

## Alex Simalabwi to Lead Global Water Partnership's Transformation

### New Executive Secretary and CEO Joins Leadership Team to Boost GWP's Mission on Water Security and Climate Resilience



**Stockholm/Pretoria, 27 January 2025** -- The Global Water Partnership's (GWP) Steering Committee has unanimously selected Alex Simalabwi as Executive Secretary and CEO, effective 1 February 2025.

GWP faces an evolving international context, with shifting foreign aid priorities and increasing engagement from emerging economies. Alex will steer the organisation and improve the necessary governance protocols to embrace this new reality, exploring fresh partnerships and funding opportunities with nations and institutions that share GWP's vision of a water secure world.

As GWP Executive Secretary and CEO of the Global Water Partnership Organisation (GWPO), Alex will serve the GWP Global Network and lead the transition of GWPO toward a decentralised organisation to empower GWP's regional hubs. This shift aims to better serve our regions and also bring us closer to our country partners facing increased water risks and challenges. Alex will lead the establishment of GWPO regional hubs that, together with GWP Regional Water Partnerships, will serve as engines of a bold transformative agenda on integrated investments in water security and climate resilience.

He will also serve as the President of the Global Investment Programme (GIP) on water and climate resilience, a new game-changing global initiative to be unveiled later in the year, building on the successes and lessons of the [Continental Africa Water Investment Programme \(AIP\)](#) and similar initiatives. GIP responds to calls by global leaders and partners to scale up investments in water security in light of increased climate-induced water risks. In July 2023, [8th UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, commended the AIP's transformative approach and called on global leaders and international organisations to scale up the AIP globally.](#) As President of GIP, Alex will pursue closer engagement with Heads of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), in response to their joint [commitment of \\$170 billion in annual climate finance projections](#) through to 2030, as well as their commitment to increase the number of people benefiting from climate-resilient water systems, announced at the One Water Summit in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in December 2024.

*"We are pleased to have Alex lead GWP during this dynamic phase full of opportunities,"* said Pablo Bereciartua, Chair of GWP's Steering Committee. *"His ability to build partnerships, mobilise resources, and lead diverse teams makes him the ideal person to drive GWP's vision and mission of water security for all. As GWP strengthens its network, develops new ways to grow its resources, and increases its regional impact, we are confident that Alex's leadership will amplify our global reach."*

Alex is a graduate of Harvard University Kennedy School of Government, with academic qualifications in civil engineering, business administration, and public policy. A Zambian national, Alex brings over 25 years of experience in transformative and impactful leadership in water security and climate resilience. He has a proven track record of working with Heads of States, global and business leaders, in mobilising investments at scale. He pioneered the establishment of the first-ever [International High-Level Panel on Water Investments for Africa](#), comprising 20 sitting and former Heads of State,

and global leaders. Alex spearheaded support to the African Union (AU) in the development of the [Continental Africa Water Investment Programme](#) (AIP), which the Panel supports in its aim to close the water investment gap in Africa by mobilising \$30 billion annually by 2030. The current UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, named the AIP as one of the [key game-changing initiatives and commitments of the UN Water Action Agenda](#), aimed at driving transformation from a global water crisis to a water-secure world.

Alex has been an integral part of GWP for many years, most recently serving as Executive Secretary and CEO of GWP Southern Africa and Global Head of Climate Resilience. As Global Head of Climate Resilience, he helped leverage over \$1.5 billion in water investments, through the global water, climate development programme (WACDEP) that he initiated and successfully led across sixty countries spanning Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

H.E. Jakaya Kikwete, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania and Chair of the Board for GWP Southern Africa (GWPSA), welcomed the GWP Steering Committee decision as ‘a wise decision’, and applauded his leadership abilities stating that “*Mr. Simalabwi has been an exemplary GWPSA Executive Secretary and CEO—a visionary, diligent, and hands-on leader whose contributions have significantly advanced GWPSA’s mission*”.

In light of this strong endorsement, Alex Simalabwi shared his vision for GWP’s future:

*“I am honoured to take on this role at such a pivotal time. For over two decades, GWP has been at the forefront of integrated water resources management. Now is the right time to change the status quo – pushed by the new global political dynamics and opening of new opportunities - and build on this strong foundation of GWP for bigger and stronger impacts, with unprecedented acceleration in both the pace and scale of mobilisation of climate-resilient water investments, in response to the current global water and climate emergency. I welcome the opportunity to join hands with global leaders and partners to lead the step-change of GWP into a transformative partner of choice for climate-resilient water investments. In the words of Nelson Mandela, ‘it always seems impossible until it is done.’ Together, in partnership with global leaders and partners, we can do this”.*

This leadership transition follows the early retirement of Alan AtKisson, who stepped down as Executive Secretary & CEO on 31 December 2024 due to medical reasons. Alan’s unwavering commitment over the past year has been instrumental in setting the stage for organisational transition and future impact. The Steering Committee and staff of GWP are deeply grateful for his dedication and significant contributions.