

Water and Cities: the role of public utilities and how to strengthen them in a rapidly urbanizing world

26 April 2022, 09:00 -10:30 am EST

Online

Organizers: Permanent Missions of Tajikistan and The Netherlands

Partner: GWOPA/UN-Habitat

[Registration link](#)

[Webcast link](#)

Concept note:

Water and sanitation services play a critical role in sustainable urban development. They are crucial to public health, environmental protection, and to eradicating poverty and inequality in human settlements. As urbanization continues to accelerate, cities are under increasing pressure to provide basic public services. There are still more than a billion people worldwide living in slums and informal settlements. These long-standing challenges are further compounded by the COVID 19 pandemic and the climate crisis.

On 28 April, a [High-Level Meeting](#) will be convened by the President of the UN General Assembly to review the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The New Urban Agenda is an accelerator agenda in support of the Sustainable Development Goals and confirms the commitment of member states to “equip public water and sanitation utilities with the capacity to implement sustainable water management systems...through capacity development”. However, to keep up with growing demand and new challenges, utilities must be more agile, inclusive and resilient. Through peer-to-peer partnerships, they can share best practices and thus improve services for all and achieve local and global goals.

In 2023, for the second time ever, the United Nations will convene a Conference on Water. The Mid-term Review of the International Decade for Action - ‘Water for Sustainable Development’, 2018-2028, will be a milestone moment to review progress on the water and sanitation-related targets of the SDG. Developing the institutional capacity of local service providers will be critical to achieving these goals. Scalable models to build this capacity, such as through Water Operators’ Partnerships (WOPs), could be leveraged.

By focusing in on the challenge posed by rapid urbanization, this themes for discussion at this event will be: What can local governments do to plan and respond to the increased demand for water and sanitation services in the context of rapid urbanization? What role does capacity development play in this regard and how can peer-to-peer learning at the city and utility level help find the right solutions and address water challenges?

Agenda:

- Welcome
- Global action on water: preparations for the UN 2023 Water Conference by Mr. Henk Ovink, Special Envoy for International Water Affairs, Kingdom of The Netherlands and Mr. Sulton Rahimzoda, Special Envoy for Water Affairs, Tajikistan.

- Panel discussion and Q&A on utility and stakeholder perspectives to address key water issues and the impacts of WOPs at the local level.
 - Vice Minister, Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities, Egypt (TBC)
 - MD, Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority, Cambodia
 - Ms. Rose Kaggwa, Director Business and Scientific Services, National Water & Sewerage Corporation, Uganda (TBC)
 - Mr. Dimitro Vankovich, CEO of Lvivvodokanal, Lviv, Ukraine
- Closing and way forward by Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations (TBC)

Moderator: Anne Le Strat, Senior Consultant, GWOPA/UN-Habitat

Focal point: Lars Stordal (lars.stordal@un.org), Programme Officer, GWOPA/UN-Habitat

Thematic alignment: Fighting inequalities, climate action, localizing global agendas