



Strategy for Sustainability Management in the UN System 2020-2030

Phase I: Environmental Sustainability in the Area of Management

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Annex I: COMMITMENTS TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN THE AREA OF MANAGEMENT

I. Context

In December 2018, the UN Secretary-General asked the UN to raise the level of its internal ambitions and to intensify its efforts to combat climate change from within. Specifically, the Secretary-General wishes to highlight at the September 2019 UN Climate Summit that the UN is “walking the talk” on environmental sustainability and climate change.

This request raises the profile of an existing mandate from Senior Officials of the UN Environment Management Group (EMG), in September 2018, to develop a UN internal sustainability vision and strategy beyond 2020 to confirm the UN’s leadership aspirations in the area of internal environmental and social sustainability and to show that the UN aligns its own performance with the principles it has pioneered internationally¹.

Both requests echo calls by member states, in General Assembly resolutions and the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, for the UN to lead by example. They are also consistent with the requirements of international financial institutions and multilateral funding mechanisms for the implementation of environmental and social safeguards in UN projects and programmes.

The EMG and the UN Environment Programme have been given the task of responding to these requests and propose herewith a *Strategy for Sustainability Management in the UN System 2020-2030* with an overarching vision for sustainability management and a two-phased approach for achieving it.

UN entities already have much progress to show, thanks to ten years of collective work to measure, reduce and offset their impacts on the environment. There remain important gaps, however, and ample scope to chart new levels of ambition towards 2030, building on efforts to date.

Sustainability management helps the UN address and manage risks to the natural environments in which we operate, to the health of UN staff, to the livelihoods of the people we serve and ultimately to the UN’s credibility and reputation. At the same time, it brings about opportunities to generate benefits such as efficiencies in the use of natural resources and financial efficiencies, accountability and transparency in how the UN manages the delivery of its mandates. The pressing need to address environmental challenges such as pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services means there is an urgency to the UN system raising its sights and making a dedicated and long-term commitment to ensure that its own activities do not cause further harm.

II. A Demand for Unprecedented Action on Climate Change

In October 2018, the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released the “Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C approved by governments”. The report advocates for a limitation of global warming to 1.5° C, instead of the previously agreed 2°C, and indicates the advantages to ecosystems and societies of such ambition. According to the report, “limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require ‘rapid and far-reaching’ transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport, and cities. Global net

¹ EMG SOM24

human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) would need to fall by about 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching 'net zero' around 2050." Remaining emissions would need to be balanced by removing CO₂ from the air.

Limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require changes on an unprecedented scale at all levels. Including:

- Governance consistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C
- Deep emissions cuts in all sectors
- Technological innovation
- Behavioural changes and demand side management
- Increased investment in low carbon options for infrastructure and buildings

The United Nations system needs to align its own practices with the recommendations of the IPCC report to ensure that its facilities, operations, projects and programmes support the efforts of governments to mitigate climate change and not the other way around.

III. A Vision for Sustainability Management in the UN System 2020-2030

The United Nations system made a commitment to benefit to lead delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by being innovative, inclusive and results-oriented, and by effectively linking together normative frameworks, policy support capabilities and operational activities. This strategy outlines actions needed to complete the transition of the UN system onto the sustainable and resilient path foreseen by the 2030 Agenda.

The 2030 vision for sustainability management is:

The United Nations system is a leader in integrating environmental and social sustainability considerations across its work in a systematic and coherent way, practicing the principles that it promotes and leaving a positive legacy.

Fundamental to this vision are objectives to embody the Sustainable Development Goals at all levels of management; lead by example; ensure harmonization of internal sustainability initiatives; manage risks; strengthen business resilience; enhance credibility and accountability; and achieve financial savings through optimal resource efficiency.

IV. Proposed Approach towards the Vision

Recognizing the complexities of full integration of sustainability considerations into how the UN system does its work, and the opportunity to present - for use at the 2019 Climate Summit - a strategy that builds on existing efforts and focusses on internal environmental sustainability, the proposed *Strategy for Sustainability Management in the UN System 2020-2030* will be developed in two stages.

Phase I, put forth in this document, covers **Environmental Sustainability in the area of Management**. It will focus on the continued reduction of environmental impacts via the systematic consideration of risks and benefits to the environment from UN activities in relevant corporate management decisions of all UN entities;

Phase II, for endorsement by the CEB in 2020, will address the full picture of internal environmental and social sustainability in UN system policies, programming and facilities and operations², as outlined in the Framework for advancing Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN System.

V. Existing Efforts and Results to date

A great deal of work has been undertaken through the EMG and its membership over the past decade, spanning both strategic development and delivery on the ground and paving the way for a progressively broader vision for internal sustainability in the UN system.

Ten years ago, ambitions for integrating environmental considerations into UN system programmes and operations were scattered. System-wide efforts to collaborate in the area of internal environmental management were in their infancy. There was no overall vision, no coordinated gathering and reporting of data, no shared reporting, no harmonized guidance or tools. We have come a long way since then.

Activities to measure, reduce and offset GHG emissions and environmental impacts from UN facilities and operations have been underway since 2007, when the CEB approved the UN Climate Neutral Strategy.

Conscious that the UN system's sustainability impacts are not limited to facilities and operations, the Environment Management Group (EMG) endorsed in 2012, a *Framework for Moving Towards Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN System*. The Framework outlines a basic architecture for integrating environmental and social sustainability measures into policies, strategies, programmes, projects, facilities and operations of the UN, providing a good base for a comprehensive sustainability strategy.

The developments over the last ten years have required significant organizational efforts, coordination and cultural change that, together, provide a good basis for moving forward. Progress made has also required dedicated financial and human resources, both entity-specific and for system-wide coordination.

² For facilities and operations, the wider strategy will build on phase I and elaborate on the missing elements of "social" sustainability where applicable.

In the area of facilities and operations, the standard ISO 14001 on Environmental Management Systems, endorsed by the HLCM in 2013 for the implementation of environmental management in the UN system, has been used as a reference. Its annex 14031 on Environmental Performance Evaluation³ requires that progress be evaluated **in a specific context using both physical results and management results**. The former are more measurable than the latter. Both are necessary to provide an accurate picture of achievements.

Projects and programming

EMG work at the level of projects and programmes has been driven by the goals of delivering as one, walking the talk, system-wide efficiencies, and access to conditional financing.

Comparative inter-agency analyses confirmed a growing use of environmental and social standards or safeguards, and of related accountability mechanisms, in the design of UN projects and programmes. Such standards aim to enhance the quality of interventions by maximizing benefits and avoiding inadvertent harm to people and the environment. As of 2018, at least 11 UN entities had or were developing management frameworks for this purpose. Some of these entities also have policies that apply environmental and social principles to all their activities, across programming and support operations, and that underpin their entity's approach to sustainability management.

Significant alignment across entities' safeguards systems have enabled the EMG to draft the *Model Approach for Environmental and Social Standards in UN Programming*. This offers a set of harmonized benchmarks and processes that can be used by entities when adopting or revising their individual sustainability policies or frameworks. The Model Approach is currently being applied by a group of UN entities involved in country level programming.

This progress responds to calls from member states for a system-wide approach to accelerating the integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions into the policies and actions of all development actors, including the United Nations system⁴. These measures have also helped ensure continued access to financing that is increasingly tied to social and environmental standards and accountability policies (e.g. Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility, bilateral donors).

Facilities and Operations

EMG and UN Environment work at the level of facilities and operations has been supported through a close collaboration with the HLCM and backing from ambitious CEB decisions associated to the UN climate neutral strategy. In this area, formal UN system commitments have included:

- a) 2007: commitment to **measure, reduce and offset** greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from United Nations' facilities, operations and travel;

³ ISO 14031:2013 gives guidance on the design and use of environmental performance evaluation within an organization. It is applicable to all organizations, regardless of type, size, location and complexity. According to the standard there are 3 categories of indicators a) Environmental condition indicators (ECI), for presenting achievements in context; b) Operational performance indicators (OPI), used to demonstrate change in resource use; c) Management performance indicators (MPI), for showing cost savings and improvements in training

⁴ "Because of their strategic inter-linkages, the sustainable development goals and targets provide new impetus to accelerating the integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions in the policies and actions of all development actors, including the United Nations system as stipulated in paragraph 88 of the 2030 Agenda - "We also stress the importance of system-wide strategic planning, implementation and reporting in order to ensure coherent and integrated support to implementation of the new Agenda by the UN development system. The relevant governing bodies should take action to review such support to implementation and to report on progress and obstacles. (...)" (A/70/75 E/2015/55)

- b) 2013: commitment to develop **environmental management systems** covering four key areas: GHG emissions, waste, water and staff awareness;
- c) 2015: endorsement of the **Climate Neutral Road Map** committing the UN system to integrate environmental considerations in the planning for facilities and operations and to fully offset its GHG emissions from facilities and operations by 2020.

These commitments have given an important fillip to collaborative work and mutual support amongst UN entities and have provided the foundations for improved management of the UN system's environmental footprint:

- a) **Measurement** of the UN system's environmental footprint is well established for GHG emissions (since 2008) and data collection on waste (since 2016) and water (since 2018) is improving. 100% of the 66 entities taking part in the Greening the Blue initiative (www.greeningtheblue.org) report reliable emissions data, 80% report less complete data on waste generation and disposal and on water consumption.
- b) Efforts to **reduce environmental impacts** have resulted in close to 30 entities now practicing a systematic approach to environmental management. Concrete or quantifiable progress also includes 20 entity headquarters which purchase renewable energy for their electricity needs, a growing number of UN common premises and country offices equipped with solar panels which meet up to 100% of their energy needs, and more recent initiatives by some 15 entities to totally ban or reduce their use of single-use plastics. UN entities have also collectively developed a range of guidelines and tools for common use.
- c) Progress towards the goal of **climate neutrality by 2020** is noteworthy, not least because at the time of the original commitment UN entities were yet to explore cost implications and budgetary modalities. As of 2018, 43 out of the 66 participating entities offset the global GHG emissions that they cannot yet reduce, accounting for 39% of the UN system's emissions. The remaining challenge is to reach climate neutrality for the whole UN Secretariat, particularly UN's peacekeeping activities, which make up over 90% of reported UN system emissions currently not offset.

The relative success of the UN climate neutral strategy has largely depended on three factors: its clear focus, its measurement and reporting framework, and the dedicated resources for UN system coordination. These have allowed UN organizations to work together on a limited set of key indicators, across management functions.

Annual reporting on Greening the Blue has drawn attention to the impacts of the UN system across UN staff and management and the wider public. It has also highlighted areas where intervention and harmonized approaches are needed, such as in waste management or staff awareness. The degree of success in individual entities has depended on the same three factors: focus, measurement and reporting, and senior management support for dedicated financial and human resources.

VI. Gaps Analysis

Despite the progress made over the last ten years, the UN system is still a considerable way from being able to claim it has mainstreamed environmental sustainability into its work practices. This carries important financial and reputational risks for UN entities, risks to the health of UN staff and the communities where they serve, and risks to sustainable development.

Gaps and opportunities for bold ambitions to achieve meaningful reductions in adverse impacts on the environment and people exist at three levels⁵:

a) Environmental Governance

At the level of policies and accountability, there is currently no system-wide commitment for UN entities to have an **environmental governance framework**, beyond the 2013 HLCM agreement to implement environmental management at the facilities and operations level. Such a framework is necessary to underpin work and results at all levels.

Governance is also tightly connected to **appropriate human and financial resources**. The existing mechanisms for coordinating environmental sustainability, whether UN-wide or within UN entities, cannot generate solid and trackable results with existing means. Too much is still dependent on the good will and creativity of individuals.

Only a handful of entities currently devote regular resources to internal sustainability, some via an internal levy, others through corporate funds.

Budgetary processes and short term cycles act as an obstacle to innovation and environmental sustainability, discouraging upfront investments for long term gains. In some entities, the absence of an accountability framework that includes an environmental policy and action plans means it is hard to “sell” investments which may not bring short term financial benefits, such as better waste management or staff training or sustainable procurement.

Similarly, environmental management is not yet integrated into entities’ performance evaluation frameworks, including for top management.

In short, despite the demonstrated risks to staff, beneficiaries and the countries in which the UN operates, in most entities the environment is not yet considered part of the UN’s “duty of care” and instead remains a “nice to have”.

⁵ These levels correspond to the three entry points in the EMG Sustainability Framework: <https://unemg.org/our-work/internal-sustainability/environmental-and-social-sustainability/>

b) Projects and Programmes

The biggest **environmental and social impacts** from UN interventions are almost certainly from programmes. It has not yet been investigated, however, the extent to which these impacts are captured in the existing environmental inventory process or in other ways.

Gaps in the adoption and use of **safeguards for programming means that** UN entities continue to spend precious resources on ad hoc compliance with safeguards imposed by donors.

Without safeguards to guide how UN programmes are managed, UN entities risk harming the communities they seek to serve as well as the UN's own reputation. Examples of unintended harm unfortunately exist: deforestation, dried-up wells, damage to protected plant species, health consequences from inadequate waste practices, livelihoods consequences from pollution to waterways.

c) Facilities and Operations

At the level of facilities and operations, there remain gaps in delivering results that are measurable and solutions that can be upscaled. Progress has been made in the adoption of environmental management systems, but the UN system cannot yet state that it has a full understanding of its footprint.

In headquarter locations, efforts to routinely integrate efficiency considerations into the management of facilities and operations have been underway for some time. In the field, however, the status quo is in general more challenging, and in practice more damaging, due to the more vulnerable populations and ecosystems and the lack of national level controls, infrastructure and capacity.

Key issues in the field include:

- ongoing significant problems and risks arising from solid waste and wastewater management;
- very low uptake of renewable energy across the UN system due to ongoing reliance on costly and polluting diesel generators;
- over-exploitation of natural resources including deforestation, land degradation, water resources depletion and ecosystems degradation.

Aside from their public health, ecological and reputation implications, these issues impact directly on the quality and cost of the outputs of the whole UN system. Often basic utilities such as energy and potable water are consumed in an inefficient manner. As a result, UN entities leave behind negative instead of positive legacies for the host nations: inefficient facilities, old generators and dumped waste, instead of durable buildings, sustainable power supplies and water treatment plants.

Fragmented project-based and site-specific solutions by individual entities are not the answer. Examples of excellent single site and single entity initiatives exist, but there is no agreed approach or mechanism for replication and scale-up.

Similarly, while the UN system can point to entity-specific reductions in GHG emissions, their scattered nature makes it difficult to draw system-wide conclusions. **Gaps in the coverage of the UN's environmental inventory** contribute to this problem and are also a reason for the **lack of commonly agreed baselines** for GHG emissions, waste management, or other indicators.

Only a few organizations (12 of the 26 with an EMS) have their own baselines and targets. Others have preferred to use objectives rather than quantifiable targets. System-wide agreement of baselines and the establishment of targets for a small series of indicators are essential to track progress.

Finally, while environmental sustainability has so far been addressed through **separate processes** for facilities/operations and for projects/programmes, there are now calls for UN entities to strengthen synergies by bringing these efforts closer together. A new sustainability strategy offers an excellent opportunity to move away from a segmented approach to one that is more comprehensive and cross-cutting, with the purpose of ensuring that environmental concerns are fully mainstreamed into all UN activities.

VII. Environmental Sustainability in the Area of Management

In defining a new strategy, the UN system can build on lessons learned. Hundreds of best practices collected through the EMG and Greening the Blue show how UN entities have innovated to seize opportunities for environmental sustainability management and what benefits such initiatives have generated.

For instance, a combination of resource efficiency measures and use of renewable energy sources has enabled innovative entities to mitigate risks associated with business continuity, especially in conflict zones and areas with high risk of natural disasters, and to make significant operational cost savings that can be redirected to programme delivery.

The Strategy for Environmental Sustainability in the area of Management rests on the following pillars:

1. ENVIRONMENT AS A CROSS-CUTTING ISSUE

The biggest opportunity presented by this strategy is to embed **environmental sustainability as a cross cutting issue to be fully integrated in how the UN operates at all levels.**

Environmental impacts are shared across support operations and programming. To date, for ease of handling, a line has been drawn between the environmental impacts from facilities and operations (currently measured system-wide) and impacts from programmes (currently not systematically measured system-wide).

In reality, they often overlap. For example, it is difficult to distinguish between operations or programming responsibility for plastic packaging waste from supplies for refugee camps, or for oil that runs into a community waterway from the maintenance work in UN vehicles workshops.

Ultimately, it doesn't matter whether an impact is deemed to have a programmatic or operational cause: **it belongs to the UN's "duty of care"** to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to prevent UN activities from harming local communities and the natural systems that underpin their livelihoods.

It is also incumbent upon the UN because of the values it represents to “do good”, to lead by example and to demonstrate innovation in implementing through its own actions the norms and principles it preaches to the world.

For these reasons, it is imperative that the UN system take a more comprehensive view of the cross-cutting nature of its environmental impacts, integrating environmental considerations at the design stage of decisions and not as an -often expensive – after-thought.

2. BUILDING ON EXISTING EFFORTS

Ten years of UN-wide efforts have produced results that deserve recognition and that must be sustained. The three steps of the 2007 UN Climate Neutral strategy (measure, reduce, offset) are now integrated into how UN entities design and manage their environmental sustainability efforts and are fully in line with the environmental management approach agreed to by the HLCM in 2013. The key to the success of future efforts will be to build on the existing structure.

UN entities accordingly renew and expand their commitments to:

- 1) **Measure:** strengthen efforts related to systematic measurement of impacts for all UN-agreed environmental indicators, including measurement methodologies, establishment of baselines, and a system to track progress. In this way, a comprehensive understanding of UN impacts can be obtained, both from facilities and operations and from projects and programmes. Measuring also implies publicly reporting environmental impacts through a set of common performance criteria and standards.
- 2) **Reduce** adverse environmental impacts and maximize sustainability gains by:
 - Implementing entity-specific **environmental management systems** in line with international best practice, including common performance criteria and entity-specific target setting
 - Working towards continuous improvements on a set of **specific goals** for common action, recognizing that the UN operates in both developed and developing country contexts
 - **Fostering innovation** and utilizing internal and external partnerships to support the financing and efficient implementation of these measures
- 3) **Offset:** maintain the commitment to a **100% climate neutral United Nations**, through a combination of GHG emission reductions, transition to renewable energy sources, and purchase of UNFCCC-approved emission reduction certificates for the unavoidable GHG emissions.

3. COMMITMENT TO A COMMON BUT FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE, SUPPORTED BY A STRONG INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION MECHANISM

Fundamental to effective environmental sustainability management is a **system-wide commitment to environmental governance** and to the policies and procedures that go with that, ensuring effective protection – and enrichment, where possible – of the natural environment.

Because UN entities' mandates and governance structures vary, a "one size fits all" environmental governance structure is not realistic. It is therefore up to each entity to identify – based on a set of common parameters- its own solutions for environmental governance, including policies, targets, implementation mechanisms and resource mobilization.

At the same time, **coordination and oversight** is essential for tracking system-wide progress.

Without the leadership, coordination and support of the Environment Management Group (EMG) and of UN Environment's Sustainable UN (SUN), individual UN entity efforts over the past ten years would have been fewer and today's common approach to sustainability management would not exist.

The technical expertise and coordination function of these two mechanisms have been decisive in maintaining focus on collective approaches to methodologies, in liaison with the HLCM, and have also brought concrete benefits in terms of experience-sharing and demonstration of the UN delivering as one. For this reason, the SUN team and the EMG's Issue Management Group on Environmental Sustainability Management were granted in 2016 the UN Secretary General's award for Greening the UN.

In the spirit of ongoing UN reform, it is important that UN system entities continue to follow a common approach to their sustainability work. In order to implement the higher ambitions of the 2020-2030 Sustainability Strategy, a strengthened system-wide coordination mechanism will be necessary, not only to maintain long-term coherence but specifically to deliver, as the EMG and SUN have done so far, the following services:

- a) Support and monitoring of individual entities' efforts towards sustainability management, promotion of inter-agency cooperation and experience sharing, and benchmarking (catalyst function);
- b) Provision of technical advice on demand, and development of harmonized tools, training packages and methodologies that can be owned by everyone (help desk function);
- c) Help in maintaining staff interest via the Greening the Blue campaign and provision of a system-wide context, and ready-to-use tools for internal campaigns. This includes also provision of on-line and ad-hoc training occasions to agencies on matters of internal sustainability (communications function);
- d) Assurance that entity-specific and system-wide environmental impacts are recorded, collated and communicated across the UN system, and progress and achievements communicated to the public (reporting function).

Services provided in common typically lead to economies of scale and the investments necessary are small compared to the costs each agency would incur should the service not be there.

With this understanding, UN system entities agree to the following system-wide commitments in the area of environmental governance and coordination. A more detailed table presenting steps to reach the Commitment is presented in Annex I.

| Environmental governance and system wide coordination | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Objective | Aspects | Commitment | 2020-2030 Indicators and Targets |
| Ensure harmonisation of approaches, benchmarking, system-wide reporting and coordination of efforts | System-wide coordination | UN system organizations commit to coordinate, collaborate, exchange, and report on system wide progress in the implementation of the UN 2020-2030 Sustainability Strategy | By 2020 a mechanism for coordination of UN system sustainability is designated |
| Establishment of entity-specific environmental governance frameworks | Environmental management systems (EMS) | All entities have an updated environmental management system approved by top management | By 2025, all UN entities have implemented an EMS at entity level including an environmental policy, and targets. % of entities having integrated environmental risks in their risk management procedures |
| | Environmental and social safeguards ⁶ | Environmental and social safeguards are integrated in (main) programme activities | 100% of entities apply safeguards to their programmes |
| | Performance management systems | Environmental performance integrated in senior management performance frameworks | 100% entities having integrated environmental objectives in senior management performance |
| | Resources mobilization | Provision in entity budgets for implementation of environmental management | % of entities with internal tax/levy or other dedicated systems to fund environmental improvements % increase in entities' expenditure on environmental issues |
| | Environmental Reporting | Entities report publicly about their environmental performance | 100% of annual reports in UN entities integrate progress on internal sustainability |

⁶ Environmental and social safeguards are normally considered together. The target outlined here does not imply that environmental and social safeguards would need to be separated.

4. COMMON GOALS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND ASPECTS⁷

Environmental impacts are “any change in the environment, whether adverse or beneficial, wholly or partially resulting from an organization’s environmental aspects”. Key impacts include emissions to air (greenhouse gases and air pollution), releases to water (water pollution), releases to land (soil pollution), use of raw materials and natural resources (e.g., energy, water, land), waste production and management.

UN activities can also impact on biodiversity, ecosystems, sustainable natural resource management, disaster risk reduction, cultural and natural heritage and indigenous peoples’ rights. These impact areas will be more fully addressed in Phase II of the strategy.

Environmental aspects are any “element of an organization’s activities, products or services that can interact with the environment”.

For the purposes of Phase I of this strategy, key aspects are a wide range of management practices such as energy use, procurement, buildings, the management of waste and water, human resources, travel and transport, ICT, and events. Sustainability aspects stemming from projects and programmes will be further considered in Phase II.

Expanding on efforts already underway, Phase I of the strategy proposes specific areas for common action to provide focus and raise the level of ambition of the UN system, assigning discrete **impact reduction objectives and indicators** to each: GHG emissions, waste (solid, hazardous, plastic), water consumption, air pollution and biodiversity loss.

Impact areas where UN system methodologies exist for measurement and reporting are greenhouse gas emissions, waste and water. The United Nations system provides information to the public on its performance in these areas via the annual Greening the Blue report.

Two more impacts have been added because of the importance they have at global scale and the opportunities they offer UN entities to show leadership and improve their performance: air pollution and biodiversity loss.

Recognizing that the United Nations operates in both developed and developing country contexts and that entities are at different levels of maturity when it comes to environmental management, further discussions are necessary to define exact targets in some areas:

1. For GHG emissions, ten years of constantly improving data is available and the establishment of a UN wide baseline is possible and also necessary to agree on system-wide targets. The commitments proposed by this strategy present a series of indicators for which system-wide targets will be established in line with the recommendations of the 2018 IPCC report.

⁷ ISO 14001:2015

2. For waste and water, data collection at UN system level has started more recently. Monitoring in individual entities is not yet mature enough to consider the data fully reliable. For these two impacts, a series of indicators for individual entities is proposed, while the setting of targets will be possible only after a more in-depth analysis of the situation.
3. Air pollution and biodiversity loss are relatively new areas for UN intervention. Indicators for individual entities are proposed but their confirmation and the setting of targets for performance will require further discussion and analysis.

With this understanding, UN system entities agree to the following system-wide commitments in the area of environmental impacts and aspects. A more detailed table presenting steps to reach the Commitment is presented in Annex I.

GHG Emissions

Climate Change is leading to irreversible changes in major ecosystems and the planetary climate system. The IPCC and the UN system are calling the world to take concrete action to limit global temperature increases to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. As any other actor in society, the United Nations needs to align its own practices with these goals if it wants to be a credible advocate for climate action.

The 2018 edition of the UN Greening the Blue report released GHG emissions data from 66 UN entities and over 250,000 personnel. The United Nations system emitted 1.86 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂eq) in 2017 – or 7.26 tCO₂eq per capita. 44% of UN entities' greenhouse gas emissions came from facilities (headquarter offices, field offices, warehouses, etc.), 42% from air travel, and 14% from other modes of travel such as ground transport.

Several UN entities have already taken concrete steps to reduce their GHG emissions in facilities by optimizing resource use through investing in more efficient appliances and fixtures, purchasing renewable energy, or using on-site renewable energy sources. Nevertheless, EMG Peer Reviews of environmental management in UN entities, carried out in 17 locations since 2014 both in headquarters and in the field, have identified opportunities for up to 50% energy efficiencies in some buildings. More systematic measures and efforts are needed to further improve the use of energy in UN facilities and operations.

Transport (both air travel and ground transport) is another area with significant scope for improvements. Only a handful of entities have integrated environmental considerations into their travel policies and opportunities offered by remote meeting technologies are not yet fully exploited. Initiatives to bring efficiencies in UN fleet management, especially in the field, have shown that savings of 25 to 30% in fuel consumption can be achieved and should be upscaled.

While continuing efforts to reduce emissions, unavoidable emissions need to be offset to meet the UN Systems' climate neutral commitment.

| Objective | Aspects | Commitment | 2020-2030 Indicators |
|---|--------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Reduce absolute GHG emissions by 2030 to limit increase in global | Use of Electricity | Optimize electricity consumption in facilities | % reductions in electricity use |

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|--|--|
| temperature to 1.5 °C, in line with recommendations of the 2018 IPCC report. (baseline year and specific targets to be agreed) | Energy sources | Switch to renewable energy sources | % of renewables |
| | Air Travel | Reduce and optimize commercial air travel for operations and programmes | % GHG emissions reduction from air travel |
| | Ground travel | Minimize/optimize fuel consumption for ground travel of UN staff for operations and programmes | % reduction in fuel use from ground transport |
| | Climate Neutrality | All UN entities maintain their climate neutral status | % of UN system-reported unavoidable GHG emissions that are offset |

Waste

Poor waste management potentially exposes waste handlers and the community at large to health problems and risks polluting the environment by contaminating water bodies, soil and air. Dumpsites are one of the main global emitters of GHG emissions, especially methane. The importance of diverting organic waste from dumpsites and uncontrolled burning to safe and environmentally sound disposal cannot be overstated.

Waste generation and management is an important measure of the impact the UN system has on the communities where it works. UN waste management practices have been tracked and reported to the public since 2015. This work has highlighted waste as a serious area of risk for the UN. In the 2018 inventory, the UN-wide rate of reuse, recycling, composting and recovery was a low 23%. Nearly 50% of reported UN waste is managed by third-party organizations, hired to dispose of unwanted materials, but without much in the way of downstream guarantees of safe disposal, recycling or specialized handling for hazardous substances. There is currently no systematic solution for e-waste, and often offices stock it for lack of better local options.

The focus of the 2018 World Environment Day on plastic pollution resulted in a number of initiatives in UN entity headquarters to limit the use of single-use plastic, but more can be done to measure, assess and reduce the use of plastics in UN facilities and operations, especially in field locations. Measures to improve waste management need to start from better measurement (as part of the waste management contracts), prevention, and control of waste streams from UN facilities and operations.

| Objective | Aspects | Commitment | 2020-2030 Indicators |
|--|---------------------|---|---|
| Ensure no solid waste from UN facilities, operations and activities is causing pollution or other harm to the environment and local populations, by avoiding the release of toxic substances to the air, soil and water bodies and adverse impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems. | Non-hazardous waste | Minimize non-hazardous solid waste generation derived from UN facilities, operations and activities while ensuring proper recycling, treating and disposal. | % entities with formal waste management programs % of waste diverted to reuse/recycling |
| | Hazardous waste | Minimize hazardous solid waste generation derived from UN facilities, operations and activities, while ensuring proper recycling, treating and disposal | % of hazardous waste formally processed using environmentally sound management standards |
| | Single-use plastic | Reduce single-use plastics across UN compounds and activities | % reduction of single-use plastics in entity headquarters /in field /humanitarian operations % reduction of plastics from UN activities or compounds dispersed in the environment % of UN entities with single-use plastic policies |

Air pollution

Air pollution causes approximately 7 million premature deaths worldwide every year. 91% of the world’s population lives in places where air quality exceeds WHO standards limits ([WHO, 2019](#)). It is important for the UN system to understand and monitor its own impact on air pollution and to take steps towards improving the air quality in the places it works.

There is currently no measurement of air pollution caused by UN facilities and operations, although the annual system-wide environmental inventory provides data on fuel usage, ozone depleting substances and short-lived pollutants via the monitoring of GHG emissions. In addition, the majority if UN facilities utilize fluorescent tubes lamps which are more often than not disposed through breakage, releasing mercury vapor they contain into the atmosphere.

Improving the efficacy, upgrading and reducing often oversized fleets and generators, using energy efficient equipment and eventually moving to on-site renewables would reduce GHG emissions and air pollution generated by UN facilities and operations and would also bring considerable cost savings. Fleet management initiatives, some of them inter-agency, are showing improvements in fuel efficiencies of 25% to 30% and can be further developed and upscaled.

Stratospheric ozone depleting substances and high global warming potential alternatives are being progressively phased out worldwide and UN offices (many of which are still using these in refrigerants or in air conditioning), should lead as examples.

| Objective | Aspects | Commitment | 2020-2030 Indicators |
|---|--|--|---|
| Ensure UN premises and fleet do not contribute to or exacerbate local air quality issues, in both urban and remote community settings | Fossil fuels | Minimise to the extent possible the particulate, black carbon SOx, NOx, and other (non-GHG) emissions from burning fossil fuels in generators and vehicles for heating or cooking or from supplied electricity | % of electric vehicles % fuel in use that meets international quality standards |
| | Refrigeration and air conditioning Hydrofluorocarbons | Ensure UN premises do not contribute to depletion of the Ozone layer | % of UN entities that have phased out ozone-depleting substances |
| | | Minimize the release of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) by purchasing exclusively low global warming potential and energy efficient refrigeration equipment and air conditioning systems | % entities with a plan for phase down of HFCs % of UN premises/facilities using low GWP equipment for refrigeration and air conditioning |

Water and wastewater

More than 2 billion people live in countries experiencing high water stress. This situation will likely worsen as populations and the demand for water grow, and as the effects of climate change intensify ([UN Water, 2018](#)): By 2025, half of the world's population will live in water-stressed areas ([WHO, 2018](#)). It is important for the UN to understand its own impact on the water supply in the communities in which it operates and to reduce its demand.

The UN system started reporting on water consumption only recently. In 2018, a total of 58 entities provided 2017 water data in the Greening the Blue report. The report shows that the UN system used a total of 11 million m³ of water in 2017, representing an average of 53 m³ per capita. These results are at the lower end of average country levels, so not alarming, but it should be noted that data is still partial and its quality not fully reliable. Entities reported that slightly less than 2% of the water used in 2017 was recycled internally, which is a very low share that can be improved.

Along with water use, it is also crucial for the UN to manage its wastewater well by treating and/or discharging it in an environmentally sound manner. 2 billion people worldwide use a drinking-water source contaminated with faeces ([WHO, 2019](#)) and 80 percent of wastewater from human activities is discharged into waterways without any pollution removal ([UNDP, 2019](#)). The UN system has not officially started to report on its wastewater management.

Water and wastewater management is an area of high risk but also of high opportunities for improvement in the UN system. Being able to quantify, monitor and reduce water use would be an important starting point.

| Objective | Aspects | Commitment | 2020-2030 Indicators |
|--|-----------------------|--|--|
| Ensure water conservation and avoid the release of untreated wastewater into the environment | Water management | Ensure sustainable extraction of water in locations where we operate. | % sites with water efficiency measures (taps, leak-reduction plans) |
| | Wastewater management | Ensure no wastewater is disposed untreated on soil or in water bodies, with potential to cause environmental damage. | % of wastewater disposed untreated % reclaimed water reported |

Biodiversity degradation

Biological diversity – or biodiversity – is the term given to the variety of life on Earth, including plants, animals and micro-organisms, as well as the ecosystems of which they are part. Maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and ecosystems contributes to securing food and livelihoods, enhancing resilience, conserving threatened species, and increasing carbon storage and sequestration. Biodiversity, however, is currently being lost at unprecedented rates due to human activities that degrade or encroach on habitats, increase pollution, and contribute to climate change. Conserving biodiversity and maintaining ecosystem services are fundamental to sustainable development.

The UN system may impact biodiversity through its facilities and operations. When new UN premises are planned and constructed, sites need to be screened for possibly adverse impacts on biodiversity and those impacts avoided through the application of safeguards.

| Objective | Aspects | Commitment | 2020-2030 Indicators |
|--|---------------------------|--|--|
| Avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity from UN facilities, operations and activities. | Biodiversity conservation | Ensure that adverse impacts on biodiversity and habitats from UN facilities, operations and activities are identified and avoided in consultation with relevant, affected stakeholders | % of sites for new premises that have been screened for biodiversity impacts |

5. MOBILIZING ALL RELEVANT MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS

A clear gap in existing internal UN sustainability work has been the limited attention paid to functions (or “aspects”) that are key to enabling success. Some functions, because of their obvious connection to the goal of climate neutrality, have been looked at more closely than others and have generated solutions, e.g., facilities management. For full mainstreaming, all relevant functions need to be systematically considered.

The below commitments for 2030 are proposed with the need in mind to mainstream the environment across key functions of the UN system’s management. Facilities, procurement and logistics are crucial components in the planning, design and delivery of programmes and emergency response. Similarly, human resources, risk management, information technology and meetings are functions that span both the corporate and programming wings of a UN entity. A more detailed table presenting steps to reach the Commitment is presented in Annex I.

| Objective | Commitment | Indicators |
|--|---|--|
| Procurement | | |
| The procurement function supports the goals set by the UN sustainability strategy | UN organizations systematically integrate sustainability considerations in procurement ⁸ | % of UN entities with a sustainable procurement policy % tenders with sustainability criteria at entity and UN wide level |
| Human resources | | |
| Environmental management is integrated into existing UN capacity building and accountability frameworks | Increased understanding and capacity among UN staff to walk the talk | % of staff trained per agency Statistics on relevant staff recruitment |
| Facilities management | | |
| All UN facilities (led by UN common premises) follow sustainable building standards or harmonized guidance for sustainable building management | Maximise resource efficiency and resilience of UN facilities and minimize their environmental footprint | % of facilities implementing sustainable building standards. % reductions in environmental impacts from facilities as measured by the environmental inventory |
| Events | | |
| UN events on any topic showcase the UN's commitment to sustainability | All large UN events (over 300 pax) are sustainable and climate neutral | % of sustainable and climate neutral events with over 300 participants |
| ICT | | |
| Align ICT function with the ambitions of the strategy | ICT management systematically integrates environmental considerations | |

⁸ Sustainable procurement has been for the past 10 years considered as integrating both environmental and social considerations together. The target outlined here does not imply that environmentally and socially responsible procurement would need to be separated.

Measurement of progress can mostly be implemented by enhancements to existing reporting frameworks such as the UN Environmental Management software developed with funding from the HLCM or the Annual Statistical Report on Procurement. More efforts will be necessary however, to develop a comprehensive and yet simple reporting mechanism that allows for progress tracking of the new indicators.

VIII. Enabling Conditions

Requirements to make this strategy operational and to achieve the desired outcomes include:

- a) **System-wide oversight and accountability:** While multiple UN entities have a stake in the effective mainstreaming of environmental considerations in the UN system's work, no one entity has the dedicated capacity and authority to actively coordinate, support, and track progress. The existing coordination units and technical support mechanisms have so far been hosted by UN Environment: the EMG and Sustainable UN. For these services to support the expanded ambitions of the 2020-2030 strategy, an in-depth discussion needs to be had within the UN system on how to mandate, organize, reinforce and maintain over time a system-wide coordination mechanism necessary to ensure harmonization of approaches, benchmarking and system-wide reporting.
- b) **Adequate resources** – Ten years of work on implementation of the UN Climate Neutral Strategy have proven unequivocally that only those entities which are able to allocate internal resources to environmental management succeed in achieving concrete results. A condition for success of the proposed strategy Phase I is therefore that environmental management is fully integrated into UN-wide and agency-specific plans for better utilization of resources, and that resources are aligned with outcomes. Some entities have introduced a levy on either travel or fuels to set aside funds to be used for environmental innovation and climate neutrality.
- c) **Commitment to teamwork and the UN Reform agenda** – Extensive experience in individual entities and partnerships have proven that universal components of the UN Reform agenda, such as common facilities and services, have an important role to play in improving the sustainability of the UN system. Some key objectives, such as the shift to renewable energy and improvements in waste and wastewater management in the field are only practically and financially possible through partnerships.
- d) **Monitoring and reporting mechanisms** – Progress on implementation of the strategy will be reported formally and annually by all entities to the EMG and through existing mandated reports such as the *Report of the Secretary-General on the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development through the UN system*. To ensure regular monitoring of results at the highest level, a progress report on the strategy's implementation will be delivered to the CEB every two years. After five years, the strategy will be reviewed to confirm and, as necessary, adjust ambitions based on an analysis of progress and emerging factors. Reporting on the Greening the Blue platform of entities' efforts will be maintained.
- e) **Communication, awareness and knowledge sharing**
The award-winning Greening the Blue campaign helps UN entities, individually and collectively, to raise awareness of the importance of sustainability throughout the UN system. It encourages entities and individual staff members to take an active role in **reducing the UN's environmental footprint and cutting costs. Peer Reviews have nonetheless highlighted a need for strengthened communication and outreach, including the need for entity champions to raise awareness of the environmental, health and cost benefits of sustainability measures so as to drive behavioural change and help overcome mental barriers such as "my contribution is too small to count". With participation, encouragement and examples set by senior management, the potential of UN staff to boost sustainability performance can be significantly enhanced.**

IX. Recommendations

The High-Level Committee on Management:

- *Endorses*, for further submission to CEB at its May 2019 session, the Strategy for Sustainability Management in the UN System, 2020-2030: Phase I: Environmental Sustainability in the area of Management, as an important step towards mainstreaming environmental considerations into the management of UN system programmes and support operations.
- *Notes* that the commitments included in Phase I of the Strategy will be incorporated into a comprehensive Sustainability Strategy for the UN System 2020-2030, encompassing a broader and fuller picture of environmental and social sustainability in UN system policies, programming and support functions, which will be further developed by EMG for submission to CEB in 2020.
- *Commits* to hastening progress towards systematic action, building on progress to date, in particular through:
 - o Adoption of suitable targets as per the Strategy and continuous improvement towards their achievement;
 - o Regular tracking and reporting on progress via the EMG, the Greening the Blue report, existing UN system reports as appropriate, and biennially to the HLCM.
- *Commits* to working with the EMG and relevant UN system coordination mechanisms towards the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability management at the levels of governance, programming and support functions.
- *Encourages* all UN system entities to include considerations for sustainability measures into their operational and non-operational budget in a transparent and systematic manner to ensure timely implementation of the strategy.

Annex I

COMMITMENTS TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN THE AREA OF MANAGEMENT

Environmental Governance

| Theme | Objective | Aspect | Commitment | Steps towards goal | Indicators of achievement 2030 |
|--------------------------|---|--|---|--|---|
| System wide coordination | Ensure harmonisation of approaches, benchmarking, system-wide reporting and coordination of efforts | System-wide coordination | UN system organizations commit to coordinate, collaborate, exchange, and report on system wide progress in the implementation of the UN 2020-2030 Sustainability Strategy | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess whether the existing EMG Secretariat/ UN Environment interagency coordination mechanism is still adequate to support the implementation of the Strategy (human and financial resources, chairmanship and networks working modalities) 2. Explore options with a task team composed of designated representatives from entities 3. Integrate a series of workable options and modalities for UN interagency coordination, oversight and accountability in the Part II of the UN 2020-2030 Sustainability Strategy | By 2020 a mechanism for coordination of UN system sustainability is designated |
| Environmental governance | Establishment of entity-specific environmental governance frameworks | Environmental management systems | All entities have an updated environmental management system approved by top management | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishment of entity-specific environmental policies 2. Implementation of Environmental management systems 3. Organisations define context specific targets on the main environmental indicators 4. Integration of environment risk into entities' risk management policies and procedures and in project evaluations | <p>By 2025 all UN entities have implemented an EMS at entity level including environmental targets</p> <p>% of entities having integrated environmental risks in their risk management procedures</p> |
| | | Environmental and social safeguards ¹ | Environmental and social safeguards are integrated in (main) programme activities. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a UN wide baseline of entities with safeguards in place 2. Entity-specific safeguard policies are reviewed and updated or developed, supported by the Model Approach to Environmental and Social Standards in the UN system | 100% of entities applying safeguards to their programmes |

¹ Environmental and social safeguards are normally considered together. The target outlined here does not imply that environmental and social safeguards would need to be separated.

| Theme | Objective | Aspect | Commitment | Steps towards goal | Indicators of achievement 2030 |
|-------|-----------|--------------------------------|--|---|--|
| | | Performance management systems | Environmental performance integrated in senior management compacts | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integration of harmonized environmental performance criteria into entities' annual reporting mechanisms 2. Organisations invest in more complete reporting and environmental data analytics to support performance 3. UN system reporting is maintained and adapted to the new strategy requirements | 100% entities having integrated environmental objectives in senior management performance |
| | | Resources mobilisation | Provision in entity budgets for implementation of environmental management | <p>Establish entity specific modalities for the provision of sufficient financial and human resources for the implementation of environmental management and of the strategy. Possible options (used currently by UN organisations) include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation of internal funds, via carbon pricing 2. Partnerships with private sector, foundations, research institutes, universities 3. In-kind and financial support from donors 4. Multiagency funding for joint initiatives | <p>% of entities with internal tax/levy or other dedicated systems to fund environmental improvements</p> <p>100% of entities have dedicated capacity for environmental management</p> |
| | | Environmental reporting | Entities report publicly about their environmental performance | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each UN Entity takes steps to integrate information about their environmental sustainability performance (including safeguards) in annual reports Entities strengthen the internal efforts to report as part of the UN wide Greening the Blue environmental report | 100% of annual reports in UN entities integrate progress on internal sustainability (safeguards, EMS, Greening the Blue) |

Environmental Impacts

| Impact | Objective | Aspect | Commitment | Steps towards goal | Indicators of achievement 2030 and targets |
|---------------|---|--------------------|--|--|---|
| GHG emissions | Reduce absolute GHG emissions by 2030 to limit increase in global temperature to 1.5 °C, in line with recommendations of the 2018 IPCC report. (baseline year and specific targets to be agreed) | Use of electricity | Optimize electricity consumption in facilities | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a UN wide baseline using the existing UN GHG emissions data and UN wide metrics for progress 1. Assess and reevaluate the size and use of generators in UN facilities 2. Establish UN wide standards for energy management in new building, retrofits, or field set ups 3. Reduce total energy demand through investments in energy efficiency technologies ((e.g. lighting upgrade, envelope insulation, windows replacement, AC upgrade) 4. Encourage behavioural change influencing reduction in demand | % reductions in electricity use |
| | | Energy sources | Switch to renewable energy sources | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a UN wide baseline using the existing UN GHG emissions data and feasibility of a UN shift to renewables 2. Decarbonise energy supply, by purchasing renewable electricity and heating utility wherever it is available 3. Increase, wherever possible, the use of renewables via investments in on-site self-production 4. Where appropriate, support dedicated private sector renewable energy projects to supply the UN 5. Consider -where renewables re not available to switch to Renewable Energy Certificates | % of renewables |
| | | Air Travel | Optimize commercial air travel for operations and programs | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reconsideration and harmonisation of current travel policies taking into account the need to reduce UN GHG emissions 2. Incentives for staff to voluntarily downgrade class of travel and dis-incentives for business and first-class travel | % GHG emissions reduction from Air travel |
| | | Ground travel | Minimize/optimize Fuel consumption derived from ground travel of UN staff, operations and programs | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define UN wide guidance for fleet management including common Goals such as reducing average fleet age; introducing electric vehicles where feasible and measures to improving fuel quality. 2. Develop agency specific fleet management systems | % reduction in fuel use from ground transport |

| Impact | Objective | Aspect | Commitment | Steps towards goal | Indicators of achievement 2030 and targets |
|------------------|---|---------------------|--|---|---|
| | | | | <i>This is same as air pollution</i> | |
| | | Climate Neutrality | All UN entities maintain their Climate Neutral status | Purchase UNFCCC approved offsets | % of UN system reported unavoidable GHG emissions that are offset |
| Waste management | Ensure no solid waste from UN facilities, operations and activities is causing pollution and harm to the environment and local populations, by avoiding the release of toxic substances to the air, soil and water bodies and impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems. | Non-hazardous waste | Minimize non-hazardous solid waste generation derived from UN facilities, operations and activities, while ensuring proper recycling, treating and disposal. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement systematic waste monitoring in every office in support of solid waste management 2. Establish UN wide and agency specific waste generation baselines related to waste management and UN wide metrics for progress 3. Establish UN waste management Code of Conduct setting UN standards (including chemicals, hazardous waste, e-waste and plastics but also acceptable disposal methods) 4. Explore /allow partnerships with local organizations to manage specific waste streams (food, ICT, furniture, etc.) 5. Minimize solid waste through preferences given to reduced and improved packaging, composting of biodegradable organics and improved material supply | <p>% entities with formal waste management programs</p> <p>% of waste being diverted to reuse/recycling</p> |
| | | Hazardous waste | Minimize hazardous solid waste generation derived from UN facilities, operations, and activities, while ensuring proper recycling, treating and disposal | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement systematic waste monitoring in every office in support of hazardous solid waste management and define baselines 2. Establish a UN wide standards for defining and managing hazardous waste as point 2 under non-hazardous waste above 3. Establish UN collaborative mapping and information sharing of hazardous waste management options, storage and take back systems including e-waste 4. Invest in hazardous material supply improvements, better management and raising awareness to reduce generation of hazardous wastes as well as improved handling and disposal of these materials | % of hazardous waste formally processed using environmentally sound management standards |
| | | Single-use plastic | Reduce single-use plastics across UN compounds and activities | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define single use plastics taking into account the specific needs of UN organisations (medical, humanitarian, etc) 2. Establish base-line and agree on UN wide metrics for progress 3. Identify key areas of intervention (packaging, catering, food distribution, medical, plastic sheeting etc.) | % of UN entities that have single-use plastic policies and report on resulting plastic reduction |

| Impact | Objective | Aspect | Commitment | Steps towards goal | Indicators of achievement 2030 and targets |
|----------------------|--|------------------------|---|---|---|
| | | | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Minimize the use of single-use plastics in premises and projects via innovative solutions in procurement and behaviour change through raised awareness 5. Define UN standards for the disposal of plastic waste in both facilities and field locations including humanitarian context | |
| Air pollution | Ensure UN premises and fleet do not contribute to/exacerbate local air quality issues, in both urban and remote community settings | Fossil fuels | Minimise to the extent possible the particulate, SOx, NOx, and other (non-GHG) emissions from burning fossil fuels in generators and vehicles | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyse at UN entities and UN wide level the extent to which the UN contribute to or try to limit air pollution 2. Define UN wide guidance for fleet management including common Goals such as reducing average fleet age; introducing electric vehicles where feasible and measures to improving fuel quality. 3. Establish a UN-wide baseline for electric vehicles 4. Develop agency specific fleet management systems 5. For Premises: energy efficiency and renewable targets as above. | <p>% of electric vehicles</p> <p>% fuel in use that meets international quality standards</p> |
| | | Ozone Depletion | Ensure UN premises do not contribute to depletion of the Ozone layer | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eliminate all Ozone depleting refrigerants from cooling systems and vehicles 2. Ensure adherence to the Kigali amendment in all developed country locations. 3. Eliminate refrigerants with low ODP (ozone depleting potential) and GWP (global warming potential) in all air conditioning equipment | % of UN entities still using ozone depleting substances |
| | | Short lived pollutants | Minimize the release of short-lived pollutants by purchasing low global warming potential options in UN refrigerants and air conditioning, in fuel choices and via the adoption of sound waste management practices | | % entities with a plan for minimization of short-lived pollutants |
| Water and wastewater | Ensure water conservation and avoid the release of untreated wastewater into the environment | Water management | Ensure sustainable extraction of water in locations where the UN operates. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Water consumption is metered/tracked at all premises. 2. Survey of sites that directly extract their own water (from surface or underground) 3. Define UN water management standards and baselines including measures to facilitate access to | % sites with water efficiency measures (taps, leak-reduction plans) |

| Impact | Objective | Aspect | Commitment | Steps towards goal | Indicators of achievement 2030 and targets |
|--------------------------|--|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| | | | | drinking water to staff other than single plastic bottles 4. Undertake water resource assessments for all large yield extraction wells and waterpoints 5. Invest in water efficient fixtures and specify them as basic requirements in all new constructions/ mobilizations, including container offices. | |
| | | Wastewater management | Ensure no wastewater is disposed untreated on soil or in water bodies, with potential to cause environmental damage. | 1. Carry out a sanitation and wastewater management audit of all field operations under direct responsibility by the UNDefine UN waste water management standards and baselines 2. Establish chain of custody process for all off-site disposed sewage waste to ensure it meets waste water management standards 3. Where needed, invest in dedicated or communal wastewater treatment facilities to protect the health of the surrounding population | % of wastewater disposed untreated % reclaimed water reported |
| Biodiversity degradation | Conserve biodiversity and avoid adverse impacts from UN facilities, operations and activities. | Biodiversity conservation | Ensure that adverse impacts from UN facilities, operations and activities on biodiversity and habitats are identified and avoided in consultation with relevant, affected stakeholders | 1. Consult qualified expertise in assessing potential impacts of new premises, developing appropriate mitigation and monitoring measures 2. Prioritize siting activities with potential adverse impacts far from critical habitats, protected areas or areas of ecological significance, giving preference to locating activities on lands where natural habitats have already been converted/degraded or in areas of low value for biodiversity and ecosystem services 3. Implement measures to avoid introduction or utilization of invasive alien species | % of sites for new premises that have been screened for biodiversity impacts |

Environmental aspects / Management functions

| Management function | Objective | Goal | Steps towards goal | Indicators of achievement 2030 |
|---------------------|---|---|---|--|
| Procurement | The procurement function supports the goals set by the UN sustainability strategy | UN organizations systematically integrate sustainability considerations in procurement ² | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define by 2021 further guidance for sustainable UN procurement including total cost of ownership considerations, circularity principles, take back schemes, innovation and opportunities for reducing UN spend by sharing and collaborating on key items 2. Agency specific sustainable procurement plans are developed that include circular economy considerations such as leasing, sharing of equipment amongst agencies and also make provisions for take back schemes 3. Define a list of phase-outs in line with the objectives of the strategy such as no ozone depleting substance; persistent organic pollutants or short-lived climate pollutants. 4. Integrate environmental considerations in supply chain risks evaluation and monitoring <i>and build capacity among suppliers</i> 5. Ensure that current and future system wide sustainability initiatives (Women, Youth, Disability, etc.) are aligned with global Sustainable Procurement Principles, and that procurement is leveraged to further these interests 6. Enhance current public reporting on UN sustainable procurement efforts 7. Incorporate true cost of environmental impacts on goods purchased | <p>% of UN entities with policies and guidance that integrate sustainability considerations in procurement</p> <p>% tenders with sustainability criteria at entity and UN wide level</p> |
| Human resources | Environmental management is integrated in UN existing capacity building and accountability frameworks | Increased awareness and understanding from UN staff of the importance of walking the talk | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awareness: develop mandatory system-wide training on environment at the work place for UN staff + invest in job-specific environmental training (e.g. facilities managers, engineers, procurement officers, programme managers) 2. Accountability: integrate requirement for environmental improvement in all Senior Level compacts and senior management performance requirements 3. Attract qualified staff: integrate requirements for environmental capacities in relevant job descriptions, (e.g. facilities managers, engineers, logistics experts, program managers) 4. Integrate environment into core competencies 5. Integrate environmental stewardship into UN and entities' staff codes of conduct and core competencies | <p>% of staff trained per agency</p> <p>Number of relevant personnel recruited with Environmental Management expertise</p> |

² Sustainable procurement has been for the past 10 years considered as integrating both Environmental and social considerations together. The target outlined here does not imply that environmentally and socially responsible procurement would need to be separated.

| Management function | Objective | Goal | Steps towards goal | Indicators of achievement 2030 |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Travel | Reduction of UN GHG emissions from travel | Reconsideration of current travel policies taking into account the need to reduce UN GHG emissions | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Harmonize approaches for travel with the objective of reducing emissions 2. Incentives for staff to voluntarily downgrade class of travel and disincentives for business and first-class travel 3. Integrate remote meetings options in travel operating procedures in line with the steps under Events and ICT) <p>This is same as commitment under GHG emissions but repeated for the importance of travel in UN environmental footprint</p> | <p>% of UN wide GHG emission from travel</p> <p>% reductions in emissions from travel per personnel</p> |
| Facilities management | All UN facilities (led by UN common premises) follow sustainable building standards or harmonized guidance for sustainable building management | Maximise resource efficiency and resilience of UN facilities and minimize their environmental footprint | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrate environmental requirements in negotiations with host governments /landlords 2. Integrate UN harmonised guidance, in existing UN premises processes including evaluations of cost benefits, environmental evaluations and building management systems including the obligation to have meter and submeter for energy and water in all UN facilities 3. Carry out environmental audits in existing larger UN buildings 4. Develop for all UN premises templates sustainable building management plans including energy, waste and hazardous waste (including e-waste), water management and where relevant biodiversity management plans | <p>% of facilities implementing building standards.</p> <p>% reductions in environmental impacts from environmental inventory from facilities</p> |
| Events | UN events on any topic show case the commitment of the UN towards sustainability | All large UN events (over 300 pax) are sustainable and climate neutral | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrate sustainability considerations in events planning 2. Analysis of entities' virtual meeting patterns and design a UN comprehensive plan for encouraging remote events & meeting 3. SGs and all USGs will not attend large UN events that are not climate neutral | % of sustainable and climate neutral events with over 300 participants |
| ICT | Align ICT function with the ambitions of the strategy | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Baseline and analysis of how the ICT sector is supporting the goals of the sustainability policy and define a specific strategy for this function including: b. Ensuring ICT complies with sustainability guidelines (reduction of data centre footprint, consideration of consolidation of data centers in and adoption of greener solutions, use of energy saving computers, use of network printers, cloud, purchasing from ISO 14001 compliant businesses, ensuring there is an effective disposal of e-Waste generated, maintenance plan to ensure once energy efficiency diminishes computers are repaired/replaced) c. Use of ICT to support sustainability (online meeting tools, specific software / analysis, ensuring reliable and working equipment is available so staff have confident that an online meeting won't fail) d. Expanded use of Icloud technologies to reduce the use of data centers and electronic equipment | |