

UN-Habitat



WHAT IS UN-HABITAT?

The United Nations Human Settlements

Programme (UN-Habitat) is the United Nations programme for human settlements and sustainable urban development. UN-Habitat is part of UN-Water.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF UN-HABITAT?

UN-Habitat works in over 90 countries to promote transformative change in cities and human settlements through **knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance** and **collaborative action**.

UN-Habitat's [Strategic Plan 2020-2023](#) outlines four mutually reinforcing and integrated goals or “domains of change”:

Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum

Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions

Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment

Effective urban crisis prevention and response

WHAT IS GWOPA?

UN-Habitat established [GWOPA](#) in 2009 as a global network to support peer support capacity

development partnerships between water utilities “Water Operators' Partnerships (WOPs)”. WOPs are Not-for-Profit partnerships between two or more water and/or sanitation operators carried out in the objective of strengthening their capacity to sustainably provide quality services to all.



GWOPA's 490 Members comprised of public water and sanitation utilities operators from all continents, development partners, labour unions, civil society organizations and private operators.

UN-HABITAT AND HUMAN RIGHTS

UN-Habitat recognizes and targets the specific rights of **women, children, youth, older people** and **persons with disability**. To achieve that, all the work carried out by UN-Habitat is underpinned by a [human-rights-based approach](#), which ensures that those furthest behind are targeted first. UN-Habitat's work on water and sanitation is part of its wider contribution to the achievement of the right to an adequate standard of living.

UN-HABITAT AND THE SDGS

UN-HABITAT is responsible

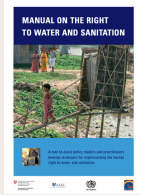
for **target 6.3**, which calls for improving ambient water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and increasing recycling and safe reuse globally.



As the UN focal point for sustainable urbanization and human settlements, UN-Habitat is designated as the custodian agency for 9 of the 15 indicators under **SDG 11**, and supports the monitoring and reporting of 4 indicators in other goals.

PUBLICATIONS

The **Manual on the Right to Water and Sanitation (2008)**, published by UN-Habitat, was designed to assist policy makers and practitioners in implementing the right to water and sanitation. Written in non-legal language, the manual addresses the vital need to clarify how human rights can be practically realized in the water and sanitation sector.



Sanitation: A Human Rights Imperative (2008), copublished by COHRE, UN-HABITAT, WaterAid, and SDC, demonstrates that sanitation is a legal entitlement, defines minimum requirements for sanitation, and provides framework and guidelines for development and reforms to public policies and plans.



Fact Sheet No 35 on the Right to Water and Sanitation, published by UN-Habitat, OHCHR and the WHO, illustrates what the right to water means for specific individuals and groups, elaborates upon State obligations with respect to the right and provides an overview of national, regional and international accountability and monitoring mechanisms.



THE WAY FORWARD

The disparities between access to water and sanitation urban and rural areas is a key barrier to the realization of the human rights to water and sanitation. UN-Habitat's approach to tackling this inequality and promoting local partnerships and resilience through GWOPA will be relevant to my 2022 thematic report on the human rights to water and sanitation in impoverished rural areas.



Pedro Arrojo-Agudo

UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation

*The Special Rapporteur held a meeting with UN-Habitat representatives on 16 February 2021

**PARTNERING WITH ORGANIZATIONS
WORKING ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS TO
SAFE DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION**

**Who's who
in WAS?**