

2nd Global WOP Congress and GWOPA General Assembly

a) What is GWOPA and WOPs?

Global Water Operator's Partnership Alliance (GWOPA) is an alliance of partners working towards the common goal of making Water Operators' Partnerships (WOPs) and is led by UN Human Settlements Programme. UN Human Settlements Programme founded GWOPA in 2009 to scale up quality WOPs worldwide, and its Secretariat is hosted in Barcelona.

WOPs is a peer-support exchange between two or more water or sanitation operators, carried out on a not-for-profit basis with the objective of strengthening capacity, enhancing performance and enabling the water operator to provide a better service to more people, especially the poor. WOPs are promoted by 'Hashimoto Action Plan' of the UNSGAB for a global scale-up of the approach. WOPs have contributed to enhance capacity development of water operators and improve the achievement of MDGs.

The GWOPA Secretariat, hosted by UN Human Settlements Programme, is driven by an international Steering Committee and supported by a global network of partners and members. Goal of GWOPA is to promote and enable impactful WOPs by creating awareness about WOPs, producing and sharing knowledge and tools, and rallying the funds and political backing to enable effective WOPs practice. In addition GWOPA is ultimately contributing to MDGs of halving the proportion of the world's population that remains unserved by adequate water and sanitation services.

b) Why NARBO?

Every two years, GWOPA organized a global forum on WOPs, and the 2nd Global WOPs Congress and GWOPA General Assembly were held from 27 to 29 November 2013 in Barcelona, Spain. Representative of water and wastewater utilities, national and local government officials, donors, civil society, labour unions and knowledge and academic institutions and international networks. The congress is a celebration of UN International Year for Water Cooperation, and main theme was "Fostering Cooperation between Water Operators". Many sessions to discuss important topics related with WOPs and its regions have been conducted. GWOPA Secretariat requested JWA to make a presentation at the sessions on 'Reducing Risks : Water and Sanitation Operators Helping Each Other 'as a representative of NARBO which focused on how to reduce risks in urban water management by Water Operators, and what are the important actions Water Operators should take when a disaster strikes.

c) What we discussed at the session

6 presenters, 6 panelists and 40 participants including Water Operator, specialists and so on with moderator joined the session. The session consisted of presentations of 6 presenters and panel discussions by 6 panelists. Informative and concrete activities were introduced at the presentation sessions. As key words of the presentations, we agreed the importance and necessity of i) information and analysis, ii) involvement of related organizations and iii) Capacity building & Awareness rising at all level.

In panel discussion, panelist stated many useful points to be considered, and by answering to 2 questions such as lessons learnt and what are the most important actions Water Operators

should take when a disaster strikes. We agreed the necessity of i) Preparedness, ii) Political will, iii) Multi crisis approach, and iv) Integrated Urban Water management. As notable comments, 'Events caused by climate change are 'new normal'. Therefore, we have to change our culture' and 'For preparedness, we need to exchange the experiences, and impact of Water Operator could be large' were stated by the panelists.

As summary of the discussions, following recommendations were summarized by the moderator.

- Information is critical. ; To take decisions and actions, accurate information is indispensable.
- Teamwork for preparedness ; Preparedness for disaster is not achieved alone.
- Networking & Interactions with Partners ; Necessity of networking and partnership including stakeholder involvement is necessary for reducing risks.

WOPs are expected to help opportunities of change and can grow more in risk / crisis management.

d) NARBO's Contribution at GWOPs Session

Mr. Tadashige Kawasaki, NARBO Secretariat in JWA joined the session and introduced JWA's risk management by introducing experience of the Great East Japan Earthquake and water quality accident in the basin and importance of the preparedness by regular drill, establishment of network among stakeholders and viewpoint of river basin. In addition, some experiences of NARBO were also shared by the participants. Mr. Kawasaki reported the summary of the session as one of the rapporteurs at the closing session and contributed to summarize the discussions of the congress.



Photo of the closing session

e) Way Forward

NARBO created the member category of 'Associate member' which target is water operators at the 5th NARBO General Meeting in May 2013. GWOP congress was a very good opportunity to collect current information of water operators and understand water operator's view point. In addition, presence of NARBO among WOPs member in the world was increased.

Water operators are one of the important stakeholders in the basin, and RBOs need to consider their viewpoints as a coordinator to improve IWRM in the basin. NARBO secretariat promotes the information about the group of stakeholders continuously. In addition, presence of NARBO among WOPs member in the world was increased, and we'd like to consider how to

make synergies with other networks including GWOPA to improve water security.