



EMBARGOED: NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL 00:01 CET THURSDAY 10 OCTOBER 2019

Elior UK joins The Co-op in backing Water Unite's micro-levy to combat plastics pollution



[Steve Murrells, CEO of The Co-op, and Catherine Roe, CEO of Elior UK, signing the Water Unite compact]

10 October 2019, London, UK – Elior UK, the British arm of the €6bn French foodservice company, has announced its support for Water Unite's voluntary micro-levy in an effort to combat plastics pollution. Elior will be making a donation for each bottle of water sold across its business, with the proceeds funding Water Unite's efforts to end water poverty and halt plastics pollution.

Water Unite's mission is to ensure every person on the planet has access to clean water and safe sanitation in a world which is free from plastic pollution. The micro-levy on global bottled water sales has the potential to raise billions of pounds globally, and Elior joins The Co-op in backing the Water Unite initiative.

Funds raised by Elior through the scheme enable Water Unite to invest in sustainable development programmes that improve recycling and water systems across Africa and South Asia. The partnership will strengthen the plastic value chain in developing countries, building recycling infrastructures that can tackle the harmful impact of plastic waste on the environment.

Each year 300 million tonnes of plastic are produced, with 70 percent of this potentially recyclable material ending up in landfill, the oceans, or being incinerated. The equivalent of a truckload of plastic is dumped in the ocean every minute, totalling 8 million pieces a day, and adding to the 51 trillion microplastic particles that are already severely impacting marine life and the entire food chain.



In supporting the innovative and easy to adopt Water Unite micro-levy, Elior is helping to reverse this process through a simple scheme that has the potential to be embraced by the entire bottled water retail sector, enabling collective engagement to tackle the negative impact of plastics pollution on our environment.

“We are delighted to welcome Elior as the first partner in the foodservice sector to support the Water Unite micro-levy. Their leadership in sustainability is world renowned and we invite all foodservice companies to join Elior in being part of a global movement to address the issues of plastic waste and help build a sustainable circular economy,” said Duncan Goose, Founder of Water Unite. “A mere 1 pence per litre voluntary contribution from key grocery retailers could raise up to £5 billion each year, enabling us to collectively tackle today’s plastics pollution pandemic and helping to transform the lives of people in the poorest countries of the world. We are excited that Elior share our vision and look forward to working with them to achieve this.”

Catherine Roe, CEO Elior UK, commented, “Plastic pollution is a growing global problem that collectively the world can no longer ignore. The partnership with Water Unite and the adoption of the micro-levy is significant step towards a more circular economy and our long-term plan to reduce the impact of plastic on our oceans and environment. Due to lack of recycling infrastructure, 85% of plastic from developing countries enters our waterways. By repurposing plastic in these areas, we can focus on reducing plastic waste and positively impact communities where plastic would have otherwise been environmentally destructive.”

Steve Murrells, Co-op CEO, said “Water poverty and plastics pollution has been at the top of our agenda for over a decade. We are proud of our work and partnership with Water Unite in helping to invest in clean water, sanitation and recycling infrastructures. Every branded bottle of water the Co-op sells helps raise money to support this urgently needed action. We welcome Elior UK in joining us to back Water Unite’s micro-levy, and ask other retailers and distributors to come on board now, so we can address these global challenges together.”

Water Unite expect to announce more new partners over the coming months, as discussions with several of the world’s largest retail and foodservice companies continue.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

About Water Unite (waterunite.org)

Water Unite is a UK based, non-profit organisation that works in partnership with the private sector to raise and invest funds for clean water sanitation and plastics recycling. Funds are raised via voluntary donations of around one cent per litre from water bottlers and retailers. Started in 2018, Water Unite is supported by The Co-operative (UK), The Rockefeller Foundation, Stone, Vitol and One Foundations. Water Unite aims to raise US\$100-\$200 million in the next 2 years.

Brochure and Data downloads available from <https://www.waterunite.org/page/research-and-papers/>



Duncan Goose, Founder, conceived and developed the Water Unite brand in 2017. Following engagement with Finance and Sector Ministers at the World Bank Spring Meetings, Water Unite was formally launched on 22 March, 2018 (World Water Day).

For more information please visit waterunite.org

About Elior (elior.co.uk)

Elior operates high profile catering contracts across the B&I, health & care home, defence, education, stadia and heritage sectors. It provides customers with a bespoke offer that focuses on great food, drink and customer service and couples it with the benefits that a large company brings. Elior UK is part of Elior Group which operates worldwide with annual revenues of €6,422 million.

Catherine Roe, CEO of Elior UK, has worked in the foodservice and hospitality industry for over 20 years. She is inspired by building a leading reputation for great service delivery, innovation and quality at Elior.

About The Co-op (coop.co.uk)

Co-op is the biggest consumer owned business in the UK, with more than 4.5 million members, 63,000 colleagues and a presence in every postcode area of the country. They are the UK's fifth biggest food retailer with more than 2,500 local stores, and supply wholesale to a further 7,700 stores across the UK.

Steve Murrells became Co-op CEO in March 2017 having previously led the Co-op's Food business since 2012. Steve now has overall responsibility for all the Co-op's businesses - Food, Funeralcare, Insurance and Legal Services. In 2019, he was shortlisted for the inaugural Retail Activist Award in recognition for his ongoing fight against water poverty.