For industrial waste, although the onus will be on the polluters to measure, the operators will need to control and support this process. Remote sensing offers new opportunities to track pollutions and treatment to identify issues and concerns and he suggested that operators could play a key role in this task.

Questions from the floor addressed the difference between WOPs and SWOPs and how to overcome the discrepancies in technologies between mentor and mentee. Mr. Lippi replied by saying that there were some parallels in the case he worked on regarding the technology used by the mentor and mentee. To ensure lessons learned were applicable, the site visits during the SWOP were focussed on these technologies. Other issues that are not related to technology, such as illegal discharge, are also shared challenges.

Final comments highlighted the need for integrated water cycle management that encompasses sanitation and urban planning. The importance of monitoring in the world of water and sanitation and the potential for North-South-South partnerships were also stressed.

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## THE INGREDIENTS IN EFFECTIVE WOPs: LESSONS FROM THE BEWOP PROJECT

The Moderator of the session, Mr. Marco Shouten, Director of Vitens Evides International, explained how this interactive session was foreseen: members of the BEWOP project team would briefly present on essential features in successful WOPs, and the audience would then have the opportunity to react with their own WOP experience.

Ms. Maria Pascual of UNESCO-IHE gave an overview of the BEWOP project, a Dutch-funded collaboration between GWOPA and UNESCO-IHE. She explained that the initiative is studying WOPs practice in order to more effectively guide future practice. The first phase was research-focused, and involved extensive documentation and analysis of current WOPs practice. A common analytical framework was used to examine WOPs at the operational level; change processes, roles of mentor and mentee in the process, knowledge management within WOPs and outside of WOPs as well as the question of continuity on the side of the mentees. The second phase will focus more on developing tools, guidance and frameworks for more effective WOPs, from their initial design, through to how to transfer and anchor knowledge within a utility, and measure the results.

### KNOWLEDGE

Ms. Uta Wehn of UNESCO-IHE presented on the theme of Knowledge and highlighted that WOPs are a vehicle to strengthen the capacity of a utility through knowledge transfer. However knowledge transfer is only a starting point; it needs also to translate into organizational improvement. This calls for going from the acquisition of new knowledge to integrating it into routines at the individual and institutional levels.

How knowledge gets picked up and applied depends first on the selection and commitment of those involved. A first step, an audience member contributed, is getting the right personnel to receive new knowledge. Often, only technical

people are involved while it is at management level that knowledge can be embedded into protocols, while other times, the WOP does not involve the technical staff that will actually operationalize the knowledge. The timing of the knowledge transfer may also have an important impact on uptake; if it comes at a moment in the work cycle that allows for a change in operations, allocations of budgets and the like, it can be more readily applied and with greater results.

*“In Belize, we involved management in site visits so they could decide what should be applied in the strategic direction. This way, Belize was able to institutionalise things that management saw into the water utility.”*

– Ms. Nicolyn Parks, Belize Water Services.

### COMPATIBILITY

Ms. Mireia Tutusaus of UNESCO-IHE presented the theme of compatibility, proposing a definition for compatibility in WOPs as “the right match between partners to foster best outcome.” The key question was what makes partners able to work together? Is it a common language, institutional framework, prior knowledge?

Participants suggested that matching expectations is paramount and it requires clarity on what we expect to get out of the partnership right from the beginning. Audience members suggested that some of the factors that influence compatibility are alignment in the goals or motivation of the partners. The process for matching partners plays a role in defining on what basis WOPs are considered compatible, although the best basis for matching has not been identified. Julie Perkins (GWOPA) explained that a lot of emphasis was put on benchmarking as the basis for compatibility early in the WOPs movement: if one utility had strong performance in a specific area relative to another, it suggested they were

in a position to share their knowledge on it. Experience, however, has shown that other factors are equally important in determining whether two operators have something to share and whether they're likely to 'click' than performance criteria alone. Geography, size, similar challenges can be equally important.

Compatibility can also be fostered. Spending time together to build mutual trust and friendship can help bring operators identify their fit. Ms. Dorothy Kobel of Uganda's National Water and Sewerage Company made the point that "the courtship process is important in understanding the political environment in which the utilities work." However she feared that this essential phase of getting to know one another is not being recognized as important. "As of today, courtship is progressively on the back seat and WOPs are being driven by funds availability".

Compatibility, it was concluded, may be essential, but there are many possible ways to be 'well-suited'.

## MONEY

Mr. Vincent Merme of the GWOPA Secretariat presented on the theme of money in WOPs. Funding often comes with conditionality. The questions asked were: Are donors a limiting or a supporting factor for WOPs? Where are resources available to start and sustain the partnership?

Some responded that the content of WOPs was often structured by donors' priorities, rather than those of the utilities involved. Money, it was noted, is needed for WOPs achievement, but it can also change who is in the driver's seat, and potentially compromise the utility ownership that is essential to effective WOPs.

The discussion turned to where the money should come from. There was agreement that money is "out there" and as one audience member put it: "if there is money for consultancies, there is money for WOPs, which are much less expensive."

Not having to worry about money to support the partnership is also beneficial to the partnership, as it allows the partners to focus on results. An important aspect is to have some flexibility in the way the money is used. WOPs budgets are fixed and attached to specific activities. There is a need for flexibility in the agreements to allow for the incorporation of changes as the WOP progresses.

## RESULTS

Mr. Klaas Schwartz of UNESCO-IHE presented on the theme of Results in WOPs, laying out the challenges of identifying WOP results. The most common approach of gauging the impact of WOPs – focusing on Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – is limiting and inaccurate, he argued, as they have a strong focus on activities. A WOP might be targeting non-revenue water but in reality, the utility also has other on-going interventions related to the same topic, so it is difficult to attribute changes exclusively to the WOP. Regardless of how successful a WOP is, the evidence is often anecdotal meaning that reviewers and donors may criticize it for not showing quantifiable indicators. WOPs are usually relatively short when considering time required to manifest in KPI changes.

A participant highlighted that social impacts and solidarity are also key features of WOPs, however these are complex and difficult to measure, quantify and analyse. The question was also raised as to how one can measure the results of a partnership when the objectives may change during the process?

The challenge of attribution should not be considered a shortcoming, suggested a speaker from the floor, saying that WOPs exist in coordination with other projects and attribution should be considered from a wider perspective and in connection with other complimentary capacity building work.

Speaking of his experience, a representative of an operator suggested that the indicators be well defined and specified at the conception stage of the WOP. However this early phase is often too short and there is pressure to move to implementation quickly.

Ms. Maria Pascual (UNESCO-IHE) told the audience that BEWOP was in the process of developing a methodology for mapping what is happening in the WOP in a quantifiable manner. Certain common procedures have been applied to try and make the measurement quantifiable and this will be important for the sustainability of the WOP movement. Traditional Key Performance Indicators can be used for long-term gains linked to the WOP but it is also important to show short-term gains.

## OWNERSHIP

Ms. Julie Perkins (GWOPA) explained that ownership is the sense of responsibility for and stake in the WOPs process and its outcomes. In a not-for-profit partnership, ownership is essential for motivating results. All stakeholders in a WOP should feel ownership, but it is most critical from the managers and staff of the mentee utility who need to 'own' their improvement process. Within a utility, ownership also needs to happen at various levels, from the institutional to the individual. Without ownership, a WOP can face resistance, while with it, a WOP can move forward, even when other inputs like funds are lacking. The questions put to the floor were: 'How do you foster ownership in a WOP?' and 'What kind of attitude must a mentor take to foster ownership by the mentee?'

Some mentioned that when partners make a financial contribution to the WOP they are demonstrating ownership and commitment, but they are also building it, as they now have a financial stake in ensuring it is successful. Monetary commitments are also an indication that the mentee can continue with the interventions, even without the funding. Another sign of ownership is when a utility integrates changes engendered by the WOP into its plans, budgets or practices. A participant suggested that you can know ownership has been achieved when a proposal originally written by mentors starts to take on a life of its own.

## DISCUSSION

In the discussion, Mr. Marco Schouten (Vitens Evides) asked audience members to propose additional ingredients not yet discussed. Several participants highlighted the importance of factors and players beyond the utilities directly involved in the WOP. In particular, the importance of political ownership of the WOP and the changes it was helping to bring about was considered crucial.

In the panelists' concluding remarks, it was noted that improving the alignment between WOPs' funding mechanisms and performance frameworks on one hand, and the essential soft features of WOPs like ownership and compatibility on the other, remained a challenge for many WOPs. The session nevertheless raised a number of suggestions for how to improve this alignment.

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## CUTTING LOSSES: WOPS IN SUPPORT OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY & WATER LOSS REDUCTION

Utilities are resource intensive – the water used as the main input to services, the energy used in extraction, treatment and pumping, not to mention the failure to reuse resources conveyed away in ‘wastewater’ are significant. Reducing inefficiencies and wastage in the use of resources by utilities can contribute directly to the protection of the environment, including the urgent task of mitigating climate change, and can help utilities put these resources, including financial ones, to more constructive uses. In this session, operators shared their experience in reducing energy and water losses, and discussed the role of WOPs in helping them do so.

As the global urban population grows, water stress also increases for cities, particularly megacities, explained Mr. Rabi H. Mohtar of the Water Energy Food Nexus Research Group at Texas A&M University. But it is not just water that is under stress. Global warming, environmental

pollution and food insecurity are on the rise at the same time that energy, water and precious nutrient resources are being wasted in cities through wastewater. Mr. Mohtar claimed that the response lies at the water-energy-food, where we need to adopt a holistic approach that takes advantage of interlinkages, hot spots, and trade-offs. The Water Energy Food nexus tool “Water Utility Allocations 2050” provides a framework to explain spatial, temporal, quality, end-use variables in order to identify priority allocations of water for public and recreational activities, urban agriculture, energy production, drinking, hygiene, and industry. He concluded with a list of challenges, such as the growing demand for energy and water resources, the expansion of cities and need for resiliency frameworks, as well as trade-offs for different projected growth tracks.

Non-revenue water reduction was the WOP between EMASESA (Spain) and PDAM Bandung (Indonesia), presented by Mr. Graciano Carpes of EMASESA. Mr. Carpes provided an overview of the partnership carried out with the support of the Asian Development Bank in which NRW



reduction was achieved in two district areas, thanks to hydraulic modeling new software. Mr. Carpes noted that financing of the pilot project, communication between the partners in three different languages (English, Spanish, and Indonesian), and the building of trust were the principle challenges the operators faced in working together. The WOP's success, on the other hand, he attributes to the flexibility of both parties, the mentee's willingness to improve, and the effective transfer and uptake of knowledge during the process of the capacity building process. EMASESA looks forward to taking part in more WOPs, as well as helping graduate former mentees to mentors leading South-South WOPs.

Another NRW-focused WOP from Asia was presented by Yolanda Gomez, Partnership Coordinator of WaterLinks, the organization facilitating the partnership. After 21 months, the Provincial Waterworks Authority Thailand, with the mentorship of the Water Corporation of Australia, had adopted a protocol for water quality management, introduced a water meter replacement program that addresses NRW management and an energy efficiency program, trained 100 PWA personnel on water quality management and energy efficiency, and formed an Energy Efficiency Core Team to carry out provincial-wide training on energy efficiency. As challenges, Ms. Gomez highlighted the need to allow for changes and adjustments to the work plan, agree on timeframe, resources, commitment, and cooperation, define realistic outputs and achievements, overcome language barriers, and define management style and structure of the mentee which many times does not promote innovation. The success factors were the commitment on both sides, the support from PWA leadership in all WOP-related activities, and the fact that mentor and facilitator had a staff member who speak Thai.

Mr. Teddy Gurunathan (eThekwini) presented on the NRW focused WOP with Lilongwe, Malawi. Mr. Gurunathan explained the origin of WOP, from the diagnostic phase, to the thematic session in which NRW (at 35%) was identified at the top of the list of priorities to be addressed,

due to apparent losses (physical losses), old infrastructure, overflows, faulty meters, illegal connections, and unbilled connections. The short-term actions undertaken included a 10-point NRW Action Plan, and the development of strategy which resulted in NRW reduction thanks to the lowering of exposed pipes, replacement of faulty meters, billing of unbilled connections, and the reporting of illegal connections. The challenges include shortage of financial resources, illegal connections, vandalism, poor workmanship, poor quality of materials, and shortage of data. Since the WOP, lessons include the development of a NRW budget and the use of service contracts to reduce NRW.

Energy Efficiency was the focus of this WOP between Aguas del Norte in Argentina & Companhia de Saneamento Ambiental do Distrito Federal (CAESB) in Brazil. The WOP was presented by Ms. Nilce da Silva from CAESB and Mr. Gabriel Sbrugnera from Aguas del Norte, who described the origin of the WOP and the main focus points: Energy efficiency, micro – and macro-measurement, tariff modeling, technological platforms, and improvement of treatment plants. Mr. Sbrugnera described the initial resistance to the technological upgrades from existing personnel, and emphasized the importance of getting their support for this step in order to measure their current performance and make steps towards improvement. They have already saved about USD 100,000 just through the initial improvements put in place following WOP activities including the adjustment of existing contracts.

Ms. Rose Kaggwa, Director Business and Scientific Services of Uganda's National Water and Sewerage Company and Mr. Fernando Morcillo, President of the Asociación Española de Abastecimientos de Agua y Saneamiento (AEAS), Spain, were invited to respond to and elaborate on issues raised in the presentations. Ms. Kaggwa raised a number of questions relevant to all WOPs, wondering if utilities were doing enough to understand their own challenges or whether they really need a mentor to 'diagnose' them. Corruption, she observed,

as well as a culture unfriendly to innovation is impeding many public utilities. These questions are relevant to what a utility does with their new knowledge after the WOP and whether the successes can be sustained.

Cari-WOP, the sub-regional WOP platform gathering Caribbean operators and linked with the wider WOP-LAC platform, was represented by Mr. Cyprian Gibson, Director, Bahamas Water and Sewerage Corporation. Responding to the presentations, he observed that there is no single solution to address the complex issues related to the energy sector, climate change, and constant changes in the water sector. Tackling the underlying causes of NRW requires commitment from the utilities and the mechanisms that facilitate their cooperation.

Mr. John Maudsley of Yarra Valley Water in Australia, speaking from his experience mentoring WOPs on climate change adaptation with the National Water Supply and Drainage Board of Sri Lanka, pointed out the differences between the technical challenges, and the organizational and structural challenges within the utilities. In WOP implementation, what is critical is the time invested and the communication.

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**“This partnership was not only a union between utilities, but more of a union between people.”** (Translated from Spanish)

– Graciano Carpes, EMASESA (Spain)

**“Really, you learn much more than you think.”**

– Gabriel Sbrugnera, Aguas del Norte (Argentina)

## FINANCE & WOPS

This session aimed at understanding what sources of finance are suitable for supporting WOPs in the current financial landscape, and what is needed to continue to strengthen WOPs practice. The session presented concrete examples where financiers and water operators have achieved their respective objectives, and discussed

Mr. Julian Doczi, Senior Research Officer on Water Policy at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) introduced the work recently conducted as part of the BEWOP project. The objective of this framing presentation was to give an overview of the role of financing in, and around, WOPs. He presented a conceptual financial model that maps WOPs with respect to the extent to which they are linked to larger investments, how the funding decision-making process is undertaken, the categories of costs covered under a WOP and by whom and how the results are achieved. The key questions addressed by the study were: Who should pay for WOPs? Can they be made more compatible with donors’ traditional requirements? What is the focus and who is the audience of WOPs results reporting (SDGs, poverty, efficiency...)? How can accountability and trust be balanced in a WOP? The presentation ended with a set of possible recommendations for scaling up and securing WOPs funding, which included starting small, fostering ownership, aligning the WOP to institutional policies, linking it with larger investments, maintaining WOP principles and continuing to collect and analyze data on WOP impacts.

Mr. Maarten Blokland, representing the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, presented the Water Financing Facility, a specific initiative proposed by the Dutch Government to channel available domestic finances toward water utilities in need of capital for infrastructure building. The Facility, which would involve the creation of a domestic bond market and equity capital, would provide a bridge between investors and utilities by balancing risks for institutional investors and increasing accessibility to loans by water utilities through

longer repayment periods and reduced interest rates. The proposed mechanism address the so-called “financial gap” for addressing SDG 6 by looking beyond conventional donor financing. GWOPA’s role in relation to this facility could consist of using its political strength and enabling partnerships to enhance operators to become bankable (through WOPs).

Mr. Abderrahmane El-Medkouri, Senior Cooperation Specialist at the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) introduced the Bank’s “Reverse Linkage” mechanism as a tool for fostering South-South cooperation. This innovative concept aims at mobilizing the Bank’s member countries as primary agents in the provision of expertise, knowledge and technology. The approach requires a tripartite financial contribution by the stakeholders (the Bank, the provider, and the recipient country). This concept emerged from an evaluation showing a huge untapped opportunity to mobilize a pool of experts at regional level. The mechanism requires the local projects to be aligned with local needs and political agenda, to be inclusive, to take win-win approach, and to foster ownership. Peer-to-peer arrangements are also central to the Reverse Linkage concept. Mr. El-Medkouri illustrated the Reverse Linkage approach in practice with the example of a WOP between ONEE of Morocco and ONEA of Burkina Faso focused on water quality. He concluded by announcing with pleasure that this WOP was about to be scaled up.

Indonesian utilities have been involved in many WOPs, both internationally and domestically, recounted Ms. Meike Kencanawulan, Deputy Director of Water Supply System at Indonesia’s Ministry of Works. Indonesia applies a ranking system for operators, categorizing them as healthy, less healthy or poor, based on a set of criteria. Upon this basis, the government encourages WOPs, supporting them by providing incentives for mentors and support for mentees. WOPs in Indonesia have carried various financial benefits for water utilities such as increasing revenues while decreasing costs, and are as such aligned with the national no-revenue water reduction roadmap. All range of financing schemes exist for WOPs, combining internal cash from operators,

government budget, and private funds. Loans and grants from the Ministry can be provided on an input or output-basis. WOPs, she concluded, have good potential to develop in Indonesia, thanks to their alignment with government programs and their ability to utilize both local and international funding and cooperation.

Mr. Stephen Gaull presented on behalf of both the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), where he serves as Senior Operations Advisor, and the US Water partnership. The MCC provides assistance either through compacts, or threshold programs. In 2014 the compact investments cumulate US\$ 10 billion, with 2/3 directed to Africa with a focus on infrastructure investments in basic service sectors. Citing the low number of utilities in Africa that currently recover operation and maintenance costs (30%), he described how negative political interference coupled with a weak regulatory environment create challenges for utilities in accessing finance. He explained that MCC’s comprehensive approach aims to address sector reforms, finance (cost-recovery combined with pro-poor tariffs), operational strengthening and better governance. He illustrated the approach with cases from Lusaka Water in Zambia and a WOP between Belize Water and Contra Costa, supported by GWOPA and followed up with PPIAF funds. Mr. Gaull concluded by recommending that WOPs support utilities in pursuing creditworthiness to create the conditions for utilities to raise their own capital.

Mr. Tevita Mau, Manager of the Strategic Planning Unit at the Water Authority of Fiji, presented on the Water Operators’ Partnership his utility undertook with Australian operator, Hunter Water. Theme by theme, he described the objectives, results and financial benefits obtained through the implementation of the WOP. Through the WOP, the utility took on a new approach to dealing with NRW using flow monitoring, resulting in a NRW reduction of 5%, reducing substantially the areas receiving intermittent supply and leading to savings estimated at about 427 000 US\$. New hydraulic modelling approaches and in-house capacity were introduced that ‘revolutionized’ the way

the national utility works. Capital expenditure increased thanks to better quality application and experience sharing on this issue. The savings implied by using WOPs instead of consultants for the support was estimated at 190 000 US\$. The partnership attributes its success to factors such as commitment, particularly at management level which had an influence throughout the organization, the effective use of long-distance communication technology to keep in touch between visits, and inclusiveness and participation by a wide range of staff members in all stages of the WOP.

Mr. Christophe Le Jallé (PS-Eau) presented on cooperation activities that are funded and led by local governments. The definition and application of decentralized cooperation differs from one European country to the next. In France, there are about 36 000 cities and towns, around 5000 of which engage in such cooperation. The French Oudin-Santini law enables these local structures (river basins organization, water operators, and cities' local authorities) to mobilize a substantial amount of money to apply to water – and sanitation-related international cooperation initiatives. Most partnerships funded via these mechanisms are very long-term, and involve strong relationships between organizations of the respective municipalities, such as NGOs or groups of experts in the respective local authorities, and tend to be oriented towards rural drinking water supply. There have been an estimated 5 million beneficiaries over 9 years. Despite their potential to be applied to WOPs, so far, very few of these initiatives have mobilized the in-house capacity of water supply professionals of the local authority in France to build the capacity of their professional peers in utilities of the South.

Panelists Ms. Catherine Cathala of the Inter American Development Bank (IDB), Ms. Anne-Laure Ullmann of the French Development Agency (Agence Française de Développement – AFD), and Mr. Emanuele Lobina of the Public Services International Research Unit (PSI) were invited to comment as panelists.

Ms. Cathala talked about the grant-based support that IDB has given to WOPs in Latin America and the Caribbean. Several of the WOPs have been very effective and long-lasting; the Bank's support helped to catalyze them. The IDB would like to see more WOPs with financial contributions by the partners; in-kind, but also in cash. Citing the WOP example of Belize Water Services with Contra Costa, in which a first phase WOP funded by GWOPA led to a loan, she recommended that this kind of case be replicated.

The French Development Agency's Ms. Ullmann considers WOP as an instrument to improve the performance of water operators. From a banker's perspective, WOPs can help to increase the trust of donors. For instance, AFD is planning to provide a loan to ONEA without any guarantee from the government or a financial institution. The WOP has provided reassurance. AFD's financial support ends after infrastructure components, so they struggle to fund WOPs beyond the lifetime of a project, however other sources such as decentralized cooperation or specialized funds such as climate funding, could be used.

Mr. Lobina reacted to the presentations, noting the strong emphasis on bankability, credit-rating, and private participation. He questioned whether such a direction was truly sustainable in the full (social and environmental, in addition to economic) sense of the term. Banks and regulators, he said, are both interested principally in cash flows, while the consumers have other interests. He asked the audience to decide whether the ultimate objective is developing the market or the community. Citing research pointing to a disappointing 30-year track record on private sector participation, he asked why Public-Private Partnerships continue to be promoted. Finally, he stressed the need to strengthen local taxation capacity as a sustainable source of redistributive finance, rather than shrinking the role of the state as has been the recent norm in our countries.

In the discussion that followed, some argued to move 'beyond' ideological debate. Pitting bankability against social considerations is not useful; both are needed. The presentation on the Water Financing Facility talked about blended money mobilized from local market, for instance through the payment of pension by a growing medium class. Institutional investors are looking for steady investments, and blended investments have the advantage of allowing donors to combine their financial support to reach the SDGs. To achieve our common goals, all stakeholders must come together to build adapted, appropriate, innovative financial systems to expand services.

The question of where the billions of dollars of investment needed to meet the SDGs should come from is not simple. Whether from states through raising taxes or issuing bonds, or by mobilizing private, financial and commercial markets, all available types of finance should be considered, with close attention to ensuring that community development remains the ultimate objective.

The moderator, Ms. Rhodante Ahlers, closed by recalling that neither private nor public funding sources are perfect. Money for WOPs and utilities however does exist, and there are a lot of different solutions which can be combined and adapted to institutional, political, environmental, economic and social context. WOPs are one of numerous instruments that can help because of their high potential for leveraging money for utilities and building financial trust. WOPs have a role to play in the achievement of the SDGs.

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## WATER RESOURCES PROTECTION & RESILIENCE

For years urban utilities have been facing the challenge of how to expand services in order to keep up with rapid urbanization. Until recently, the focus of utilities was inwards and very often times limited to issues related to the production and delivery of water. More recently, utilities have become aware of and affected by the limits of exploitable water resources caused by growing demand or polluted resources from uncontrolled waste disposal. These challenges are further aggravated by unpredictable and acute natural hazards linked to climate change.

Due to these risks to water supply, utilities are increasingly concerned about their protection. Many have moved to looking at services 'from source to tap'. This session brought these issues to the table by means of case studies of utilities that put in place water resource protection strategies. Furthermore, the session presented WOPs that focused on knowledge-sharing related to adaptation and resilience in different regions of the world.

Climate change is a relatively new topic within water utilities, said Mr. Pastor Homeres, General Manager of the Leyte Metropolitan Water District of the Philippines. Despite being located in a zone that is highly affected by natural hazards that are exacerbated by climate change, utilities of the region have little awareness of their likely impacts and there is a shortage of data to support local assessments. Through its recent WOP with the Florida Climate Action, six mentee utilities from the Philippines had the opportunity to put into practice the Climate Change Adaptation tool developed by Waterlinks and GWOPA with the Cities and Climate Change Initiative of UN-Habitat. Through this WOP, the six mentee utilities developed for the first time a vulnerability assessment that has increased internal awareness and begun changing daily operations and investments. In a related WOP, Mr. Maudsley from Yarra Valley Water, Australia presented on the implementation of the tool in Sri Lanka, explaining that using this tool through

WOPs, utilities can benefit from the experience of others and avoid reinventing the wheel'. Melbourne, he reported, refined and reiterated its adaptation plans over a 30 year period, whereas Sri Lanka was able to take a shortcut and build a plan based on a refined framework.

Mr. Akram Nassar from Water Supply and Sewage Authority of Bethlehem and Mr. Bensaid from ONEE (Morocco) presented their WOP in Palestine which, despite the very unique circumstances in which it developed, allowed the two utilities to take stock of the importance of 'holistic operations'. Mr. Nassar said that many of the water quantity and quality challenges Palestine was facing related to climate change, infrastructure, operational/technical daily work, and management decisions.

In order to cope with changes information and decision making tools are needed. Ms. Josje Spierings from Akvo presented Akvo FLOW-survey, a service supported on mobile phones with cloud-based data accessible from anywhere. The system allowed the Island of Vanuatu to coordinate relief support after the last hurricane event. Ms. Gomez (Waterlinks), presented in more detail the climate change vulnerability assessment tool developed for water utilities in coastal and small island states. The tool helps collect knowledge from other sectors and make it available to water utilities, where the topic is still largely unexplored. Mr. Ramon Creus, from Aguas de Barcelona (Agbar), presented how the implementation of new smart technology has allowed Agbar to reduce water consumption in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona by providing more accurate data to prevent extreme events such as the drought experienced in 2007/2008.

A presentation from Mr. Benito Dumary, Director from Direction National de l'Eau Potable et de l'Assainissement (DINEPA) from Haiti, raised interesting questions around positioning management to be more adaptive, and what strategies to use in setting priorities within a utility following a major natural disaster like the earthquake that struck Haiti in 2010.

Participants discussed how climate change requires adaptive management based on flexible processes and structures. Utilities need more data to help them anticipate the range of possible impacts of a changed hydrological regime. However, even with good data, utilities cannot know exactly what they have to adjust to, so structures need to be reconceived from a resiliency perspective, and designed to allow for quick recovery. A systems-based approach that considers the role and impact of water within the whole urban system should be applied when facing complex problems such as climate change.

Building resiliency can draw on existing tools such as Water Safety Plans as they help in assessing the entire chain of water production, however new tools and new approaches will also be required. Most importantly, more data is required to make informed decisions within the utility. Tools are increasingly available but not widely used to address climate change related issues in utilities. The session concluded that while climate change is now a widely-accepted phenomena, water utilities still struggle to address it in their strategies.

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*“Before the WOP we used to build always higher and higher levies. We have learned now that what we need are ‘flexible’ structures that can cope with changes.”*

– Mr. Homeres, Leyte Metro Water District

*“The current mandate and mindset in water operators does not match a ‘green thinking’ but rather in infrastructural solutions.”*

– Daniel Moss, IDB

*“When discussing climate change at this point, we should be discussing adaptation and adaptation measures are not incredibly expensive.”*

– Yolanda Gomez, Waterlinks

*“Access to information can facilitate adaptation. Without data there is no coordination possible.”*

– Josje Spierings, Akvo

## LOCAL AUTHORITIES, OPERATORS & WOPS

Mr. Mohamad Boussraoui, Programme Officer at United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) opened the session with the observation that while access to water and sanitation has progressed in recent years, inequalities continue to grow, particularly in urban areas. Local authorities are on the front lines of this challenge, however a World Health Organization study showed that in over 67 countries worldwide, they don't have the human or financial means to act sufficiently. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide an important opportunity for Local Authorities to take further action on sustainable urban water management and service delivery, building on commitments made in the [Istanbul Water Consensus](#) which was launched in the Turkish city during the World Water Forum in 2009, and has since been signed by over 1000 local governments.

The Coordinator from ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, Ms. Barbara Anton, shared the [Water Action for Sustainable Cities and Regions Daegu-Gyeongbuk](#) adopted by Local Authorities at the 7th World Water Forum in April 2014. It lays out two sets of strategies to support local action to achieve the water-related goals of SDGs; the first targeting local, the second national, governments. While national governments are called upon to create an enabling environment for water action by local authorities, Ms. Anton emphasized that local authorities can be proactive in building local operators' capacity, without waiting for national governments to support them.

Fons Català is an association of municipalities encompassing 80% of the Catalan population. Mr. Josep Sagarra explained how this organization manages multi-actor governance (local authorities, technical cooperation, water operators and civil society) in the promotion of decentralised international cooperation. Fons Català applies 0.7% of its resources to international cooperation in Latin America and Palestine. As the association embraces water

as a public resource and a fundamental right, they support municipalities abroad in ensuring universal access to water to their communities, whether services are provided by public or private actors. Fons Català applies its values and experience to support the capacity building of local leaders, which it believes to be an essential ingredient in sound local water service provision.

Mr. Bernard Michaux, representing the public water company, Compagnie Intercommunale Liégeoise des Eaux (CILE), from Belgium's Wallonia region, told the story of CILE's collaboration with Societe Wallonaise des Eaux (SWDE), the other major public service provider in the primarily French-speaking part of Belgium. Together the two companies cover 85% of the Wallonia population. The population benefits from quality public water services and optimized investments achieved through collaboration between the two companies. The constituent local authorities made an active decision to support cooperation between CILE and SWDE in order to meet production capacity and quality challenges, such as new standards imposed by the EU Water Framework Directive. The win-win partnership contributes to strengthening the public model and keeping water affordable and equitable at the regional scale.

As a municipal utility in Ecuador, the Empresa pública municipal de telecomunicaciones, agua potable, alcantarillado y saneamiento de Cuenca (ETAPA) plays an important role in realizing the Ecuadorian constitutional recognition of the Human Right to Water and the Rights of Nature. Mr Vicente Gonzalez, Supervisor at ETAPA shared their strategy to achieve universal access, which involves integrated water resources management, public participation and knowledge transfer. Research and innovation in cooperation with universities is also a central axis of the strategy. Innovation needs to be systematically shared and transferred through training, conferences and interdisciplinary networks.

Since 2014, the German City of Freiburg and the rural areas of Wiwilí in Nicaragua have been partnering to improve water supply through small drinking water installations run by community-owned drinking water and sanitation committees (CAPS) and to establish future plans for wastewater and water protection. Mr. Jurgen Bolder, representing city Freiburg, told participants how the local authority has taken a proactive role in fostering and implementing this unique WOP, which is a recent component of a long-standing partnership between the German and Nicaraguan city councils dating back to the early 80s. The Steering Committee is comprised of the City of Freiburg, Wiwilí City and its water operator, as well as the local drinking water and sanitation committees, which are at the heart of the project.

Mr. Alejandro Pena Paredes, Technician from the City Council (Diputación) of Badajoz presented on behalf of PROMEDIO, an Inter-municipal structure on environmental management in Spain's Extremadura region. The Extremadura population is scattered, with small-scale public water utilities serving communities between 2,000 and 20,000 inhabitants, and private firms operating in the more populated areas. PROMEDIO facilitates inter-municipal cooperation between the region's small public providers to tackle issues such as financial and technical weakness, and infrastructure renewal. PROMEDIO has begun extending its partnership experience beyond the territory and, with funding from FELCODE (the inter-municipal development cooperation in Extremadura region), has engaged in a WOP in Bolivia where it is supporting the establishment of a similar kind of structure that would support small service providers to pool their experience, resources and expertise for mutual benefit.

CONGIAC unites public water utilities in Catalonia to defend public water management. Mr. Albert Testart, Manager, explained that the association emerged 15 years ago in a region in which 84% of towns have private water concessions. One of the association's principle activities is to allow utilities to come

together to benefit from economies of scale in the purchase of such common inputs like electricity, the procurement cooperation in tenders, in capacity building activities and the harmonization of standards and procedures. To facilitate this, CONGIAC created an inter-municipal corporation, GIAC.S.A. CONGIAC continues playing a role to foster synergies and knowledge exchange among its members, with the objective of reinvesting profits into further social improvements.

After the presentations, panelists were invited to reflect and discuss how local authorities, operators, associations and citizens work together to upscale partnerships in creative and innovative ways. Recalling discussion from the morning's plenary session on New Roles for operators in the urban era, session moderator Ms. Satoko Kishimoto, Transnational Institute (TNI), stated that local governments must work with water operators in an integrated manner to implement social and environmental policies to achieve SDGs. Mr. Eloi Badia, a member of Barcelona's newly formed City Council explained that it is very difficult to have such coherence in Barcelona with a private concession. Ten to fifteen percent of the Barcelona population have difficulty paying their water bills, at the same time that 50% of the water charge in Barcelona is unrelated to water production costs. He explained that the private service provider passes on through user fees the cost of repaying the fine it receives from the City for failing to lower water losses as per its contract. The decoupling of public policies and implementation under private management is common worldwide, he said.

EThekwini in South Africa provided a counter example: it works proactively to achieve universal access to basic water supply and sanitation, a constitutional right in South Africa, at no cost to poor families. The utility's strategy ensures a balance between needs of society, sustainability and cost recovery despite the unusual setting which ranges from low-density high income urban settlements to dense informal peri-urban and sparse rural settlements. Mr.

Gouden (eThekwinini) explained that the utility staff went to communities to discuss solutions before approaching consultants and technicians.

Mr. Pireh Otieno, Programme Officer at UN-Habitat shared the organization's rich experience of organizing multi-stakeholder spaces on development policies in Africa countries. He asked the audience: 'are people just consumers or are they citizens?' He argued that people should be at the center of SDGs, meaning that citizen/community engagement in policy formation and implementation is key to its implementation.

Asked by the moderator if WOPs can add value for ICLEI members and serve to support implementation of the Daeugu Action and SDGs, Ms. Anton (ICLEI) confirmed that such partnerships can be effective in helping local governments and operators develop the capacity they need to provide the services they need to provide. She noted that both capacity building and inter-municipal cooperation were key to achieving sustainable cities.

Wrapping up, the moderator observed that the commitment by local governments to the SDGs appears to be strong and growing, and multi-actor platforms are doing important work facilitating WOPs and inter-municipal cooperation that support the translation of these local commitments into real improvements.

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## OPERATORS INTEGRITY & GOVERNANCE

The Integrity and Governance Session was composed of two segments: Part 1 showcased the work of a Water Integrity Network/GIZ Programme to increase Integrity in utilities in Arab Countries and East Africa. The second half dealt with a broader range of utility governance topics.

The first half of the programme was introduced by Mr. Thomas Petermann, Project Manager at GIZ. The Water Integrity programme, supported

by GIZ and Aqua and initiated in the Arab region in 2012, focused on improving integrity within utilities by linking the concept with improved performance. A pool of experts and trainers were then established throughout the region to support utility activities and facilitate interaction among the regional actors. Two years into the initiative, they have identified a number of critical principles to the project, including ownership (including by all levels of staff) and commitment by high level managers, inclusiveness, the development partner involvements, institutional encouragement, the establishment of a regional pool of experts, the facilitation of twinning and knowledge exchange, and the production of a manual based on the experience.

### WATER INTEGRITY EXPERTS

Mr. Mostafa Biad, Regional Adviser for Arab Countries Water Utilities Association (ACWUA) in Morocco, provided further context to the regional initiative. Water and wastewater are services that require a high level of integrity to be performed well, he began, and the initiative tries to link performance with good governance. Loss of staff motivation and reputation are costly to utilities. He estimated that 2/3 of operating costs of many utilities can be saved by corruption avoidance.

At the heart of this approach are transparency, accountability and participation (TAP) principles. The approach is anchored in the observation that addressing integrity is more effective than correcting corruption once installed. The programme used in the Water Integrity program was to have utilities map their integrity risks and drivers, then identify and implement measures that could help them mitigate those risks.

Egypt's Holding Company for Water and Wastewater is a huge public enterprise, consisting of 25 subsidiary companies serving over 90 million people and employing 130,000 staff. Mr. Mohamed Moawad explained that the focus on integrity was consistent with Egypt's strategic current orientation. He described the benefits that the application of water company has for the company: from improving

allocation and distribution of water to improving performance, employee morale and customer satisfaction. Improving customer satisfaction was critical for gaining public support for tariff hikes, necessary in Egypt where connection rates are low. At the same time, addressing well-anchored customer integrity challenges was also a priority for the utility. The Holding company piloted the Water Integrity initiative in three of its subsidiary companies, but plans thereafter to roll out the programme to the rest of its company. In each company, teams were created and trained on integrity during the 'incubation period,' with implementation planned to begin next month.

Mr. Bensaid (ONEE) recounted that in Morocco, the Water Integrity initiative was easy to put into place because the country already had a growing culture of integrity to build on. The Moroccan experience shows that ownership, good governance, and top management support are essential. Recalling how Morocco caught up on 40 years of backlog in service provision in only 10 years thanks to its visionary and supportive leadership, he insisted on the importance of political will in strengthening utility integrity. "If there is political engagement, the rest are details..."

In addition to high level support, putting the risk management strategy into practice requires close engagement with those on the front lines who will put the change into practice. The involvement of regulators can also be important.

Ms. Atika Souissi of the Société Nationale d'Exploitation et de Distribution des Eaux (SONEDE) explained that the Tunisian operate provides water and wastewater services for the entire country. In SONEDE, the Water Integrity initiative began with workshops for all managers, followed by the creation of a pilot committee composed of members from different departments of the utility. After conducting a risk mapping exercise, the process teams developed implementation strategies, which were validated in late 2014 and on which implementation began in early 2015. SONEDE's motivations for getting involved were to introduce risk

management approaches into the company, to improve governance and to sensitize personnel. One of the benefits was identifying opportunities for TAP in action plans. Through the initiative, they developed a mobile application and perfected their website for increased transparency, elaborated a code-of-conduct based on ethical principles for workers, and standardized working methods.

Ms. Duha Altarawneh of Jordan explained that her company, Miyahuna, provides water in the capital city, Amman. Taking on integrity has been a way of motivating change in staff. The utility has been implementing actions to reduce integrity risk in three areas, but they intend to address further risk areas after the programme. She said that in conducting their risk analysis, they made sure to involve the staff at different levels because they have a better understanding of the processes. The team was very excited and motivated to engage in this work although they encountered many challenges. If the top management is not behind the programme, she said, it won't work.

For Aqaba Water in Jordan, the Water Integrity programme was considered an opportunity to extend access, explained Mr. Montaser Abu Abdallah claimed that management motivation is high, as the manager has deemed that integrity must be considered in all procedures. About 14 processes initially selected for attention in the program had to reduce to five: customer services, tender, human resources, projects and compliance. The process, which involved the initial training, meetings, analysis of current practices, identifying activities for implementation and follow up, resulted in progress being made in all themes. The main success story was in the compliance area, where all the outputs from the integrity programme are now embedded in their work procedures, and results are visible in customer feedback and performance measures.

Ms. Lotte Feuerstein from the Water Integrity Network (WIN) presented in detail the Water Integrity Toolbox concept. Its aims to create interest in improving integrity by showing the

potential performance improvements that could be engendered by managing integrity risks. The toolbox is a moderation kit with descriptions of 38 integrity risks and 69 integrity instruments. The process involves an incubation phase during which the concepts are introduced and buy-in is gained among management. Then, a participatory workshop supports operators to look at their own risks and instruments. The implementation phase then begins.

Understanding how corruption affects the business model of the utility was put at the fore. The work began by studying the operators' key resources, channels, processes, costs and revenue structures. From there, a long list of integrity risks can be selected from, or added to, and prioritized in terms of their potential impediment to the business model. The instruments that will most benefit their business model are put forth for action. It is recommended to start with a short list that will lead to quick and tangible results in order to motivate continued work. Many instruments are closely aligned with normal management instruments, with the idea that many existing processes can simply be tweaked to better support integrity. The existing manuals are currently being transformed into an online platform where the tools can continuously be improved, updated and illustrated with examples.

Ms. Janet Cherotich Irongi from Kericho Water and Sanitation Company (KEWASCO) in Kenya talked about her utility's experience using the Water Integrity Toolbox. KEWASCO agreed to carry out this initiative with seven other operators in Kenya. The main risks identified in Kericho were lack of integrity in financial management, interference by external actors and politicians, poor quality of contractors and bribes to avoid disconnection. Five instruments were chosen to address these risks and the in-house team came up with an action plan to be monitored. The teamwork aspect was considered very useful.

The session Chair, Mr. Petermann (GIZ), convened a panel including Mr. Mohamed Ralsan of HCWW in Egypt, Mr. Mohamed

Dahech of SONED, Mr. Ahmed Benaddou of the Ministry of Water in Morocco, and Mr. Festus Kipkoech Ng'eno from KEWASCO. An insight of the panel was that integrity is a significant source of utility income in its own right, by eliminating the huge losses associated with corruption. Where resources are scarce, corruption has an undue burden on users, particularly the poor. Looking at integrity allows utilities to prevent, rather than respond to corruption and it gives employees the responsibility for doing this themselves. At the same time, making integrity improvements has a lot to do with the support of the external environment and top management. Without good leadership, change simply will not happen, according to the panel.

The importance of water users as drivers of integrity improvements was highlighted. Where TAP principles are institutionalized, such as in basin committees created in Morocco, users are more active in demanding integrity. However in some contexts, users' integrity (for example, willingness to bribe) can represent a significant Integrity risk in itself that needs addressing by the utility.

Mainstreaming, it was concluded, was key to sustainability of the improvements. Once integrity risk management instruments have been adopted, they should be institutionalized to ensure it is a part of the process. The process of identifying how integrity impacts on the company's business is a powerful way to create willingness among managers for increased integrity.

**“How do you manage so many employees? By capacity building!”**

– Mamdouh Raslan, HCWW, Egypt

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## GOVERNANCE

Ms. Oriana Romano from the OECD Water Governance Programme, presented the OECD perspective on 'Water Governance in Cities'. The presentation was based on results from an OECD Survey conducted in 48 cities from OECD and BRICS in 2014 to provide evidence on the relationship between governance structures for managing water in selected cities and the performance of water policy outcomes.

According to the survey, aging and obsolete infrastructure was identified as the most challenging driver of urban water governance. Others include extreme events, water pollution, water in the political agenda, and implementation of the Human Right to Water and Sanitation, and competition over water allocation in that order.

Mr. Michele Falcone, General Director of the CAP Holding Group emphasized the need for transparent, participatory and inclusive institutions that are accountable to the very people that development intends to engage. On WOPs, CAP Holding is working hard to build cooperation projects among public water companies. An example was given of the WEBGIS shared between CAP and Brianzacque. CAP is also part of a Water Alliance involving seven Lombardy water operators working together since April 2015.

Mr. Stefano Archdiacano presented the experiences of the Platform for Public Community Partnerships (PAPC), a network of public water operators, community-based water operators, water unions and civil society organizations established in April 2009. PAPC's goal is to foster partnerships between public and community based water operators in Latin America. Examples of public-community water partnerships include WOPs between INTRACUVALLE (union of ACUVALLESA, public water operator of Valle del Cauca, Cali Colombia) and Acueducto Comunitario La Sirena (community based water operator located the

rural area of Valle del Cauca, La Sirena) in Colombia and community-based water operators in Latin America. Latin America there are over 80,000 community-based water operators that provide water to more than 70 million people.

Mr. Meindert van den Berg, Trade Union Officer in International Affairs from Abvakabo presented research findings on employee satisfaction survey undertaken by Abvakabo FNV at the Mwanza Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (MWAUWASA). Abvakabo, a Dutch Union, is a WOP partner of MWAUWASA, the other Dutch partners are Dunea, the Waterlaboratorium and the Hoogheemraadschap van Rijnland. The other Tanzanian partners are Lake Victoria Basin Office and the Trade Union for Government and Health Employees.

The discussion that followed the presentation raised a number of common points. First, that WOPs can serve as a vehicle to improve urban water governance and build transparent, participatory and inclusive institutions that are accountable to the consumers. Within WOPs, public-public water unions and water workers, for example Abvakabo/Dunea, Netherlands and Mwanza Urban Water and Sewerage Authority, Tanzania, participation can strengthen WOPs. Within an expanded notion of WOPs, Public-Community Partnership that link urban and rural/peri-urban areas can help ensure that WOPs are really reaching the poor.

Among the recommendations that were made, the inclusion of other (non-domestic) water users such as agricultural users and regulators in the governance of drinking water and sanitation is important. Because of their critical roles in applying, scaling up or advancing any of the improved practices of WOPs, WOPs should systematically involve institutional, regulatory and stakeholder groups. Finally, WOPs should increasingly become more policy oriented/political.

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## MEASURING PERFORMANCE IN UTILITIES & WOPS: KPIS & BEYOND

### PART I: MEASURING UTILITY PERFORMANCE

This part of the agenda aimed to support understanding of current utility performance measurement initiatives and how they are used to set the stage for WOPs, by helping utilities identify areas needing improvement, or establishing benchmarks for performance improvement.

The key speakers were Mr. Enrique Mendez, the General Manager of AquaRating, Mr. Jarrah Aizubi, Technical Advisor and Project Manager at ACWUA, Mr. Dinesh Mehta (CEPT) and Mr. Marco Schouten of Vitens Evides International (VEI).

Mr. Mendez presented AquaRating, a certified rating agency for the water sector. The initiative, led by the Inter-American Development Bank and operated by International Water Association (IWA), provides a comprehensive, independent assessment for measuring performance, justifying investment, taking tariff action, and gives market information to investors.

When in 2009 the MDGs were reported as having been met in the Arab countries, the Arab ministerial council was skeptical, reported Mr. Aizubi (ACWUA). It set up a separate council to do its own assessment and establish the status of MDG attainment and establishing a regional mechanism for improved monitoring. Six sub-indicators for water and six for sanitation were monitored. These were the MDG Plus Indicators and the process resulted in the MDG Plus Report, which was issued in May 2015.

Because the IWA assessment of utility performance was not applicable in the Indian context, India developed a framework of its own. Mr. Mehta (CEPT) presented the Performance Assessment System (PAS), created to break the cycle of lack of measurement, transparency and performance within the country's utilities. Utilities provide information on around 10 performance

areas via a mobile app, which then produces an Urban Development Index (UDI) Score and is displayed online. For data quality assurance, the program looked at sources of information and built in simple checks. Furthermore, every year, 40 of the 400 cities involved are audited. The framework, funded through a 5-year, 10 Million dollar Gates Foundation Grant, is being expanded to include solid waste and sanitation. The Central Government is very interested in the ranking and the website allows Government to dig into the information. Mr. Mehta (CEPT) gave the following lessons from the project: forget pilots and go straight to scale, keep number of indicators small and allow them to be meaningfully visualized and finally, use ranking as a reward and penalty system. The system is now used to link with grants in the two states they are working in.

Mr. Schouten (VEI) presented on a unique WOP focused on benchmarking in Kenya. Since 1990, Dutch utilities have been engaged in benchmarking and they now share this experience in their partnership with Kenya's Water Services Providers Association (WASPA), Water Service Providers (WSP) and the Water Services Regulatory Board (WASREB). Through this partnership which began in 2012, Kenya's utilities are now doing quarterly benchmarking. The initial set of 9 operators has now grown to 27. The focus is on non-revenue water, cost recovery, service levels and in 2016, they will introduce pro-poor assessment. One of the key lessons is that measuring alone does not accomplish anything; utilities need to share best practice, hence shift from metric benchmarking to process benchmarking. WOPs plays a role here, as Mr. Schouten (VEI) summarized: "If you are to engage in WOPs as a mentor, you need to be critical about yourself – what are you really good at? Is that something you can offer?"

### DISCUSSION

The discussion touched on whether benchmarks should be universal, with the same standards worldwide. While comparison requires standardization, both the selection and weighting

of performance indicators that go into creating universally comparable scores should be recognized as highly subjective.

There was question about whether there is too little or too much data out there for decision making. Some commented that the quantity of data was less important than whether or not it is usefully applied to improving system sustainability.

Session Moderator, Ms. Maria Pascual of UNESCO-IHE concluded the session by noting that there are clearly a range of modalities for measuring utility performance. How utilities use performance assessment to identify their strengths and weaknesses is relevant to WOPs as it sets the starting point for the improvement process. The next question is how to measure the performance of the WOP itself?

## PART II: MEASURING RESULTS IN WOPS

Measuring WOP performance is not as easy as it looks. Many WOPs observers have noted that the benefits of Water Operators' Partnerships can be overlooked when Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) – the standard way of assessing WOPs – are used as the sole measure of their effectiveness. Changes tend to happen progressively and may not be captured by such blunt tools, especially over short time scales. Other issues are attribution and alignment – even measurable performance improvements do not necessarily say anything about WOPs contribution on development goals such as the MDGs and SDGs, the ultimate goal of WOPs. The second part of this session aimed to grapple with these issues by looking at some alternative frameworks for WOP performance measurement.

Key speakers for this session were Mr. Emmanuel Lobina from the Public Services International Research Unit (PSIRU), Mr. Julian Doczi of the Water Policy Programme Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Ms. Susan Spronk, Associate Researcher with the Municipal Services Project and Ms. Maria Pascual, from UNESCO-IHE.

Mr Doczi (ODI) presented on the potential of Outcome mapping to measure WOP results. This participatory method for planning project design, focuses on behavior change and is rooted in the notion that the journey is more important than the destination. He explained that outcome mapping is not a fixed tool, but something that is project specific and adjusted throughout the course of the project. The questions to participants that guide the use of the tool are: What would you expect to see? what would you like to see? and what you would love to see? Outcome mapping offers a way of capturing results that do not show up in KPIs. Such tools that are essential for convincingly demonstrating to donors that WOPs are effective and worthy of funds.

Ms. Spronk (Municipal Services) asked how efficiency priorities have played out in WOPs and whether they are contributing to social objectives. There is growing criticism of the quality of continuous service and so there is need to talk about processes a lot more. WOPs thus far have been doing a lot on the technical elements but they can do a lot more to address inequality. The Municipal Services Project research does projects that support greater access for all.

Mr. Lobina of the (PSIRU) asked fundamental questions about what should really be measured in WOPs if the ultimate goal is making good on the Human Right to Water. Given the current wave of remunicipalization in which municipalities are returning provision to public-run operators, many utilities asking are now asking questions about what 'good performance' could now look like, and how WOPs might help them achieve it.

WOPs practitioners and facilitators are under pressure to show how their partnerships are changing KPIs, however these are not good measures to inform on the progress of the partnership, explained Ms. Pascual (UNESCO-IHE) in introducing a proposal for a new WOPs performance measurement framework. Everyone involved in the WOP may be testifying to changes happening, but if they are not depicted in KPIs, practitioners face a huge challenge in





convincingly formulating and communicating these results to external stakeholders whose confidence in the WOP maybe essential for continued WOP funding or other essential support. Results get reported upon, but unpersuasively, usually in terms of activities as opposed to changes integrated into utilities' way of working. The reporting framework presented by Ms. Pascual consists of identifying changes at different levels, and at different phases of the WOP, for increased traceability and visibility.

In the discussion that followed, skepticism was expressed that donors would accept a monitoring approach that involved revising objectives as you go along. Others suggested that this was nevertheless a reflection of the reality with WOPs, as in most development work: conditions change and require adaptation. Donors are realizing that WOPs take time and could become partners in understanding that learning is slow but an essential resource. Canadian donors, for example, have adopted outcome mapping as a means for measuring results.

Mobilizing political commitment can enable changes that make WOPs more effective and sustainable. Monitoring and communicating on the WOP's progress can help to build this buy-in, and in this respect, pursuing 'quick-wins' to build enthusiasm can be strategic. Outputs should also be looked at as products in themselves, and should not be limited to initially planned outputs.

The point was made that citizens need to be involved in WOPs on issues that affect them. Citizen involvement can help achieve WOP results, for example the involvement of cooperatives in supporting billing and connections in low-income areas. Yet there is need to strike the right balance between inclusivity and efficiency in WOPs; depending on the nature of the WOP, citizen engagement will be more or less meaningful.

Session Moderator, UNESCO-IHE's Ms. Uta When, concluded by recalling that BEWOP (a collaboration between GWOPA and UNESCO-IHE) was working on the development of

tools that could be used in monitoring WOPs outcomes. Such tools will help better track those improvements that happen along the process.

[Download the session presentations](#)

## UTILITIES WORKING TOWARDS MORE EQUITABLE SERVICE PROVISION

The reason we need to act to redress inequities in water services is because they are unjust, but it is also because we can, asserted Ms. Marianne Kjellen from the Water Governance Programme at the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) in her introduction to the session. The disparities produced by the social environment, namely through the different prices paid for the different ways of accessing water services, can be addressed through social change. Using the example of Dar es Salaam, Ms. Kjellen (SIWI) illustrated the range of water access options and price disparities. Documenting inequality is critical, she argued, and needs to look not only at the percentage of households connected, but also on the quantity of water consumed, and the proportion of income spent on water in order to understand how water services are prioritized, and to serve as an input for dialogue with governments, communities, providers and regulators to improve them. Accurate information can guide priorities and resource allocation in urban areas.

Initiatives to address social vulnerability in Barcelona emerged following the intense economic and social crisis of 2007, explained Ms. Nuria Latorre, Strategic Client Director of Aigües de Barcelona (Agbar). The crisis left many water users unemployed and, in extreme cases, unable to pay for water services. They introduced a solidarity fund in 2012, a social tariff that accounts for the financial capacities of families and includes a modified protocol to avoid water cuts with improved communication measures, as well as a municipal program of measures against energy poverty. A key factor in addressing

vulnerability is communicating well about the range of available solutions that they can access when in need.

One approach for utilities to improve their performance is to address gender, through an increased understanding of the customer base and water use patterns, and through a better understanding of the utility's human assets. Ms. Esther de Jong, Deputy Director of the Gender and Water Alliance presented the Gender Scan methodology, a participatory tool that helps examine the utility's policies and procedures for a specific activity with a gender lens. It can be used internally, with a focus on the working environment and its diversity aspects, or externally, to examine the impact of policies and practices on customers and other stakeholders. Possible outcomes include increased gender sensitivity among staff, a broader market base, and ensuring that the utility is up to international standards in terms of gender policies. WOPs could use the Gender Scan tool to share results and experience with another utility.

Some WOPs aim to address inequity directly. Ms. Sara Ahrari a Senior Programme Officer with Simavi of the Netherlands, explained that of the 15 million inhabitants of Dhaka, Bangladesh, 4 million live in low income communities, but only 4% of this population has a legal water connection. In this WOP, the mentee utility, Dhaka Wasa (DWASA) was supported by Vitens Evidens International from the Netherlands to implement integrated and sustainable WASH services in Dhaka's low income areas, among other objectives. Simavi and its Bangladeshi partner, DSK, acted as third parties in this WOP. The role of an NGO in such a challenging context can be in lobbying and advocating to demand enabling policies from the water utility to support the development of affordable and quality services for the community, as well as to act as a mobilizing organism supporting community capacity building.

A small panel was then composed to respond to the presentations. Mr. Leonard Shang-Quartey, Policy Analyst at Ghana's Integrated Social

Development Center (ISODEC) said that the role of civil society organizations (CSO) in WOPs should be fostered. CSOs could help establish a relationship between citizens and the operators at the national level, which could help in ensuring the poor are represented and services are developed to respond to their specific needs.

Mr. Klaas Schwartz of UNESCO-IHE said that MDGs have addressed equity mainly in terms of access to an improved source based on infrastructure, while equity in water services requires an examination of the quantity and quality of water accessed through that infrastructure, and at what price. The level of service to the consumer is not part of the definition. The distinction between the served and unserved obscures certain inequities, as the served do not all have the same level of service, and the unserved have different capacities to access water. The development of the water utility's infrastructure is also influenced by politics; hence there is a need to engage politicians in addressing equitable service provision. In addition to the politics at the national, regional levels, there is also the 'everyday' politics of water operators deciding where the water is going to flow, etc., which also need to be addressed.

Ms. Amanda Robertson of USAID wrapped up observing that despite progress in access, the poor continue to pay more for water. Reducing inequity is a political issue, but it is also a technical one, and utilities can adopt approaches (including ones obtained through WOPs) that can support social sustainability and increase fairness in service provision. The involvement of NGOs and CSOs in WOPs can support dialogue and point to solutions to increasing equity.

Recommendations that came out of this session included a call to expand the definition of inequities to account for quality of service, improve outreach to poorest customers and address 'everyday' politics of water operators' decisions.

“‘Pro-poor services’ doesn’t necessarily mean equitable services.”

– Session participant

“Water governance is about politics, but some things can be addressed on a technical level, and it is important to know where to separate the two, and where to engage the political side.”

– Session participant

[Download the session presentations](#)

## BEYOND DRINKING WATER: HOW WOPS CAN HELP UTILITIES CONTRIBUTE TO IUWM

The traditional 19th century ‘linear system’ approach to water provision and wastewater management has not been successful in providing adequate services to the populations in most developing countries. The current water crisis presents an opportunity to develop a new, integrated approach to water and wastewater management, especially in developing countries.

The session moderator, Mr. François Brikké, Senior Network Officer, Global Water Partnership (GWP), opened the session by recalling the many solutions had been advanced in recent decades as the silver bullet for achieving sustainability in urban water. Finally there seems to be an emerging understanding that the issues are connected and the responses need to be integrated to work. He called on the speakers to inspire the audience with their examples of what was possible and to build responses to the growing demand by cities for integrated water management solutions.

Mr. Kala Vairavamoorthy, Practice Leader for Applied Research and Knowledge Transfer of the Integrated Water Management Institute

(IWMI) provided a framing keynote address called for a major perspective change in how we think about the productive uses of water. Today, cities need to be asking how to match the quantity and quality of water to its intended use, while looking at the entire water cycle from a systems perspective in which all water is good water and resource (nutrients, energy) recovery is maximized. Decentralized, fit-for-purpose water treatment facilities can be shown through modeling to be more cost-effective than the expansion of centralized systems in growing cities. Smart networks that build sensors into the body of pipes to help identify early deterioration and bursts, reduce friction and even heal damaged pipes will contribute to reducing the enormous wastage that occurs through losses. However the diffusion of such innovation takes time. Diverse stakeholders platforms that facilitate collaboration, coordination and cooperation between institutions, help identify co-benefits and hasten the pace of adoption are critical.

Windhoek, Namibia has always been a water-stressed city, recounted Mr. Pierre van Rensburg, Strategic Executive for Infrastructure Water and Technical Services, at the City of Windhoek. It developed its first potable water reuse plant in 1968, and has upgraded it four times since then. Its strategy to stretch the city’s water supply is based on two approaches: demand management and water reuse. Demand management is addressed through the tariff structure and through engagement with the 50 highest consumers of the city to help them reduce their water consumption. Reuse activities include the use of tertiary-treated wastewater for irrigation which is sold at a lower price than potable water as an incentive while still being regulated through quotas, and direct potable reuse plant and artificial aquifer recharge.

The Semizentral Resource Recovery Centre in Qingdao, China, is the first real case implementation of this developed through German-Chinese collaboration, led by the Damstadt Technical University. Ms. Susanne Bieker, from Damstadt’s IWAR Institute showed how the speed of population growth in Asian

cities combined with climate change and limited water and energy resources, has created the need for resource-efficient, flexible structures to meet the demand where it develops. Semizentral is a modular integrated treatment system at the district-scale that combines greywater reuse for non-potable water service and blackwater irrigation using membrane bio-reactor (MBR) treatment, nutrient recovery from food waste for biogas and electricity production to run the plant, and heat recovery from greywater (from showers and washing machines).

Mr. Javier Niete Alegre from Barcelona Cicle de Agau S.A. (BCASA) presented on Barcelona's efforts to influence urban water actors by promoting the use of alternative water sources in Barcelona. In particular, BCASA, working together with Area Metropolitana de Barcelona (AMB), is working towards irrigating green spaces with lower quality water, advancing policies to improve urban water drainage, and supporting integrated coastal management, through cooperation between all service providers of the beaches' public spaces.

The sustainable water and management strategies to meet Durban, South Africa's growing water demands and the need for increased wastewater treatment capacity were presented by Mr. Speedy Moodliar, Senior Manager of Water and Sanitation Planning for E-thikwini. The main strategies included: (i) a successful partnership with Veolia on the operation of the Durban Water Recycling (DWR) plant, which produces near-potable quality water from domestic sewage for sale to partners for industrial reuse; (ii) a demonstration plant combining desalination and wastewater reuse, with a 40% reduction in energy consumption as compared to regular desalination; (iii) rainwater harvesting from households' roofs; (iv) the operational optimization of the water supply network, in addition to addressing non-revenue water, to name only a few.

## PANEL DISCUSSION

Mr. Andre Dzikus, the Coordinator of UN-Habitat's Urban Basic Services Branch said that while a lot of improvement is being seen in water management, urban planning is still outdated and needs to become equally innovative. Nineteenth-century planning modalities and zoning practices are still being used, causing people to commute long distances from their living areas to their work. A new urban paradigm for the 21st century is needed in which services are available at proximity. The Habitat III Conference in Quito Ecuador in 2016 presents an opportunity to revisit the legal, financial and design foundations of our cities in order to better anticipate growth and handle unforeseen shocks.

Mr. Kees Leenderste, the Deputy Director of Cap-Net recalled the importance of capacity development in better, more integrated urban planning. Planning instruments need to be adaptable and flexible, and water utilities can contribute to capacitating urban planners.

Mr. Kala Vairavamoorthy (IWMI) told the audience that we need to change the way in which urban professionals are educated, to reflect a new perspective on water management. GWOPA can play a role in supporting operators to understand the transitional process to gradually move from the current system to an integrated, decentralized, full water-cycle management system.

Increased coordination between water and wastewater professionals at local level is key, said Ms. Anton (ICLEI). Cities need to produce local visions for water, through increased internal coordination between the main water institutions. Professionals from Windhoek, Barcelona, and other cities with inspirational water management stories need to spread the message that this approach can be possible and successful under very diverse circumstances.

**"Somebody's waste is somebody else's feedstock."**

– Session participant

## CONGRESS CLOSING PLENARY

Mr. André Dzikus from UN-Habitat addressed the audience on behalf of Mr. Joan Clos, Executive Director of UN-Habitat. To address the challenge of providing water and sanitation to a fast-growing urban population, “we have to sit together and plan for our cities of the future”. Cities, he recalled, need to make use of three key levers: 1) urban planning, 2) urban legislation, and 3) urban economy. He recalled that the Sustainable Development agenda, to be adopted in the form of the SDG framework New York the following week, includes both SDG goal 11 to “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” and of SDG goal 6 to “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.” Water operators will play an important role in achieving the SDGs, and WOPs signify an important mechanism to support them. This 3rd Global WOPs Congress will inform the work on Habitat III policy unit. He encouraged to continue building on the success of WOPs and supporting the new urban development agenda.

Keynote Speaker, Mr. Leo Heller, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation (HRtWS), introduced the legal basis for the human rights to water and sanitation, starting with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, through various international conventions, until the UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions including the normative content of the Human Right to Water in 2010. What constitutes a rights-based approach? The first is equality and non-discrimination, followed by participation and inclusion, and third, accountability. “The human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses”. In regards to sanitation: “The human right to sanitation entitles everyone, without discrimination, to physical and affordable access to sanitation, in all spheres of life, which is safe, hygienic, secure, socially and culturally acceptable.”

Mr. Heller recalled that 663 million people (9%) of the population worldwide still lack access to an improved source of drinking water. What’s more, the indicators on quality, quantity, continuity, affordability, gender issues, and access to water in schools and health facilities are missing from the MDG account. On sanitation, 2.4 billion people (32%) of the global population still lack improved sanitation, based on an MDG monitoring framework with similar deficiencies to those of water. The HRtWS requires us to choose our approach: should we focus on achieving financial sustainability in delivering safe drinking water or prioritize delivery of services to the poor? We mustn’t forget financial sustainability, Mr. Heller said, however it can be addressed without leaving the poorest people behind.

Of the 17 goals and the 79 targets in the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework, Mr. Heller indicated that many are human-rights oriented. He praises the SDG “Transforming Our World” document in which the HRtWS is explicitly formulated. Still, indicators looking at factors such as inequality, hygiene, regional differences, social groups, affordability, quality and safety, will need to be articulated. Mr. Heller indicates that the goal is to include the poor first, and this will positively influence all other SDG goals.

**“We mustn’t forget financial sustainability, however it can be addressed without leaving the poorest people behind.”**

– Leo Heller, UN Special Rapporteur HRtWS

Lastly, Mr. Heller explained his role as the UN Special Rapporteur on HRtWS, a position created in 2008 by the Human Rights Council. The HRtWS special rapporteur position is independent and unpaid, and includes a series of duties which support affordability and support mechanisms for ensuring affordability in practice.

Mr. Heller reports to the General Assembly on types of water and sanitation services and management models.

Mr. Bert Diphooorn, former Director of Urban Basic Services within UN-Habitat and former Chair of the GWOPA Steering Committee, presented an overview of Congress outcomes. Since the first Global WOPs Congress in Cape Town in 2011 where 150 people from 40 countries participated, to the 2nd Congress in 2013 with 270 participants from 80 countries, the Congress now has 450 registered participants from 85+ countries. Mr. Diphooorn recalled the Congress programme and offered highlights and key insights from the plenary, thematic and regional sessions.

Congress participants from GWOPA's various membership categories, followed by members from the audience, were invited to present on their personal highlights from the previous days' discussions.

Mr. David Boys from Public Services International and also a member of UNSGAB, said that many of the participants in the room should be thanked for the strong global advocacy they have provided in bringing GWOPA to its current situation. We have succeeded in 'putting water where it belongs,' he said. Mr. Boys lauded the focus on local and regional government, however reacting to a recommendation made earlier to 'get politics' out of water, he responded "What we really want is to get rid of peddling, corruption, nepotism and patronage in the water sector. But water operators do not exist for themselves. They exist to integrate the political will of the citizens, for the public, the environment, the community."

For Mr. Samir Bensaid of Morocco's national utility, ONEE, the key issues discussed also concern political responsibility. He said that operators and their governments need to reflect together on different solutions to help public service providers. This reflection can help increase performance and understand what management models would help reach the objectives. This would address the roles of

different actors: universities, academics, and politicians. This dialogue also needs to discuss technological solutions that can be adapted in the current global context.

Mr. Mamadou D'ia from Aquafed highlighted the need for good governance, integrity and transparency in the management of water. He said that it is not about public vs. private operators; each have their place. Rather we need to focus on quality and affordability, which he considered the most important points to achieve in the SDGs. It is essential, he argued, that civil society, the authorities, the operators, and all actors (public and private) reach common goals, and address the issue of financing together.

Mr. Dwiki Riantara from the Indonesia Water Association, Permapsi, shared his view that WOPs should be taken up at a massive scale to enable peer-supported learning. He proposed more discussion about the role of WOPs facilitation, and challenged the UNESCO-IHE and GWOPA to focus on this issue within their BEWOP project. He also requested more national WOPs cases to be showcased during the next Congress. He concluded by inviting participants to the next WaterLinks Forum, upcoming in Manila.

Ms. Satoko Kishimoto of the Transnational Institute (TNI) said she was impressed to see the number of new WOPs in Africa, and the level of professionalism and commitment that they demonstrate. However she wanted to encourage this work to go further by recalling the main objective of WOPs: addressing the reality that 43% of the continent's population does not have access to safe water. This needs to be kept at the top of the agenda, and this can be helped by putting citizens at the center of the discussion, rather than in the margins.

Mr. Diphooorn highlighted the sessions on resilience as being the most pertinent, particularly in the face of climate change and the upcoming COP-21 Conference.

Audience members were called upon to offer their own highlights from Congress discussions.

Ms. Rachel Beja from the Philippines' Cagayan de Oro Water District thanked GWOPA for the invitation and highlighted the topics of leadership and governance as most important to her. She looks forward to policy action recommendations and how to review government's frameworks to involve WOPs.

Additional comments from the floor drew attention to the matter of fighting corruption through integrity, and the benefits for utilities of addressing corruption. More focus should be put on how WOPs support increasing connections to low-income areas.

Mr. Cyprian Gibson from the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association would like to see more continuity of WOPs, and specially the multi-stakeholder WOPs. In the Caribbean, he said, they want to foster inter – and intra-utility WOPs. He would like a simple formula to share the use of WOPs and the inclusiveness of all stakeholders.

Mr. Milo Fiasconaro from Aqua Public Europea told the audience that the EU Parliament had recently adopted a resolution on the Human Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation, which is an important step forward in ensuring this Right in Europe and worldwide. Highlighting cost as an access barrier, he explained that different EU states are introducing mechanisms to improve affordability of water services. It is crucial, he said, to have low interest rates and low prices for consumers, but there needs to be more discussion of financial sustainability.

Explaining the situation of armed conflict in his community, Mr. Jonathan Velazco Estrada from Guatemala said that the WOP with his mentor had given hope to his utility, and he transmitted his extreme gratitude on behalf of his country. Another speaker emphasized that as water is a social good, priority should be given to the most vulnerable sectors of society.

Returning to the panelists, Mr. Boys (PSI) asked why it was difficult to find WOP mentors when there are approximately 250,000 public water

utilities around the world. The constraint, he explained, is often a legal one that prohibits them from operating domestically and internationally. So a key priority should now be getting the political level to recognize how useful WOPs are. Finally, he urged GWOPA to take a closer look at domestic WOPs.

Mr. Dia (Aquafed) re-emphasized the need to connect stakeholders, and to coordinate action to provide potable water. Public operators have an important role to realize the goals of ending poverty and encouraging equity. We need everybody to engage and help WOPs progress.

Speaking as a member of the Global WOPs Alliance, whose membership, she recalled, is based on allegiance to a set of principles such as solidarity, Ms. Kishimoto (TNI) argued that WOPs should be used to achieve the Human Right to Water and Sanitation, but not to make utilities bankable.

Mr. Rianarata (Perpamsi) agreed with Mr. Boys' (PSI) suggestion that domestic and national WOPs receive more attention and promotion, and said he looked forward to seeing more national WOPs presented at the next Congress.

Mr. Bensaid (ONEE) in his closing reflection commented on how WOPs should now contribute strategically to the new objectives of the SDGs, capitalizing on its strengths with a clear understanding of its specific added value.

Mr. El-Awar (GWOPA) closed the session by thanking the panel and audience members for their reflections and suggestions, and to the GWOPA team for the Congress organizing. He expressed his wish that everyone would continue working together and that these biannual events would continue to serve as a forum to exchange knowledge on WOPs with the main objective of growing peer-led, solidarity-based partnerships and contributing more to the access of water and sanitation services for all.

[Download the session presentations](#)

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY

At the General Assembly, Mr. El-Awar (GWOPA) presented the state of Water Operators' Partnerships and the Global WOPs Alliance. He retraced the history of WOPs, from when the practice was recommended by UNSGAB in its Hashimoto Action plan to UN-Habitat's leading the foundation of the Alliance in 2009 and the establishment of regional platforms. The Alliance, he explained, was comprised primarily of public operators, but also governmental and non-governmental bodies and academia, labour unions, civil society provide sectors and donors. In 2013 GWOPA developed a 5-year strategy which laid out its work along two strategic axes – operational support, and guiding global growth of WOPs. He provided a map of WOPs activity globally, noting that while occurring everywhere, the majority of WOPs are south-south. Regarding WOPs themes, the majority are focused on enhancing operational efficiency. He noted that one of the key messages that he would take out of the Congress was to facilitate more WOPs in support of the SDGs and attainment of Human Right to Water. Mr. El-Awar finished by highlighting GWOPA's current priority challenges: First, GWOPA still need to remove finance as an obstacle to WOPs practice. Large-scale adoption of WOPs by donors, financiers and international finance institutions as a very effective approach for capacity development still needs to come. Second, more guidance is required on effective WOPs, quality assurance, and the direction of WOPs making the direct link to the SDGs.

Audience members were then invited to make comments.

Ms. Susan Spronk, Municipal Services Project, congratulated GWOPA on its work to support public operators on technical and managerial issues however pointed out the need to work more on social indicators by organizing regional workshops to exchange knowledge about working in informal settlements, and to initiate WOPs based on transfer of this kind of expertise.

Mr. Mbaruki of Nairobi Water noted the growth of the Alliance since his utility joined in 2011, and encouraged the secretariat to again double its participation for the next Congress in 2017. For him, the value of the meeting was in bringing together operators with donors, and facilitating the transfer of expertise. In this respect, he requested providing a more dedicated opportunity during the Congresses for networking and bilateral meetings.

Mr. Bert Diphorn (formerly of UN-Habitat) commented that the European Parliament's endorsement of GWOPA is good news that needs to be seized as an opportunity to introduce legislation at country level for decentralized WOP funding (i.e. 1% laws). Another speaker called for working to remove legal impediments to partners engaging in solidarity initiatives internationally.

A number of comments were made from the floor. A request was made for Arabic translation for the next Congress, given the strong participation by members of Arab countries. Mr. David Onyango from KIWASCO in Kisumu, Kenya, said that the global-level achievement of the MDGs should not mask the failure of sub-Saharan Africa to adequately extend access to water and sanitation to its people. Another speaker echoed this comment by calling for WOPs to make more effort to measure their impact on access.

A speaker from Saint Lucia said that having been a WOP practitioner for several years, it was a pleasure to find himself among a much larger community at this Congress. A representative from the Ministry of Public Works in Indonesia, said that governments are very important to WOPs but under-represented at the Congress. She requested GWOPA to gather more stories about government involvement that could be shared with other countries for inspiration. Another speaker noted that there was a lot of work to accomplish in their utility back home, and that this Congress served to motivate them to take it on.

In wrapping up, Mr. El-Awar thanked everyone for their comments. As GWOPA is a global platform of exchange, it is very valuable, he said, to hear the perspectives of people coming from the Pacific, Africa, Asia, and elsewhere. This confirms that this is truly a growing global movement.

Ms. Perkins of the GWOPA secretariat then presented on the Steering Committee Election Process, reviewing the rules that had been recently updated and circulated prior to the event. The General Assembly was then divided into categories and released to vote. The meeting was reconvened half an hour later and the elected SC members announced.

New members organizations elected during the 2015 General Assembly include:

- Kisumu Water and Sewerage Company Limited (Public Operator – Africa)
- Federacion Nacional de Cooperativas de Servicios Sanitarios Chile Ltda – FESAN (Public Operator – Latin America)
- North Lebanon Water Establishment (Public Operator – Arab Region)

- Contra Costa Water District (Public Operator – North America)
- Integrated Social Development Center (ISODEC) (Civil Society)
- Kenya County Government Workers Union (Labour Union)
- Aigues de Barcelona (Private Sector operator)
- International Water Management Institute (Development Partner)

More about the GWOPA  
International Steering Committee:  
<http://gwopa.org/en/about-gwopa/1845>

All WOPs presented during the  
Congress can be found on our website:  
[www.gwopa.org/WOP-profiles](http://www.gwopa.org/WOP-profiles)

Watch the plenary sessions:  
[www.youtube.com/gwopachannel](http://www.youtube.com/gwopachannel)

# Pre-event: WOPs introduction course for Spanish and Portuguese water operators

## TUESDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2015

GWOPA organized a one-day course to introduce the concepts and learning approaches related to WOPs for Spanish and Portuguese water and sanitation operators seeking to learn more about peer-to-peer support and capacity building between water utilities. Ten operators from Spain and Portugal participated in the course as well as a number of institutions and professional associations linked to the work of water operators in the two countries.

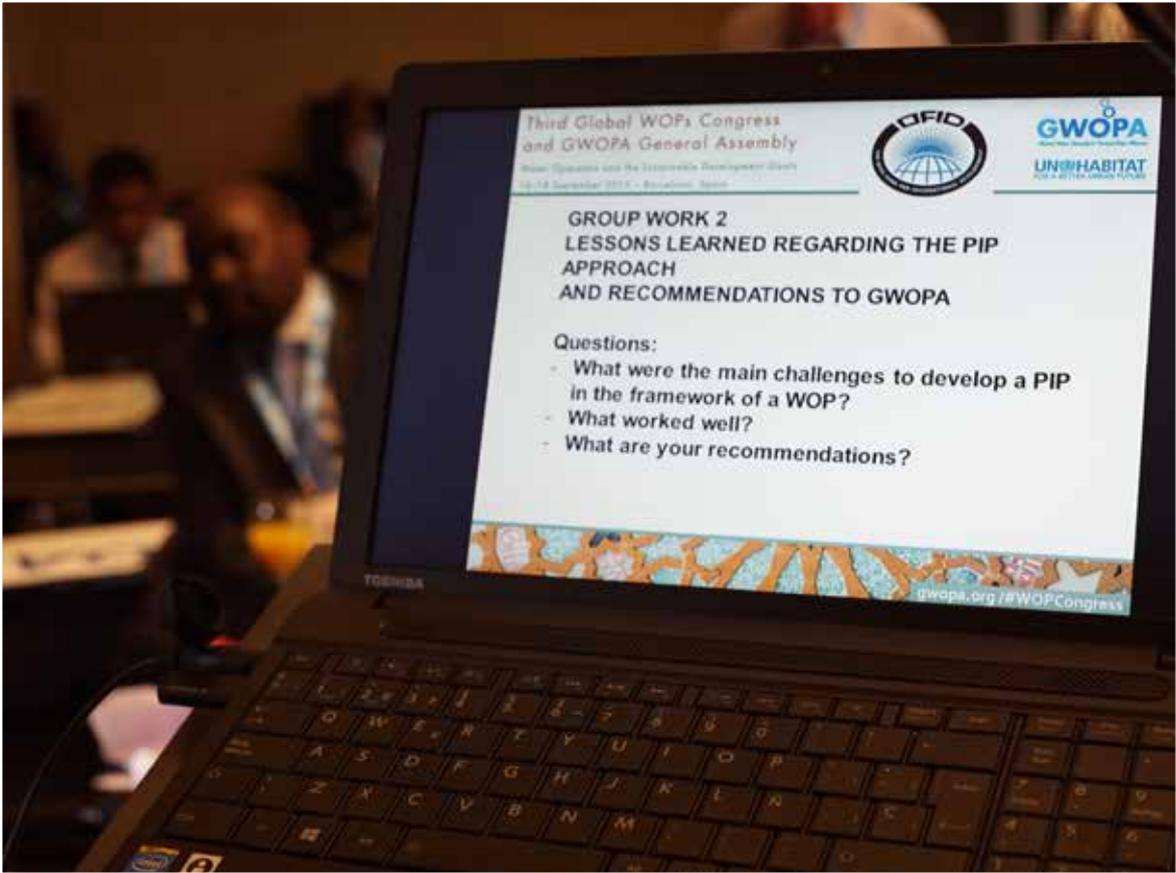
During the workshop, several presentations focused on the added value that WOPs bring to mentor water utilities and on the identification of roles and responsibilities of mentors throughout the implementation of the WOP-cycle. Another set of presentations focused on how to make best use of the existing methodologies and tools to implement a WOP and to introduce different models of WOPs by emphasizing their diversity and adaptability. The last set of presentations focused on the procedures to establish, monitor and document a WOP and the requirements to adhere to the principles of the WOPs approach. The discussions addressed important aspects such as the financial and human resources implications of being involved in a WOP, and

stressed the necessity of a strong institutional and political will both within the utility management and from the local authorities.

Three examples of WOPs between Spanish operators and Asian and Latin American operators were presented by the mentor utilities involved, giving a very practical dimension to this introductory course. The following WOPs were presented: 1) EMASESA (Sevilla) and PDAM Bandung (Indonesia); 2) Aigües del Prat (Prat del Llobregat) and Aguas de Santa Fe (Argentina); and 3) Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza y EMAX, Xela (Guatemala). The purpose of these presentations was to motivate participating utilities in the course to become mentors and to give them the opportunity to ask the representatives directly about their professional and personal experiences as mentors.

Throughout the course, space was left for discussion and interaction between operators and GWOPA, allowing participants to learn more about the different incentives and expectations that lead water operators to engage in international WOPs. The Secretariat of GWOPA committed to follow up on possible cooperation with the individual water operators and institutions that expressed interest in becoming involved in WOPs.





# Pre-event: the closing workshop for the nine African PIP WOPs

## TUESDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2015

As the project to develop medium-term performance improvement plans through WOPs came to an end in September 2015, a closing workshop was organized to draw lessons from the process. The workshop not only gathered all the utilities involved in the PIP WOPs (5 mentors and 9 mentees), but other utilities from Africa involved in WOPs under the umbrella of WOP-Africa, in order to initiate them to the approach and with view to replicate in a near future.

The first part of the workshop was dedicated to the implementation of the short term action plans, which were presented by the practitioners themselves, by mentor-mentee pairs and focused on the main results of the short term action plan implementation. Then the audience was then split into groups to discuss the capacity building approaches which were used and assess their relevance in the various contexts encountered. The medium term PIPs were presented synthetically, and the practitioners were invited to discuss the challenges, success factors and recommendations to GWOPA. The last part of the workshop was dedicated to a round table discussion on the way forward and the stakeholders reflected on the best ways to implement the MT PIPs.

## MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

All utilities, with one exception, delivered the medium term PIP and implemented short term capacity building action plans, however many faced challenges in doing both simultaneously. The preparatory phase (matchmaking, developing and signing cooperation agreements) took longer than expected and left less time for the activities (5 – 10 months).

The assistance of the consultants recruited to facilitate the process and assist in the writing of the medium term PIPs was appreciated. Some operators called for systematic facilitation by a consultant, as operators may not have the time nor the capacity to write the MT PIPs. During the WOPs, mentors proved to have the skills to lead the diagnosis, identify challenges and help mentees to develop action plans both on the short and the medium term to address those challenges.

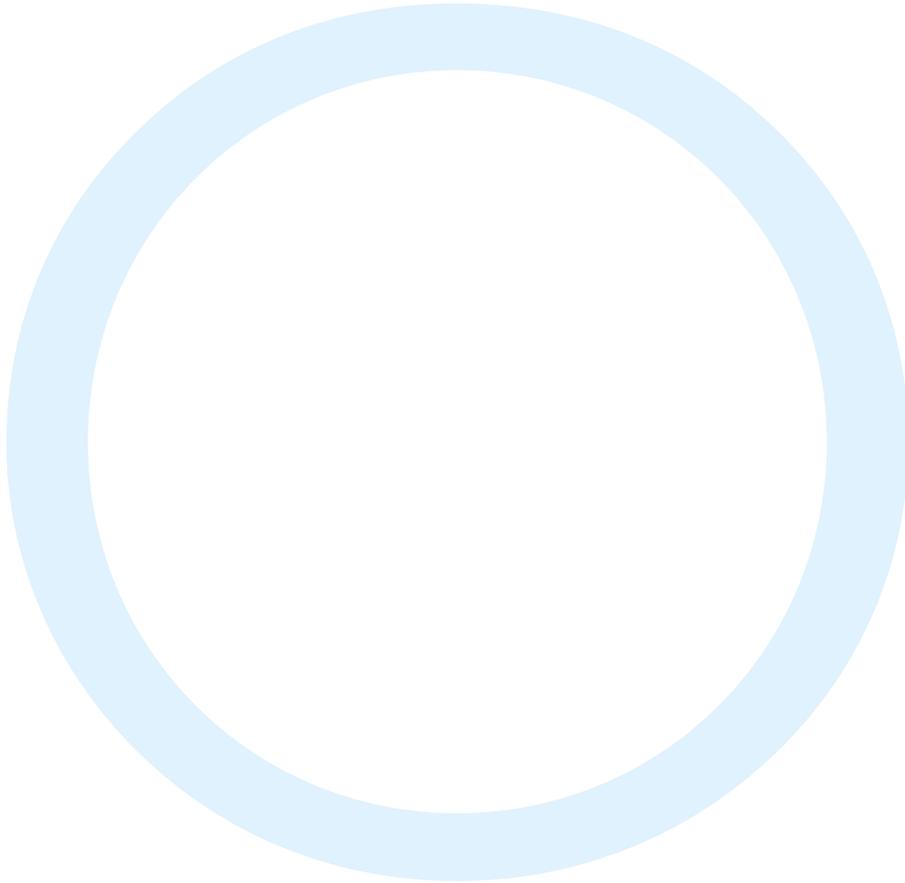
The mentees selected the themes for which they could reach 'low hanging fruit' on the short term. Common themes included: Non-revenue water management (8 mentees), Asset management (6) and Human resources (5) among others. Few utilities selected the following themes: Master planning and business planning (1), Financial management (1), Expanding services to poor households (1), among others.

The discussion on the capacity building mechanisms used during the WOPs revealed that the whole range of knowledge transfer mechanisms were used: classroom trainings, one-to-one mentoring, immersion etc. In some cases, distance exchanges through emails and phone calls were very useful, notably for the development of various policies (HR policies for example) where the mentor could share documentation with the mentee. The good practices exposure visits were also instrumental to allow the mentees to take stock of weaknesses and gain inspirational exposure to development the action plans.

The main task for GWOPA and its partners – including the utilities themselves – has highlighted in the workshop is to mobilize funding for the implementation of the medium term PIPs, and to build on the lessons learned during this pilot initiative in order to replicate it with other utilities from other regions and to improve the PIP manual.



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