



## Annex 2: GWOPA Charter Extracts

Version as of 28 September 2020

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Revised versions of the GWOPA Membership Policy and Charter are pending final approval by the General Assembly (October 2021). Upon approval, the finalised documents will be shared with all members with an option to opt-out.

# Annex 2: GWOPA Charter Extracts

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## 1. Establishment and Organization of GWOPA

- 1.1. The Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance, ("GWOPA"), was established in January 2009 to scale up the practice of Water Operators' Partnerships, ("WOPs"), globally, following the recommendation of the United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Board, ("UNSGAB"), on Water and Sanitation in its 2006 Hashimoto Action Plan.
- 1.2. GWOPA operates as an Alliance open to diverse actors who are willing to contribute to its goals and objectives. GWOPA has been working to strengthen the capacities and performance of water and sanitation operators through not-for-profit peer support partnerships.
- 1.3. GWOPA is hosted by UN-Habitat. As the hosting agency, UN-Habitat manages and administers the activities of GWOPA, including GWOPA's secretariat staff and GWOPA funds in accordance with United Nations rules and regulations. UN-Habitat further supports the GWOPA secretariat to mobilize resources and the international community in pursuit of GWOPA's objectives.
- 1.4. Since its inception, GWOPA was located in Nairobi, Kenya, up to 2013. Currently, the host country and city of the GWOPA secretariat is determined following an international hosting bid. From 2013 to 2019, the GWOPA secretariat was hosted in Barcelona, Spain. From 2020-2025, the GWOPA secretariat is hosted in Bonn, Germany, at the United Nations Campus in Bonn.
- 1.5. GWOPA operates pursuant to and in furtherance of the following United Nations resolutions, declarations, frameworks and response plans:
  - a. Resolution A/RES/64/292 of the United Nations General Assembly, July 2010 which recognizes the human right to water and sanitation,.
  - b. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
  - c. The Paris Agreement;
  - d. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC COP 21)
  - e. The 2016 Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction;
  - f. The 2016 High-Level Panel on Water;
  - g. The New Urban Agenda;
  - h. The United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19; and
  - i. The International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development.

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## 2. Rationale

- 2.1. Currently, worldwide, one in three people do not have access to safe drinking water, two out of five people do not have a basic hand-washing facility with soap and water, and more than 673 million people still practice open defecation. As such, water and sanitation utilities roles are crucial in contributing to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals ("SDGs"), in particular, Goal 6, "ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" and Goal 11, "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable", target 1 "By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums". Their role is also important for the other SDG goals and targets related to water, sanitation and hygiene, ("WASH"), that is, SDG target 1.4 on universal access to basic services, SDG target 3.9, on the disease burden from inadequate WASH and SDG target 4a relating to basic WASH in schools.

- 2.2. Most utilities in developing countries suffer from a wide range of interrelated institutional weaknesses, ranging from inadequate cost recovery compounded by a low customer base and limited physical coverage, to poor and dilapidated physical infrastructure, high levels of unaccounted for water, wastage and lack of skilled personnel and poor service delivery and customer relations, among others.
- 2.3. Fostering collaboration between water supply and sanitation utilities is a vital element in ensuring exchange of experiences between performing and non-performing utilities. The need for creating a mechanism for the collaboration of water utilities was highlighted in the “Hashimoto Action Plan” which was announced by the United Nations Secretary General’s Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (“UNSGAB”) during the 4<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum in Mexico.
- 2.4. One of the recommendations of the Hashimoto Action Plan was the establishment of a global mechanism to promote Water Operators Partnerships, (“WOPs”). The rationale behind the WOPs mechanism is that most of the capacity for improving water and sanitation services lies with the operators themselves. It also builds on the fact that about 90% of all utilities are publicly owned and managed and that even modest improvements in these utilities will go a long way in contributing to the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals and targets for water and sanitation. Thus, the WOPs are to be based on mechanisms to enable operators to systematically communicate amongst themselves and to share their experiences and learn from each other’s’ practices for the benefit of all.
- 2.5. GWOPA brings together a diversity of actors consisting of water and sanitation utilities, utility associations, development finance institutions, research and learning institutions, non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations, national and sub-national governments, etc. It aims to support water and sanitation utilities, to build their capacity, and complement their resources. WOPs are being promoted by a global alliance of partners who believe in this efficient mechanism to strengthen utilities’ capacity, enhance their performance and enable them to provide a better service to more people, in particular, to the poor and the underserved.

### 3. Gwopa’s Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles

#### 3.1. Vision

Water and sanitation service providers, connected in a solidarity-based network, share and help one another to achieve local and global objectives to improve services for all.

#### 3.2. Mission

To work as an effective global alliance to inspire, mobilize and enhance support for WOPs to improve lives.

#### 3.3. Guiding Principles

In keeping with the original text and spirit of UNSGAB’s Hashimoto Action Plan, the Global WOPs Alliance shall be guided by the following principles:

- a. *Inclusiveness*: GWOPA shall be as inclusive as possible and shall reach out to all stakeholders in the water supply and sanitation sector including public and private water operators, non-governmental organizations and representatives of civil society, academia, and private sector players at the global, regional, and national levels;
- b. *Non-profit based partnerships*: Partnerships established between water operators under the WOPs umbrella shall be built on a not-for-profit basis;
- c. *Mutuality of benefit*: Mutuality of benefit shall be promoted whenever possible in implementing “twinning” and other activities of exchange, of experience and expertise among utilities. Such mutuality shall be used as

- an incentive, whenever possible, for utility cooperation on non-profit basis;
- d. *Transparency*: GWOPA shall promote transparency in the water and sanitation sector at the global, regional, and national levels. GWOPA shall conduct its activities in a transparent manner, providing clear and regular updates on activities, and equal opportunities for stakeholders to influence its direction;
  - e. *Learning from the Past and Others*: GWOPA shall draw lessons and learn from past experiences to promote best practices for utility partnerships and capacity building;
  - f. *Supporting WOPs Processes Worldwide*: GWOPA shall seek to strengthen mutual exchange between water operators;
  - g. *Fostering Sustainable Change*: GWOPA shall support efforts to build lasting positive change within water utilities using mechanisms that are increasingly independent of external financial support;
  - h. *Building a Culture of Solidarity*: GWOPA shall embrace and promote a spirit of solidarity and mutual support between water operators and all other water sector actors working towards the goals of GWOPA; and
- 3.4. In the implementation of its mandate and activities and in its relationship with its members and partners, GWOPA will operate in accordance with the United Nations Charter, rules, regulations, principles and policies, including the United Nations policy on “*zero tolerance for sexual exploitation*”. Nothing in its actions or engagements shall be deemed, either expressed or implied a waiver of the United Nations privileges and immunities.
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