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."
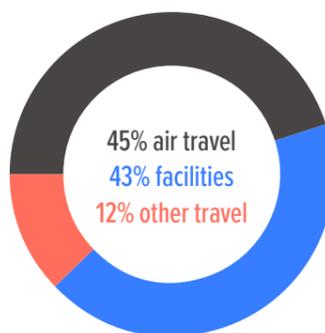
António Guterres

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

OVERALL EMISSIONS

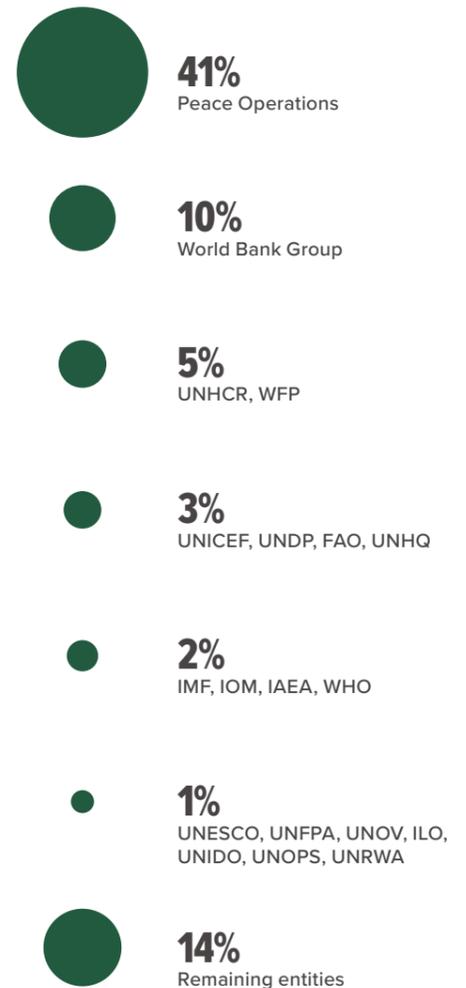~**2.0** million tonnes CO_2eq were emitted by the UN System

PER CAPITA EMISSIONS

6.5 tonnes CO_2eq

EMISSIONS BY SOURCE

45% air travel
43% facilities
12% other travel

SHARE OF TOTAL EMISSIONS BY ENTITY

41% Peace Operations

10% World Bank Group

5% UNHCR, WFP

3% UNICEF, UNDP, FAO, UNHQ

2% IMF, IOM, IAEA, WHO

1% UNESCO, UNFPA, UNOV, ILO, UNIDO, UNOPS, UNRWA

14% Remaining entities

WASTE

AVERAGE WASTE GENERATED
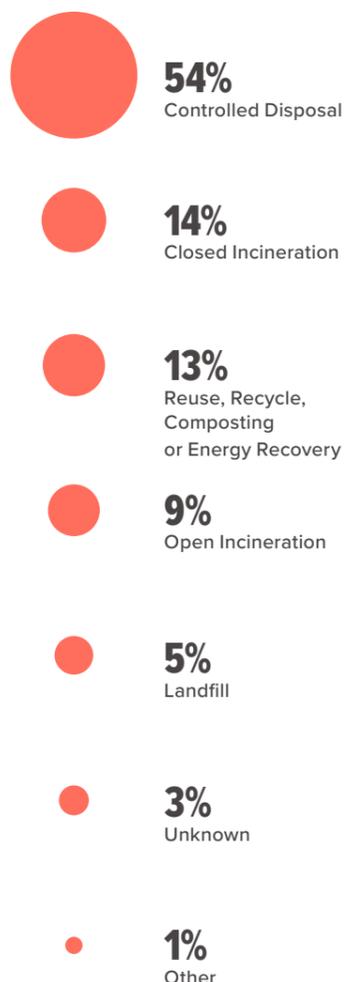
457 kg/person
for the whole UN System

227 kg/person
for the UN System excluding Peace Operations

CLIMATE NEUTRALITY

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

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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 refrigerants[1]

10%
use ozone depleting refrigerants

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

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WATER AND WASTEWATER

AVERAGE WATER CONSUMPTION BY THE UN SYSTEM IS

49 m³
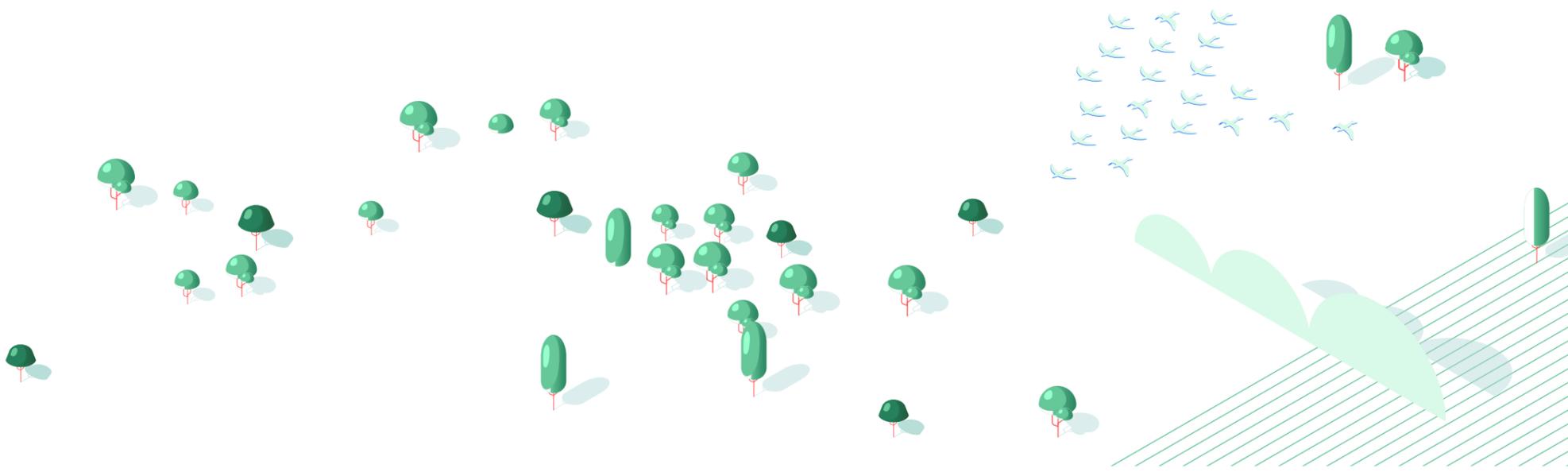per UN personnel per year.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

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

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GREENING THE BLUE

UN environment programme

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.

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.

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.

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.
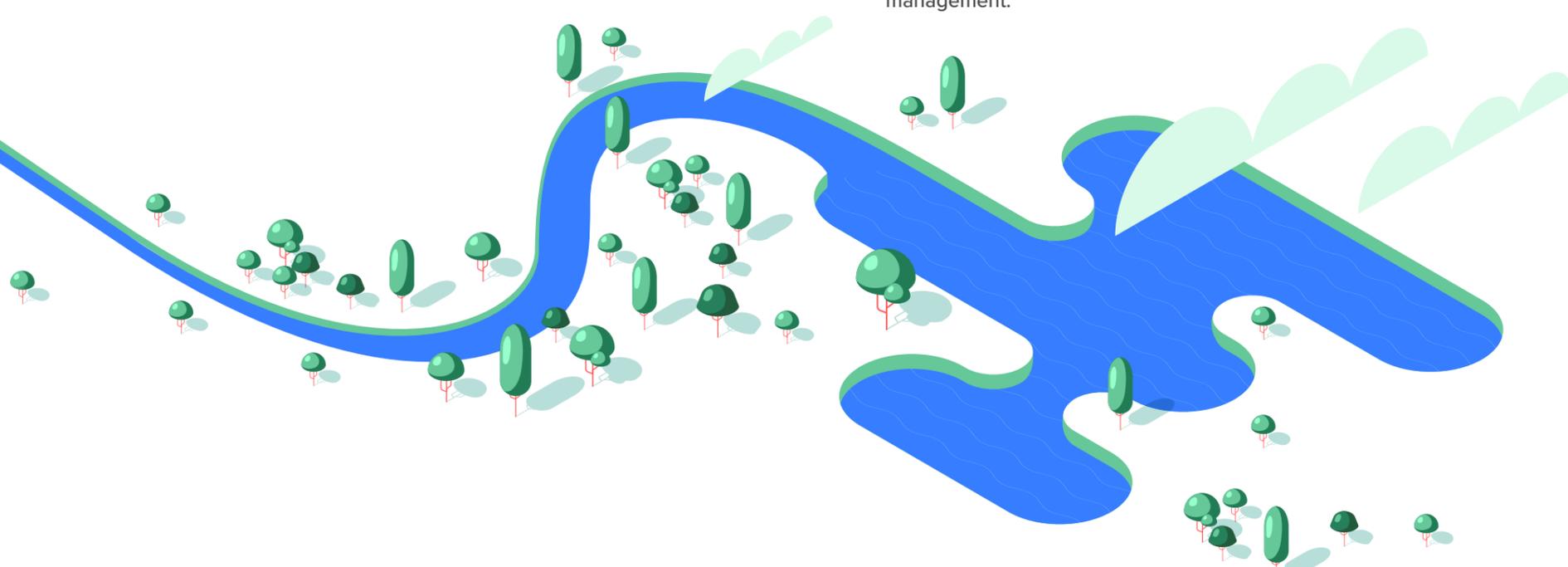
BIODIVERSITY
2030 OBJECTIVE

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.

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