GREENING THE BLUE REPORT 2020 (SUMMARY)

The UN System’s Environmental Footprint and Efforts to Reduce it

Greening the Blue Report 2020 provides UN System-wide 2019 data on the environmental impact areas identified in the UN Sustainability Strategy 2020-2030, Phase I: Environmental Sustainability in the Area of Management.

The report highlights the 2019 environmental impacts of over 310,000 personnel in Headquarters, field offices and operations on the ground. Data was provided by close to 60 UN System entities and one new member of the growing Greening the Blue community: The Green Climate Fund.

“...The emergence of COVID-19 is a stark reminder of how we are all a part of nature and the environment. Just as humanity does not exist in isolation, neither does the United Nations system. Everything we do affects the world around us. We are all part of the global climate crisis, and our efforts to achieve environmental sustainability are essential to tackling it. We must work harder and faster to bequeath a livable planet for this and future generations.”

António Guterres

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

<table>
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<th>Overall Emissions</th>
<th>2.0 million tonnes CO₂ eq were emitted by the UN System</th>
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<tr>
<td>Per Capita Emissions</td>
<td>6.5 tonnes CO₂ eq</td>
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EMISSIONS BY SOURCE

Air travel: 45%  
Facilities: 43%  
Other travel: 12%

SHARE OF TOTAL EMISSIONS BY ENTITY

- Peace Operations: 41%
- World Bank Group: 10%
- UNHCR, WFP: 5%
- UNICEF, UNDP, FAO, UNHQ: 3%
- IMF, IOM, IAEA, WHO: 2%
- UNESCO, UNFPA, UNO, ILO, UNIDO, UNOPS, UNRWA: 1%
- Remaining entities: 14%

WASTE

Average waste generated:
- 457 kg/person for the whole UN System
- 227 kg/person for the UN System excluding Peace Operations

Disposal routes of waste generated by the UN System:
- 54% Controlled Disposal
- 14% Closed Incineration
- 13% Reuse, Recycle, Composting or Energy Recovery
- 9% Open Incineration
- 5% Landfill
- 3% Unknown
- 1% Other

AIR POLLUTION

Ozone depleting substances in the upper atmosphere (stratosphere):
- 70% of UN offices did not know which refrigerants they use
- 20% use non-ozone depleting refrigerants¹
- 10% use ozone depleting refrigerants

WATER AND WASTEWATER

Average water consumption by the UN System is 49 m³ per UN personnel per year.

CLIMATE NEUTRALITY

- 97% of the UN System’s reported 2019 greenhouse gas emissions are offset

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

- 28 entities have a systematic approach to Environmental Management in place or underway

* Offices that use non-ozone depleting refrigerants include the 2% of offices that use low Global Warming Potential (GWP) refrigerants

¹ To access the full report and UN Entity-specific data visit: www.greeningtheblue.org
**2020-2030 UN System Environmental Commitments in the Area of Management**

In 2019, UN’s Chief Executive Board for Coordination endorsed the UN Sustainability Strategy 2020-2030, Phase I: Environmental Sustainability in the Area of Management.

The strategy intends to accelerate the UN System’s corporate efforts to combat climate change and to systematically integrate sustainable development considerations into how it operates. In particular, UN entities committed to reduce their environmental impacts via targeted actions on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, waste management, air and water pollution, and biodiversity degradation.

For each environmental impact area, the strategy establishes a UN System-wide objective to be achieved by 2030. How best to achieve this objective is specific to each UN entity.

**Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

**2030 Objective**

Reduce absolute greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 to limit the increase in global temperature to 1.5°C, in line with the recommendations of the 2018 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

To achieve the objective, each entity will look at aspects such as: use of electricity, energy sources, air travel, and ground travel.

**Air Pollution**

**2030 Objective**

Ensure that United Nations premises and fleet do not contribute to or exacerbate local air quality issues, in both urban and remote community settings.

To achieve the objective, each entity will look at aspects such as: fossil fuels, and refrigeration and air conditioning.

Note: in the Strategy, Air Pollution as a category of environmental impacts included pollution in the lower and upper atmosphere. For this reason, very different aspects such as fossil fuels and Ozone Depleting Substances were associated with it. As an environmental impact area Air Pollution is new to the Greening the Blue Report and will be further developed next year.

**Waste**

**2030 Objective**

Ensure that no solid waste from United Nations facilities, operations or activities is causing pollution or other harm to the environment and local populations by avoiding the release of toxic substances into the air, soil and water bodies and preventing adverse impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems.

To achieve the objective, each entity will look at aspects such as: non-hazardous waste, hazardous waste, and single-use plastic.

**Biodiversity**

**2030 Objective**

Avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity from United Nations facilities, operations and activities.

To achieve the objective, each entity will look at aspects such as: biodiversity conservation.

Note: Biodiversity is a new environmental impact area to report on for the UN System. Specific indicators and guidance on biodiversity will be developed in 2021, in line with the principles of the UN decade of Biodiversity Restoration.

**Environmental Governance**

Environmental Governance is the overarching commitment of the strategy to systematically improve control over and reduce risk from the environmental impacts of UN entities’ facilities and operations. The recommended approach for doing so is the implementation of environmental management systems and the reference is the international standard ISO 14001.

**Water and Wastewater**

**2030 Objective**

Ensure water conservation and avoid the release of untreated wastewater into the environment.

To achieve the objective, each entity will look at aspects such as: water management and wastewater management.

*To access the full report and UN Entity-specific data visit: www.greeningtheblue.org*