

High Level Political Forum 2020
Special Event
Official Launch of the SDG6 Global Acceleration Framework
Thursday 9 July 2020

Your Excellency, President of the General Assembly

UN Secretary-General

Honourable Ministers, fellow UN Principals, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to commit UN-Habitat's support for the SDG6 Global Acceleration Framework. I congratulate UN-Water for leading this important SDG6 framework and UNDESA for steering the Decade of Action.

COVID-19 has shown once again how critical it is to provide access to safe water and sanitation services in order to ensure public health and resilient local economies.

Now, more than ever, is the time to step up our action to make sure that these basic infrastructures and services are available to all and safely and sustainably managed.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As you are aware, urbanization continues to accelerate – often in an unplanned and unmanaged manner. This is putting more and more pressure on cities to provide public services. More than a billion people worldwide live in slums and informal settlements.

Today, I would like to share with you four key messages which are critical as we now embark on the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs by 2030:

- **We must act quickly to prevent the spread of COVID-19 amongst the urban poor in informal settlements and slums.** Most slum residents do not have the facilities at home to wash their hands. For them, physical distancing is not an option. I would like to call upon all of us to work together to address the WASH needs of slum dwellers and other vulnerable populations.
- **We need strong water and sanitation operators now more than ever.** The current crisis has shown the need to come together and move from a “just-in-time” to a “just-in-case” approach. Scalable and well-founded peer-to-peer exchanges through Water Operator Partnerships can fill critical gaps and share solutions in times of need.
- **We need to support cities and communities to tackle the threat of climate change.** Water and sanitation service providers are adjusting to this reality but will need more support to innovate and find new ways to ensure business continuity and quality of service.
- **We need to track progress in a more accurate manner and ensure that data can serve decision-making and guide investments in cities.** Current data on water and sanitation issues masks inequities in urban areas and often does not count slums and informal settlements. We need greater disaggregation and better data management systems at the national and local level, which in-turn can strengthen global estimates.

Ladies and gentlemen,

UN-Habitat's Global Water Operators Partnerships Alliance has for the past 10 years been helping to

strengthen water and sanitation utilities around the world. It has never been more important to support public service providers for the health and well-being of communities. [This partnership has demonstrated that multilateral action is the basis for effective action in our globalised world.](#)

When national and local governments, service providers and other stakeholders work in a coordinated and integrated manner, we can fully leverage the potential that urbanization holds for a better life for all.

I thank you once again and wish you a fruitful meeting.