

Green Cross backs UNDP-led water and sanitation solutions platform

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Marseille - Green Cross International has joined the new Platform for Global Water Solidarity, a United Nations Development Programme-led ([UNDP](#)) initiative to promote decentralized cooperation in the water and sanitation field.

The platform, launched 14 March 2012 in Marseille, France, at the [World Water Forum](#), aims to bring about solutions to water and sanitation challenges by connecting local-level actors with, for example, municipal water authorities in more developed countries, which can help improve water and sanitation services in developing contexts by contributing 1% of their revenue or budgets.

Adam Koniuszewski, Chief Operating Officer of Green Cross International, joined representatives from 25 institutions including local, regional and national authorities, international and multilateral organizations, water operators, private organizations and other NGOs to sign the Decentralized Solidarity Mechanisms International Charter for the platform, which will aim to address major challenges such as 800 million people having no access to safe water and 2.5 billion lacking adequate sanitation.

"The Platform for Global Water Solidarity can help respond to the drastic crisis facing many developing countries in terms of access to safe water and sanitation," says Mr. Koniuszewski (pictured above). "We at Green Cross recognize that solutions to the water and sanitation crises can be found in the very countries where the problems lie. The issue is to empower civil society and local communities to develop sustainable systems to overcome these challenges."

Green Cross responds to the water and sanitation challenges in many communities in Africa, Latin America and elsewhere through its Smart Water for Green Schools project. Some 40,000 people now have access to sustainable safe water supplies in dozens of remote villages in Ghana and Bolivia through the Green Cross-led installation of water systems, including rainwater harvesting systems, boreholes and water pumps. Green Cross also installs eco-friendly latrines and has developed an education programme to promote hygiene practices and, in turn, reduce the prevalence of water-borne diseases.

The French and Swiss governments support the Global Water Solidarity Platform. Local authorities and water utility companies are expected to play a key role as well.

"Together with an active coalition of stakeholders and concrete cooperation mechanisms, local leaders from across the globe are working in solidarity so everyone can access safe water and sanitation services," said UNDP Deputy Director for External Relations and Advocacy, Romesh Muttukumaru.

Sub-national institutions have found efficient solutions and accumulated best practices to overcome technical, political or financial obstacles and, in turn, ensure the availability, quality, acceptability, affordability, inclusiveness and sustainability of their water and sanitation services. The platform will help share best practices between countries and regions around the world to help overcome the water and sanitation challenges.

Green Cross, which was founded by Soviet Union President and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Mikhail Gorbachev in 1993, is an independent non-profit and nongovernmental organization working to address the inter-connected global challenges of security, poverty eradication and environmental degradation through a combination of advocacy and local projects.