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COP27 PRESS RELEASE: WATER UNITE IMPACT ENDORSED AT COP27 AS TURNKEY SOLUTION TO PROVIDE WATER SECURITY ACROSS AFRICA

Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt – Today, at COP27 in Egypt, the Water Unite Impact investment vehicle has been endorsed as one of the key solutions to tackling water security issues across Africa over the next 10 years.

The 'Catalyzing Finance for Strengthened Water Resilience in African Cities' session, hosted in Sharm El Sheikh, displayed Water Unite Impact amongst other initiatives and collaborations that are working towards building a water-resilient future for Africa's cities.

Water Unite Impact is an investment vehicle developed by non-profit Water Unite, and managed by regulated impact investment manager Wellers Impact, which invests into private sector water SMEs in the global south to transform lives and communities. Donations from international retailers act as Catalytic Capital to drive commercial capital and expertise toward water security solutions.

The initiative was endorsed by Water Unite's founding corporate partner, the Co-op, a major food retailer and wholesaler with over 2,500 stores across the UK, who have backed the model since 2017. Its CEO, Shirine Khoury-Haq, presented the programme as an innovative funding model to leverage investments in the systems needed to keep clean water flowing.

On the same day, the grocery retailer released a new report titled '[Water Security for People and Planet](#)'. The report brings together a series of recommendations for governments, businesses and citizens in particular to address issues of WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), Water Scarcity and Water Pollution.

Over the last 15 years, the Co-op has raised over £20 million to fund water security programmes in their supply chains and beyond, changing the lives of over 2.5 million people. Donations have been raised through micro-levies on the sales of bottled water in Co-op and wholesale partner stores and distributed through non-profit partners, Water Unite and The One Foundation.

Speaking as a panellist on the COP27 session, co-organised by the World Resources Institute and UN Climate Change High-Level Champions, Khoury-Haq emphasised the need for collective action across the retail sector to address water resilience:

"For businesses like ours, the moral case for making the kind of investment I have described is clear. It's also increasingly clear and widely accepted that the commercial imperative is equally compelling. We call on other retailers and brands worldwide to consider the approach that we have pioneered thanks to our partners and encourage all businesses and institutions to act on water security"

"Businesses can play a vital role through the decisions they take to unlock further private capital. Work with us and Water Unite Impact to scale solutions."

The Water Unite Impact vehicle has been making investments into impact first businesses across Africa and Asia since 2021, including Mr Green Africa, GREE New Energy, Sanivation and Jibu. In the last twelve months, the portfolio investees have:

- Distributed over 29,000,000 litres of safe drinking water to 425,000 people
- Managed over 1,100 tones of faecal sludge safe managed
- Diverted over 1,175,000 kgs of pollution from waste streams
- Supported over 2000 jobs in emerging markets

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

Media contact: Louis Goring-Morris, mediarelations@waterunite.org / +44 7851 256875



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ABOUT WATER UNITE

Water Unite is a global non-profit working to provide clean water for people and planet. This is done by uniting corporate partners around a common collective action - namely to create a small micro-contribution from products and services to fill the funding gaps in the water sector. Large corporates including Co-op, Elixia PLC and Britvic PLC have already joined and adopted the model. To date Water Unite has supported nine projects in the water and circular economy sectors, directly benefiting over one million individuals in developing countries. waterunite.org

Explainer Video: youtu.be/Q4vD1qe0r30

2021/22 Impact Report: waterunite.org/site_files/7323/upload_files/WaterUniteImpactReport2021_22.pdf?dl=1

ABOUT CO-OP

Co-op is one of the world's largest consumer co-operatives, owned by millions of members. They are the UK's fifth biggest food retailer with more than 2,500 local, convenience and medium-sized stores. The UK's number 1 funeral services provider, a major general insurer and a growing legal services business. As well as having clear financial and operational objectives and employing over 60,000 people, Co-op is a recognised leader for their social goals and community-led programmes. Co-op exists to meet members' needs and stand up for the things they believe in. [Funding clean water projects - Co-op \(coop.co.uk\)](https://coop.co.uk)