United Nations System CEB/2019/1/Add.1

Chief Executives Board for Coordination

Distr.: General
29 May 2019

Original: English
English and French only

First regular session of 2019
Geneva, 9–10 May 2019

Summary of deliberations

Addendum

Strategy for sustainability management in the United Nations system, 2020–2030

Phase I: Environmental sustainability in the area of management

Contents

19-08787 (E) 090719

I. Context

1. In December 2018, the Secretary-General of the United Nations asked the Organization to raise the level of its internal ambitions and intensify its efforts to combat climate change from within. At the climate summit he has called for, which is to be held in September 2019, the Secretary-General plans to highlight that the United Nations is "walking the talk" on environmental sustainability and climate change.

2. This request raises the profile of mandate from senior officials of the Environment Management Group to develop an internal sustainability vision and strategy for the United Nations beyond 2020 in order to confirm the Organization's leadership aspirations in the area of internal environmental and social sustainability and to show that the United Nations aligns its own performance with the principles that it has pioneered internationally.[1]

3. Both requests echo calls by Member States in General Assembly resolutions and the quadrennial comprehensive policy review for the United Nations 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 United Nations projects and programmes.

4. The Environment Management Group and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have been given the task of responding to these requests and propose herewith a strategy for sustainability management in the United Nations system for the period 2020–2030, with an overarching vision for sustainability management and a two-phased approach for achieving it.

5. United Nations entities already have much progress to show, thanks to 10 years of collective work on measuring, reducing and offsetting 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.

6. Sustainability management helps the United Nations to address and manage risks to the natural environments in which it operates, to the health of its staff, to the livelihoods of the people it serves and ultimately to the credibility and reputation of the Organization. At the same time, sustainability management brings about opportunities to generate benefits such as efficiencies in the use of natural resources and finances, and accountability and transparency in how the United Nations manages the delivery of its mandates. The pressing need to address environmental challenges such as pollution, climate change and the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services means that there is an urgency to the United Nations system raising its ambitions 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

7. In October 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released the special report entitled *Global Warming of 1.5ºC*. In its report, the Panel advocates limiting global warming to 1.5°C, instead of the previously agreed 2°C, and indicates the advantages to ecosystems and societies of such an 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 human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide (CO_2) would need to fall by about

[1] The 24th meeting of senior officials of the Environment Management Group was held in New York during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly.

45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching ‘net zero’ around 2050.” Remaining emissions would need to be balanced by removing carbon dioxide from the air.

8. 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

9. The United Nations system needs to align its own practices with the recommendations contained in the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in order to ensure that its facilities, operations, projects and programmes should support, rather than hinder, the efforts of Governments to mitigate climate change.

III. A vision for sustainability management in the United Nations system, 2020–2030

10. The United Nations system made a commitment to be fit to lead delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals 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 United Nations system to the sustainable and resilient path envisaged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

11. The 2030 vision for sustainability management is that the United Nations system is a leader in integrating environmental and social sustainability considerations across its work in a systematic and coherent way, practising the principles that it promotes and leaving a positive legacy.

12. Fundamental to this vision are the objectives to embody the Goals at all levels of management; lead by example; ensure the 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

13. In recognition of the complexities of fully integrating sustainability considerations into the way in which the United Nations system does its work and the opportunity to present, at the 2019 climate summit, a strategy that builds on existing efforts and focuses on internal environmental sustainability, the proposed strategy for sustainability management in the United Nations system, 2020–2030 will be developed in two stages.

14. Phase I, set out in the present document, covers environmental sustainability in the area of management. It focuses on the continued reduction of environmental impacts by the systematic consideration of risks and benefits to the environment from United Nations activities in relevant corporate management decisions of all United Nations entities.

15. Phase II, for endorsement by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) in 2020, will address the full picture of internal environmental and social sustainability in United Nations system policies, programming, facilities and operations,[2] as outlined in the Framework for Advancing Environmental and Social Sustainability in the United Nations System.

V. Existing efforts and results to date

16. The Environment Management Group and its membership have undertaken a great deal of work over the past decade, spanning both strategic development and delivery on the ground and paving the way for a progressively broader vision of internal sustainability in the United Nations system.

17. Ten years ago, ambitions for integrating environmental considerations into United Nations 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 and no harmonized guidance or tools. The United Nations system has come a long way since then.

18. Activities to measure, reduce and offset greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impacts from United Nations facilities and operations have been underway since 2007, when CEB approved the United Nations climate neutral strategy.

19. In 2012, conscious that the sustainability impacts of the United Nations system were not limited to facilities and operations, the Environment Management Group endorsed the Framework for Advancing Environmental and Social Sustainability in the United Nations System, outlining a basic architecture for integrating environmental and social sustainability measures into policies, strategies, programmes, projects, facilities and operations of the United Nations, and providing a good base for a comprehensive sustainability strategy.

20. The developments over the past 10 years have required significant organizational efforts, coordination and cultural change that together form a sound basis for moving forward. The progress made has also required dedicated financial and human resources for individual entities as well as for system-wide coordination.

21. In the area of facilities and operations, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standard ISO 14001 on environmental management systems, endorsed by the High-level Committee on Management in 2013 for the implementation of environmental management in the United Nations system, has been used as a reference. Its annex 14031, on environmental performance evaluation,[3] requires that progress be evaluated in a specific context using both physical and management results. The former can be more easily measured than the latter. Both are necessary to provide an accurate picture of achievements.

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

[3] ISO 14031:2013 provides guidance on the design and use of environmental performance evaluation within an organization. It is applicable to all organizations, regardless of type, size, location or complexity. According to the standard, there are three categories of indicators: (a) environmental condition indicators, for presenting achievements in context; (b) operational performance indicators, for demonstrating changes in resource use; and (c) management performance indicators, for showing cost savings and improvements in training.

A. Projects and programming

22. The work of the Environment Management Group at the level of projects and programmes has been driven by the goals of “Delivering as one”, walking the talk, achieving system-wide efficiencies and ensuring access to conditional financing.

23. Comparative inter-agency analyses have confirmed the growing use of environmental and social standards or safeguards and of related accountability mechanisms in the design of United Nations projects and programmes. Such standards are aimed at enhancing the quality of interventions by maximizing benefits and avoiding inadvertent harm to people and the environment. As of 2018, at least 11 United Nations 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 of their activities across programming and support operations and that underpin their entity’s approach to sustainability management.

24. Significant alignment across the safeguards systems of entities has enabled the Environment Management Group to draft a model approach for environmental and social standards in United Nations programming that offers a set of harmonized benchmarks and processes for use by entities when adopting or revising their individual sustainability policies or frameworks. The model approach is currently being applied by a group of United Nations entities involved in country-level programming.

25. 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 system. These measures have also helped to ensure continued access to financing that is increasingly tied to social and environmental standards and accountability policies, for example, from the Green Climate Fund, the Global Environment Facility and bilateral donors.

B. Facilities and operations

26. The work of the Environment Management Group and UNEP at the level of facilities and operations has been supported through close collaboration with the High-level Committee on Management and backing from ambitious CEB decisions associated with the United Nations climate neutral strategy. In this area, formal United Nations system commitments have included the following:

(a) 2007: Commitment to measure, reduce and offset greenhouse gas emissions from the facilities, operations and travel activities of the United Nations;

(b) 2013: Commitment to develop environmental management systems covering four key areas: greenhouse gas emissions, waste, water and staff awareness;

(c) 2015: Endorsement of the climate neutral road map committing the United Nations system to integrate environmental considerations into the planning for facilities and operations and to fully offset its greenhouse gas emissions from facilities and operations by 2020.

27. These commitments have given an important fillip to collaborative work and mutual support among United Nations entities and have provided the foundations for improved management of the environmental footprint of the United Nations system, as follows:

(a) **Measurement of the United Nations system’s environmental footprint.** Such a measurement is well established for greenhouse gas emissions (since 2008),

and data collection on waste (since 2016) and water (since 2018) is improving. All of the 66 entities taking part in the Greening the Blue initiative report reliable emissions data, and 80 per cent report partial data on waste generation and disposal and on water consumption;

(b) **Efforts to reduce environmental impacts.** These efforts have resulted in close to 30 entities now practising a systematic approach to environmental management. Details of concrete or quantifiable progress include 20 entity headquarters that purchase renewable energy for their electricity needs, a growing number of United Nations common premises and country offices equipped with solar panels that meet up to 100 per cent of their energy needs, and more recent initiatives by some 15 entities to reduce or totally ban their use of single-use plastics. United Nations entities have also collectively developed a range of guidelines and tools for common use;

(c) **Progress towards the goal of climate neutrality by 2020.** Progress in this regard is noteworthy, not least because United Nations entities had yet to explore cost implications and budgetary modalities at the time of the original commitment. As of 2018, 43 of the 66 participating entities offset the global greenhouse gas emissions that they cannot yet reduce, accounting for 39 per cent of United Nations system emissions. The remaining challenge is to achieve climate neutrality for the whole United Nations Secretariat, particularly United Nations peacekeeping activities, which make up over 90 per cent of reported United Nations system emissions not currently offset.

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

29. Annual reporting on the Greening the Blue initiative has drawn the attention of United Nations staff and management and of the general public to the impacts of the United Nations system. It has also highlighted areas in which intervention and harmonized approaches are needed, such as 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. Gap analysis

30. Despite the progress made over the past 10 years, the United Nations system is still a considerable way from being able to claim that it has mainstreamed environmental sustainability in its work practices. This carries important financial and reputational risks for United Nations entities, the health of United Nations staff and of the communities where they serve, and sustainable development.

31. Gaps in and opportunities for bold ambitions to achieve meaningful reductions in adverse impacts on the environment and people exist at three levels:[4]

[4] These levels correspond to the three entry points in the sustainability framework of the Environment Management Group. Available at https://unemg.org/our-work/internal-sustainability/environmental-and-social-sustainability/.

A. Environmental governance

32. With regard to policies and accountability, there is currently no system-wide commitment for United Nations entities to have an environmental governance framework beyond the 2013 agreement of the High-level Committee on Management to implement environmental management at the level of facilities and operations. Such a framework is necessary to underpin work and results at all levels.

33. Governance is also tightly connected with appropriate human and financial resources. The existing mechanisms for coordinating environmental sustainability, whether across or within United Nations entities, cannot generate solid and trackable results with existing means. Too much is still dependent on the goodwill and creativity of individuals.

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

35. 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 makes it hard to "sell" investments that may not bring short-term financial benefits, such as better waste management, improved staff training or sustainable procurement.

36. Similarly, environmental management has not yet been integrated into the performance evaluation frameworks of entities, including such frameworks of top management.

37. In short, despite the demonstrated risks to staff, beneficiaries, and the countries in which the United Nations operates, environmental governance is not yet considered part of the "duty of care" of the United Nations in most entities, and instead remains a desirable option.

B. Projects and programmes

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

39. Gaps in the adoption and use of safeguards for programming mean that United Nations entities continue to spend precious resources on ad hoc compliance with safeguards imposed by donors.

40. Without safeguards to guide the management of programmes of the United Nations, its entities risk harming the communities they seek to serve as well as its reputation. Examples of unintended harm unfortunately exist: deforestation, dried-up wells, damage to protected plant species, and consequences for health from inadequate waste practices and for livelihoods from polluted waterways.

C. Facilities and operations

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

42. At 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 more challenging in general and more damaging in practice as a result of the increased vulnerability of populations and ecosystems and the lack of national-level controls, infrastructure and capacity.

43. 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 United Nations system due to ongoing reliance on costly and polluting diesel generators
- Overexploitation of natural resources including deforestation, land degradation, water resource depletion and ecosystem degradation

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

45. Fragmented project-based and site-specific solutions from 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 their replication and scale-up.

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

47. Only 12 of the 26 organizations with an environmental management system have their own baselines and targets. Others have preferred to use objectives rather than quantifiable targets. The system-wide agreement of baselines and the establishment of targets for a small series of indicators are essential to track progress.

48. Finally, while environmental sustainability has so far been addressed through separate processes for facilities and operations and for projects and programmes, there are now calls for United Nations 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 should be fully mainstreamed in all United Nations activities.

VII. Environmental sustainability in the area of management

49. In defining a new strategy, the United Nations system can build on lessons learned. Hundreds of best practices collected through the Environment Management Group and the Greening the Blue initiative show the way in which United Nations entities have innovated to seize opportunities for environmental sustainability management, and the benefits that such initiatives have generated.

50. For instance, a combination of resource efficiency measures and renewable energy use has enabled innovative entities to mitigate risks associated with business

continuity, especially in conflict zones and areas at high risk of natural disasters, and to make significant operational cost savings that can be redirected to programme delivery.

51. The strategy for environmental sustainability in the area of management rests on the pillars set out below.

A. Environment as a cross-cutting issue

52. Considerations include the following:

(a) The biggest opportunity offered by this strategy is that of embedding environmental sustainability as a cross-cutting issue to be fully integrated into how the United Nations operates at all levels;

(b) Environmental impacts are shared across support operations and programming. For ease of handling, a line has been drawn to date between the environmental impacts of facilities and operations, which are currently measured system-wide, and those of programmes, which are not currently measured system-wide Systematically;

(c) In reality, these impacts often overlap. For example, it is difficult to distinguish between operations responsibility and 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 United Nations vehicle workshops;

(d) Ultimately, it does not matter whether an impact is deemed to have a programmatic or an operational cause: it is part of the duty of care of the United Nations to ensure that all reasonable precautions should be taken to prevent United Nations activities from harming local communities and the natural systems that underpin their livelihoods;

(e) Given the values represented by the United Nations, it is also incumbent upon the Organization to “do good”, to lead by example and to demonstrate innovation in its own implementation of the norms and principles that it advocates to the world;

(f) For these reasons, it is imperative that the United Nations system should 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 afterthought.

B. Building on existing efforts

53. Considerations include the following:

(a) Ten years of system-wide efforts have produced results that deserve recognition and that must be sustained. The three steps of the 2007 United Nations climate neutral strategy (measure, reduce, offset) are now integrated into the ways in which United Nations entities design and manage their environmental sustainability efforts and are fully in line with the environmental management approach agreed to by the High-level Committee on Management in 2013. Building on the existing structure will be the key to the success of future efforts;

(b) United Nations entities accordingly renew and expand their commitments to:

(i) Measure: strengthen efforts related to systematic measurement of impacts for all environmental indicators agreed by the United Nations, including the establishment of measurement methodologies, baselines and a system to track progress. In this way, a comprehensive understanding of United Nations 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;

(ii) Reduce: decrease adverse environmental impacts and maximize sustainability gains by:

- Implementing entity-specific environmental management systems in line with international best practices, 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 United Nations 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

(iii) Offset: maintain the commitment to a 100 per cent climate-neutral United Nations, through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the transition to renewable energy sources and, for the unavoidable greenhouse gas emissions, the purchase of emission reduction certificates approved by United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

C. Commitment to a common but flexible approach to environmental governance, supported by a strong inter-agency coordination mechanism

54. Considerations include the following:

(a) A system-wide commitment to environmental governance is fundamental to effective environmental sustainability management and the concomitant policies and procedures, ensuring effective protection and, where possible, enrichment of the natural environment;

(b) As the mandates and governance structures of United Nations entities vary, a one-size-fits-all environmental governance structure is not realistic. It is therefore up to each entity to identify, on the basis of a set of common parameters, its own solutions for environmental governance, including policies, targets, implementation mechanisms and resource mobilization;

(c) At the same time, coordination and oversight are essential for tracking system-wide progress;

(d) Without the leadership, coordination and support of the Environment Management Group and of the UNEP project, Sustainable United Nations, there would have been fewer efforts by individual United Nations entities over the past 10 years, and today's common approach to sustainability management would not exist;

(e) The technical expertise and coordination function of these two mechanisms have been decisive in maintaining the focus on collective approaches to methodologies, in liaison with the High-level Committee on Management, and have also brought concrete benefits in terms of experience-sharing and the demonstration of the United Nations delivering as one. For this reason, the Sustainable United Nations team and the Issue Management Group on Environmental Sustainability

Management of the Environment Management Group were granted the "Greening the UN" award by the Secretary-General in 2016;

(f) In the spirit of ongoing United Nations reform, it is important for system entities to 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 also specifically to deliver, as the Environment Management Group and the Sustainable United Nations team have done so far, the following services:

(i) Support and monitoring of the efforts of individual entities towards sustainability management, promotion of inter-agency cooperation and experience-sharing and of benchmarking (catalyst function);

(ii) Provision of technical advice on demand, and development of harmonized tools, training packages and methodologies that can be owned by everyone (help desk function);

(iii) Help in maintaining staff interest through the Greening the Blue campaign and provision of a system-wide context and ready-to-use tools for internal campaigns. This includes the provision of online and ad hoc training to agencies on matters of internal sustainability (communications function);

(iv) Assurance that entity-specific and system-wide environmental impacts are recorded, collated and communicated across the United Nations system, and that progress and achievements are communicated to the public (reporting function);

(g) Services provided in common typically lead to economies of scale, and the investments necessary are small compared to the costs that each agency would incur if the service were not available.

55. With this understanding, United Nations system entities agree to the system-wide commitments set out below (see table 1) in the area of environmental governance and coordination. Steps to achieve the commitments are set out in greater detail in the tables contained in the annex to the present report.

Table 1
Commitments on environmental governance and system-wide coordination

Objective	*Aspects*	*Commitment*	*2020–2030 indicators and targets*
Ensure the harmonization of approaches, benchmarking, system-wide reporting and coordination of efforts	System-wide coordination	United Nations system organizations commit to coordinate, collaborate, discuss and report on system-wide progress in the implementation of the 2020–2030 sustainability strategy of the United Nations	By 2020, a mechanism for the coordination of United Nations system sustainability is designated
Establishment of entity-specific environmental governance frameworks	Environmental management systems	All entities have an updated environmental management system approved by top management	By 2025, all United Nations entities have implemented an environmental management system at entity level, including an

Objective	*Aspects*	*Commitment*	*2020–2030 indicators and targets*
			environmental policy and targets
			Percentage of entities that have integrated environmental risks into their risk management procedures
	Environmental and social safeguards[a]	Environmental and social safeguards are integrated in (main) programme activities	100 per cent of entities apply safeguards to their programmes
	Performance management systems	Environmental performance integrated in senior management performance frameworks	100 per cent of entities that have integrated environmental objectives into senior management performance
	Resource mobilization	Provision in entity budgets for implementation of environmental management	Percentage of entities with an internal tax or levy, or other dedicated systems for funding environmental improvements
			Percentage increase in expenditure of entities on environmental issues
	Environmental reporting	Entities report publicly on their environmental performance	100 per cent of annual reports in United Nations entities integrate progress on internal sustainability

[a] 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.

D. Common goals for environmental impacts and aspects[5]

56. Considerations include the following:

(a) 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 (energy, water, land), and waste production and management;

(b) United Nations activities can also have an impact on biodiversity, ecosystems, sustainable natural resource management, disaster risk reduction,

[5] ISO 14001:2015. Available at https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso:14001:ed-3:v1:en.

cultural and natural heritage, and indigenous peoples' rights. These impact areas will be more fully addressed in phase II of the strategy;

(c) Environmental aspects are any element of an organization's activities, products or services that can interact with the environment;

(d) For the purposes of phase I of this strategy, key aspects include a wide range of management practices such as energy use, procurement, buildings, waste and water management, human resources, travel and transport, information and communications technology (ICT), and events. Sustainability aspects stemming from projects and programmes will be further considered in phase II;

(e) Expanding on efforts already under way, phase I of the strategy proposes specific areas for common action to provide focus and raise the level of ambition of the United Nations system, assigning discrete impact reduction objectives and indicators to each area: greenhouse gas emissions, waste (solid, hazardous, plastic), water consumption, air pollution and biodiversity loss;

(f) Impact areas in which United Nations system methodologies exist for measurement and reporting include greenhouse gas emissions, waste and water. The United Nations system provides information to the public on its performance in these areas by means of the annual Greening the Blue report;

(g) Two more impacts have been added because of their importance at the global level and the opportunities that they offer for United Nations entities to show leadership and improve their performance: air pollution and biodiversity loss;

(h) 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:

(i) For greenhouse gas emissions, constantly-improving data covering a 10-year period are available, and the establishment of a system-wide baseline is possible and necessary for agreement on system-wide targets. The commitments proposed by this strategy provide a series of indicators for which system-wide targets will be established in line with the recommendations of the 2018 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change;

(ii) For waste and water, data collection at the United Nations system level started more recently. Monitoring in individual entities is not yet mature enough for the data to be considered fully reliable. For these two impacts, a series of indicators for individual entities is proposed. The setting of targets will only be possible after a more in-depth analysis of the situation;

(iii) Air pollution and biodiversity loss are relatively new areas for United Nations intervention. Indicators for individual entities have been proposed, but their confirmation and the setting of targets for performance will require further discussion and analysis.

57. With this understanding, United Nations system entities agree to the stem-wide commitments in the area of environmental impacts and aspects (see boxes 1–5). Steps to achieve the commitments are set out in greater detail in the tables contained in the annex to the present report.

Box 1
Greenhouse gas emissions

Climate change is leading to irreversible changes in major ecosystems and the planetary climate system. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the United Nations system are calling on the world to take concrete action to limit global temperature increases to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Like 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 United Nations Greening the Blue report contains greenhouse gas emissions data from 66 United Nations entities and over 250,000 staff members. In 2017, the United Nations system emitted 1.86 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, or 7.26 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per capita. 44 per cent of the greenhouse gas emissions of United Nations entities came from facilities (headquarter offices, field offices, warehouses, etc.), 42 per cent from air travel, and 14 per cent from other modes of travel such as ground transport.

Several United Nations entities have already taken concrete steps to reduce their greenhouse gas 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, Environment Management Group peer reviews of environmental management in United Nations entities, carried out since 2014 in 17 locations both at headquarters and in the field, have identified opportunities for up to 50 per cent energy efficiencies in some buildings. More systematic measures and efforts are needed to further improve the use of energy in United Nations facilities and operations.

Transport, including both air and ground travel, is another area with significant scope for improvement. Only a handful of entities have integrated environmental considerations into their travel policies, and opportunities offered by remote meeting technologies have not yet been fully exploited. Initiatives to introduce efficiencies into United Nations fleet management, especially in the field, have shown that savings of 25–30 per cent in fuel consumption can be achieved and should be upscaled.

While efforts to reduce emissions continue, unavoidable emissions need to be offset to meet the climate neutral commitment of the United Nations system.

Objective	*Aspects*	*Commitment*	*2020–2030 indicators*
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 (Baseline year and specific targets to be agreed)	Use of electricity	Optimize electricity consumption in facilities	Percentage reduction in electricity use
	Energy sources	Switch to renewable energy sources	Percentage of renewables
	Air travel	Reduce and optimize commercial air travel for operations and programmes	Percentage reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from air travel
	Ground travel	Minimize and/or optimize fuel consumption for ground travel of United Nations staff for operations and programmes	Percentage reduction in fuel use from ground transport
	Climate neutrality	All United Nations entities maintain their climate-neutral status	Percentage of unavoidable greenhouse gas emissions reported by the United Nations system that are offset

Box 2
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 greenhouse gas 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 are an important measure of the impact of the United Nations system on the communities in which it works. United Nations 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 United Nations. In the 2018 inventory, the system-wide rate of reuse, recycling, composting and recovery was a low 23 per cent. Nearly 50 per cent of reported United Nations 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 electronic waste, and offices often store it for lack of better local options.

The focus of 2018 World Environment Day on plastic pollution resulted in a number of initiatives in United Nations 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 United Nations 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 the control of waste streams from those facilities and operations.

Objective	*Aspects*	*Commitment*	*2020–2030 indicators*
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	Non-hazardous waste	Minimize non-hazardous solid waste generation derived from United Nations facilities, operations and activities while ensuring proper recycling, treatment and disposal	Percentage of entities with formal waste management programmes Percentage of waste diverted to reuse or recycling
	Hazardous waste	Minimize hazardous solid waste generation derived from United Nations facilities, operations and activities while ensuring proper recycling, treatment and disposal	Percentage of hazardous waste formally processed using environmentally sound management standards
	Single-use plastic	Reduce single-use plastics across United Nations compounds and activities	Percentage reduction in single-use plastics at entity headquarters, in the field or in humanitarian operations Percentage reduction in plastics from United Nations activities or compounds dispersed in the environment Percentage of United Nations entities with single-use plastic policies

Box 3
Air pollution

Air pollution causes approximately seven million premature deaths worldwide every year. 91 per cent of the world population lives in places where air quality exceeds World Health Organization (WHO) standards limits.[a] It is important for the United Nations system to understand and monitor its own impact on air pollution and to take steps towards improving the air quality in the places where it operates.

There is currently no measurement of air pollution caused by United Nations facilities and operations, although the annual system-wide environmental inventory provides data on fuel usage, ozone-depleting substances and short-lived pollutants through the monitoring of greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, the majority of United Nations facilities utilize fluorescent tubes that are usually disposed of through breakage, releasing the mercury vapor they contain into the atmosphere.

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

Stratospheric ozone-depleting substances and high-global-warming-potential alternatives are being progressively phased out worldwide, and United Nations 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 that United Nations premises and fleet do not contribute to or exacerbate local air quality issues, in both urban and remote community settings	Fossil fuels	Minimize particulate, black carbon, sulphur oxide, nitrogen oxide and other, non-greenhouse-gas, emissions from burning fossil fuels in generators and vehicles for heating or cooking or from supplied electricity	Percentage of electric vehicles Percentage of fuel in use that meets international quality standards
	Refrigeration and air conditioning	Ensure that United Nations premises do not contribute to the depletion of the ozone layer	Percentage of United Nations entities that have phased out ozone-depleting substances
	Hydrofluorocarbons	Minimize the release of hydrofluorocarbons by exclusively purchasing energy-efficient refrigeration equipment and air conditioning systems with low global-warming potential	Percentage of entities with a plan to phase down hydrofluorocarbons Percentage of United Nations premises and facilities using refrigeration and air-conditioning equipment with low global-warming potential

[a] Available at www.who.int/airpollution/en/.

Box 4
Water and wastewater

More than 2 billion people live in countries experiencing high water stress. According to UN-Water, this situation will likely worsen as populations and the demand for water grow, and as the effects of climate change intensify.[a] The World Health Organization (WHO) indicates that, by 2025, half of the world population will live in water-stressed areas.[b] It is important for the United Nations to understand its own impact on the water supply in the communities in which it operates and to reduce its demand.

The United Nations system started reporting on water consumption only recently. In 2018, a total of 58 entities provided water data for 2017 in the Greening the Blue report. The report shows that the United Nations system used a total of 11 million m^3 of water in 2017, representing an average of 53 m^3 per capita. These results are at the lower end of average country levels and so are not alarming, but it should be noted that the data are still partial and that their quality is not fully reliable. Entities reported that slightly less than 2 per cent of the water used in 2017 was recycled internally, which is a very low share that can be improved upon.

Along with managing its water use, the United Nations must also manage its wastewater well by treating and/or discharging it in an environmentally sound manner. According to WHO, 2 billion people worldwide use a drinking-water source contaminated with faeces[c] and, according to the United Nations Development Programme, 80 per cent of wastewater from human activities is discharged into waterways without adequate treatment.[d] The United Nations system has not officially started to report on its wastewater management.

Water and wastewater management is an area of high risk, but also of significant opportunities for improvement in the United Nations 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	Percentage of sites with water efficiency measures (taps, leak reduction plans)
	Wastewater management	Ensure that no wastewater is discharged untreated onto soil or into water bodies with the potential to cause environmental damage	Percentage of wastewater discharged untreated
			Percentage of reclaimed water reported

[a] See www.unwater.org/publications/highlights-sdg-6-synthesis-report-2018-on-water-and-sanitation-2/.
[b] See https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/drinking-water.
[c] See https://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/water-quality/en/.
[d] See https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-6-clean-water-and-sanitation.html.

Box 5
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 help to secure food and livelihoods, enhance resilience, conserve threatened species and increase 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 United Nations system may impact biodiversity through its facilities and operations. When new United Nations 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 United Nations facilities, operations and activities.	Biodiversity conservation	Ensure that adverse impacts on biodiversity and habitats from United Nations facilities, operations and activities are identified and avoided in consultation with relevant, affected stakeholders	Percentage of sites for new premises that have been screened for biodiversity impacts

E. Mobilizing all relevant management functions

58. Considerations include the following:

(a) The limited attention paid to functions, or aspects, that are key to enabling success has constituted a clear gap in existing internal United Nations sustainability work. Given their obvious connection to the goal of climate neutrality, some functions have been examined more closely than others and have generated solutions, such as facilities management. For full mainstreaming, all relevant functions need to be systematically considered;

(b) The commitments for 2030 (see table 2) are proposed with consideration of the need to mainstream the environment across key management functions of the United Nations system. Facilities, procurement and logistics are crucial components in the planning, design and delivery of programmes and emergency responses. Similarly, human resources, risk management, information technology and meetings are functions that span both corporate and programming wings of a United Nations entity. Steps to achieve the commitments are set out in greater detail in the tables contained in the annex to the present report.

(c) Measurement of progress can be implemented primarily through enhancements to existing reporting frameworks, such as the United Nations environmental management software developed with funding from the High-level Committee on Management, or the Annual Statistical Report on United Nations Procurement. More efforts will be necessary, however, to develop a comprehensive yet simple reporting mechanism that allows the tracking of progress on the new indicators.

Table 2
Commitments for 2030

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

[a] For the past 10 years, sustainable procurement has been considered to integrate both environmental and social considerations. The target outlined here does not imply that environmentally responsible procurement and socially responsible procurement need to be separated.

VIII. Enabling conditions

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

(a) **System-wide oversight and accountability.** While multiple United Nations entities have a stake in the effective mainstreaming of environmental considerations in the work of the United Nations system, no single entity has the dedicated capacity and authority to actively coordinate, support and track progress. The existing coordination units and technical support mechanisms, namely, the Environment Management Group and the Sustainable United Nations facility, have so far been hosted by UNEP. For these services to support the expanded ambitions of

the 2020–2030 sustainability strategy, an in-depth discussion is required within the United Nations system on how to mandate, organize, reinforce and sustain a system-wide coordination mechanism to ensure the harmonization of approaches, benchmarking and system-wide reporting;

(b) **Adequate resources.** Ten years of work on implementation of the United Nations climate neutral strategy have proven unequivocally that only those entities that are able to allocate internal resources to environmental management succeed in achieving concrete results. A condition for the success of phase I of the proposed strategy is therefore that environmental management should be fully integrated into system-wide and agency-specific plans for better utilization of resources, and that resources should be aligned with outcomes. Some entities have introduced a levy on either travel or fuels to set aside funds for use in environmental innovation and climate neutrality;

(c) **Commitment to teamwork and the United Nations reform agenda.** Extensive experience in individual entities and partnerships have proven that universal components of the United Nations reform agenda, such as common facilities and services, have an important role to play in improving the sustainability of the United Nations 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 the implementation of the strategy will be reported formally and annually by all entities to the Environment Management Group and by means of existing mandated reports such as the Report of the Secretary-General on the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development through the United Nations system. To ensure the regular monitoring of results at the highest level, a progress report on the implementation of the strategy will be delivered to CEB every two years. After five years, the strategy will be reviewed to confirm and, as necessary, adjust ambitions on the basis of an analysis of progress and emerging factors. Reporting on the Greening the Blue platform regarding the efforts of entities will be maintained;

(e) **Communication, awareness and knowledge-sharing.** The award-winning Greening the Blue campaign helps United Nations entities individually and collectively to raise awareness of the importance of sustainability throughout the United Nations system. It encourages entities and individual staff members to take an active role in reducing the Organization’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 to overcome mental barriers such as the belief that contributions can be too small to make a difference. With the participation and encouragement of, and examples set by, senior management, the potential of United Nations staff to boost sustainability performance can be significantly enhanced.

IX. Recommendations

60. **The High-level Committee on Management:**

(a) **Endorses phase I, environmental sustainability, of the strategy for sustainability management in the United Nations system, 2020–2030, in the area of management, as an important step towards mainstreaming environmental considerations in the management of United Nations system programmes and support operations;**

(b) **Notes that the commitments included in phase I of the strategy will be incorporated into a comprehensive sustainability strategy for the United Nations system for the period 2020–2030, encompassing a broader and fuller picture of environmental and social sustainability in United Nations system policies, programming and support functions, which will be further developed by the Environment Management Group for submission to CEB in 2020;**

(c) **Commits to hastening progress towards systematic action, building on progress to date, in particular through:**

(i) **Adoption of suitable targets in accordance with the strategy and continuous improvement towards their achievement;**

(ii) **Regular tracking and reporting on progress through the Environment Management Group, the Greening the Blue report and existing United Nations system reports as appropriate, and biennial reporting to the High-level Committee on Management;**

(d) **Commits to working with the Environment Management Group and relevant United Nations system coordination mechanisms towards the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability management at the levels of governance, programming and support functions;**

(e) **Encourages all United Nations system entities to include considerations for sustainability measures in their operational and non-operational budgets in a transparent and systematic manner in order to ensure timely implementation of the strategy.**

Annex

Commitments towards environmental sustainability in the area of management

A. Environmental governance

Theme	*Objective*	*Aspect*	*Commitment*	*Step towards goal*	*Indicator of achievement by 2030*
System-wide coordination	Ensure harmonization of approaches, benchmarking, system-wide reporting and coordination of efforts	System-wide coordination	United Nations system organizations commit to coordinating, collaborating, discussing and reporting on system-wide progress in the implementation of the United Nations 2020–2030 sustainability strategy	1. Assess whether the existing Environment Management Group secretariat/United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) inter-agency 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 United Nations inter-agency coordination, oversight and accountability in phase II of the United Nations 2020–2030 sustainability strategy	By 2020, a mechanism for the coordination of United Nations 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	1. Establishment of entity-specific environmental policies 2. Implementation of environmental management systems 3. Definition by organizations of context-specific targets on the main environmental indicators 4. Integration of environmental risk into the risk management policies and procedures of entities and into project evaluations	By 2025, all United Nations entities have implemented an environmental management system at the entity level, including environmental targets Percentage of entities that have integrated environmental risks into their risk management procedures

Theme	*Objective*	*Aspect*	*Commitment*	*Step towards goal*	*Indicator of achievement by 2030*
		Environmental and social safeguards[a]	Environmental and social safeguards are integrated in (main) programme activities	1. Establish a system-wide baseline of entities with safeguards in place 2. Review and update, or develop, entity-specific safeguard policies, supported by the model approach to environmental and social standards in the United Nations system	100 per cent of entities apply safeguards to their programmes
		Performance management systems	Environmental performance integrated in senior management compacts	1. Harmonized environmental performance criteria are integrated into entities' annual reporting mechanisms 2. Organizations invest in more complete reporting and environmental data analytics to support performance 3. United Nations system reporting is maintained and adapted to the new strategy requirements	100 per cent of entities have integrated environmental objectives into senior management performance
		Resource mobilization	Provision in entity budgets for implementation of environmental management	Establish entity-specific modalities for the provision of sufficient financial and human resources for implementing environmental management and the strategy. Possible options, currently used by United Nations organizations, include: 1. Creation of internal funds by means of 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	Percentage of entities with internal tax or levy or other dedicated systems for funding environmental improvements 100 per cent of entities have dedicated capacity for environmental management

Theme	*Objective*	*Aspect*	*Commitment*	*Step towards goal*	*Indicator of achievement by 2030*
		Environmental reporting	Entities report publicly on their environmental performance	1. Each United Nations entity takes steps to integrate information about its environmental sustainability performance (including safeguards) into annual reports 2. Entities strengthen the internal efforts to report as part of the system-wide Greening the Blue environmental report	100 per cent of annual reports in United Nations entities integrate progress on internal sustainability (safeguards, environmental management system, Greening the Blue)

[a] 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.

B. Environmental impacts

Impact	*Objective*	*Aspect*	*Commitment*	*Step towards goal*	*Indicator of achievement by 2030*
Greenhouse gas emissions	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 (Baseline year and specific targets to be agreed)	Use of electricity	Optimize electricity consumption in facilities	1. Establish a system-wide baseline using the existing United Nations greenhouse gas emissions data and system-wide metrics for progress 2. Assess and re-evaluate the size and use of generators in United Nations facilities 3. Establish system-wide standards for energy management in new building, retrofits or field setups 4. Reduce total energy demand through investments in energy-efficiency technologies, such as lighting upgrades, envelope insulation, window replacement, air-conditioning upgrades 5. Encourage behavioural change influencing a reduction in demand	Percentage reductions in electricity use
		Energy sources	Switch to renewable energy sources	1. Establish a system-wide baseline using the existing United Nations greenhouse gas emissions data and the feasibility of a United Nations shift to renewables 2. Decarbonize the energy supply by purchasing renewable electricity and heating utilities where available 3. Where possible, increase the use of renewables through investments in on-site self-production 4. Where appropriate, support dedicated private-sector renewable energy projects for supplying the United Nations	Percentage of renewables

Impact	*Objective*	*Aspect*	*Commitment*	*Step towards goal*	*Indicator of achievement by 2030*
				5. Where renewables are not available, consider switching to renewable energy certificates	
		Air travel	Optimize commercial air travel for operations and programmes	1. Reconsideration and harmonization of current travel policies, taking into account the need to reduce United Nations greenhouse gas emissions	Percentage reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from air travel
				2. Provision of incentives for staff to voluntarily downgrade class of travel and disincentives for business- and first-class travel	
		Ground travel	Minimize and/or optimize fuel consumption derived from ground travel of United Nations staff, operations and programmes	1. Define system-wide guidance for fleet management, including common goals such as reducing average fleet age, introducing electric vehicles where feasible, and implementing measures to improving fuel quality	Percentage reduction in fuel use from ground transport
				2. Develop agency-specific fleet management systems	
				This is same as air pollution	
		Climate neutrality	All United Nations entities maintain their climate-neutral status	Purchase offsets approved by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	Percentage of unavoidable greenhouse gas emissions reported by the United Nations system that are offset
Waste management	Ensure that no solid waste from United Nations facilities, operations and activities is causing pollution and harm to the environment and local populations by avoiding the release of	Non-hazardous waste	Minimize non-hazardous solid waste generation by United Nations facilities, operations and activities while ensuring proper	1. Implement systematic waste monitoring in every office in support of solid waste management	Percentage of entities with formal waste management programmes
				2. Establish system-wide and agency-specific waste generation baselines for waste management and system-wide metrics for progress	Percentage of waste being diverted to reuse or recycling

Impact	*Objective*	*Aspect*	*Commitment*	*Step towards goal*	*Indicator of achievement by 2030*
	toxic substances into the air, soil and water bodies and preventing impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems		recycling, treatment and disposal	3. Establish a United Nations waste management code of conduct setting United Nations standards to cover chemicals, hazardous waste, electronic waste and plastics, as well as acceptable disposal methods 4. Explore and/or allow partnerships with local organizations to manage specific waste streams, such as food, information and communications technology (ICT) and furniture 5. Minimize solid waste by giving preference to reduced and improved packaging, the composting of biodegradable organics, and improved material supply	
		Hazardous waste	Minimize hazardous solid waste generation by United Nations facilities, operations, and activities, while ensuring proper recycling, treatment and disposal	1. Implement systematic waste monitoring in every office in support of hazardous solid waste management and define baselines 2. Establish system-wide standards for defining and managing hazardous waste, as for point 2 under non-hazardous waste above 3. Establish collaborative United Nations mapping and sharing of information on hazardous waste management options, storage and take-back systems, including electronic waste options 4. Invest in hazardous material supply improvements, better management, and awareness-raising to reduce the generation of hazardous waste and improve the handling and disposal of these materials	Percentage of hazardous waste formally processed using environmentally sound management standards

Impact	*Objective*	*Aspect*	*Commitment*	*Step towards goal*	*Indicator of achievement by 2030*
		Single-use plastics	Reduce single-use plastics across United Nations compounds and activities	1. Define single-use plastics, taking into account the specific needs of United Nations organizations (medical, humanitarian, etc.) 2. Establish a baseline and agree on system-wide metrics for progress 3. Identify key areas of intervention, such as packaging, catering, food distribution, medical use and plastic sheeting 4. Minimize the use of single-use plastics in premises and projects by means of innovative solutions in procurement and behavioural change through raised awareness 5. Define United Nations standards for the disposal of plastic waste in both facilities and field locations, including the humanitarian context	Percentage of United Nations entities that have single-use plastic policies and report on resulting plastic reduction
Air pollution	Ensure that United Nations premises and fleet do not contribute to or exacerbate local air quality issues, in both urban and remote community settings	Fossil fuels	Minimize the particulate, sulphur oxide, nitrogen oxide, and other, non-greenhouse-gas, emissions from burning fossil fuels in generators and vehicles	1. Analyse, at the United Nations entity and system-wide levels, the extent to which the United Nations contributes to or tries to limit air pollution 2. Define system-wide guidance for fleet management, with common goals such as reducing average fleet age, introducing electric vehicles where feasible and implementing measures to improve fuel quality 3. Establish a system-wide baseline for electric vehicles 4. Develop agency-specific fleet management systems	Percentage of electric vehicles Percentage of fuel in use that meets international quality standards

Impact	*Objective*	*Aspect*	*Commitment*	*Step towards goal*	*Indicator of achievement by 2030*
				5. Establish energy-efficiency and renewable targets as above for premises	
		Ozone depletion	Ensure that United Nations premises do not contribute to the depletion of the ozone layer	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 ozone-depleting potential and global warming potential in all air-conditioning equipment	Percentage of United Nations entities that still use ozone-depleting substances
		Short-lived pollutants	Minimize the release of short-lived pollutants by purchasing low-global-warming-potential options in United Nations refrigerants and air conditioning, in fuel choices, and through the adoption of sound waste management practices		Percentage of entities with a plan for minimizing short-lived pollutants
Water and wastewater	Ensure water conservation and avoid the release of untreated wastewater into the environment	Water management	Ensure the sustainable extraction of water in locations where the United Nations operates	1. Meter/track water consumption at all premises 2. Survey sites that directly extract their own water (from surface or underground) 3. Define United Nations water management standards and baselines including measures to facilitate access to	Percentage of sites with water efficiency measures (taps, leak-reduction plans)

Impact	*Objective*	*Aspect*	*Commitment*	*Step towards goal*	*Indicator of achievement by 2030*
				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 and mobilizations, including container offices	
		Wastewater management	Ensure that no wastewater is discharged untreated onto soil or into water bodies with the potential to cause environmental damage	1. Carry out a sanitation and wastewater management audit of all field operations under direct responsibility of the United Nations 2. Define United Nations wastewater management standards and baselines 3. Establish the chain-of-custody process for all sewage waste discharged off-site to ensure that it meets wastewater management standards 4. Where needed, invest in dedicated or communal wastewater treatment facilities to protect the health of the surrounding population	Percentage of wastewater discharged untreated Percentage of reclaimed water reported
Biodiversity degradation	Conserve biodiversity and avoid adverse impacts from United Nations facilities, operations and activities	Biodiversity conservation	Ensure that adverse impacts from United Nations facilities, operations and activities on biodiversity and habitats are identified and avoided in consultation with	1. Consult qualified experts in assessing the 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 the siting of activities on lands where natural habitats have already been converted or degraded or in areas of low	Percentage of sites for new premises that have been screened for biodiversity impacts

Impact	*Objective*	*Aspect*	*Commitment*	*Step towards goal*	*Indicator of achievement by 2030*
			relevant, affected stakeholders	value for biodiversity and ecosystem services 3. Implement measures to avoid the introduction or utilization of invasive alien species	

C. Environmental aspects/management functions

Management function	*Objective*	*Goal*	*Step towards goal*	*Indicator of achievement by 2030*
Procurement	The procurement function supports the goals established in the United Nations sustainability strategy	United Nations organizations systematically integrate sustainability considerations into procurement[a]	1. Define further guidance for sustainable United Nations procurement by 2021, including total cost of ownership considerations, circularity principles, take-back schemes, innovation, and opportunities for reducing United Nations spend by sharing and collaborating on key items 2. Develop agency-specific sustainable procurement plans that include circular economy considerations, such as leasing and the sharing of equipment among agencies, and make provisions for take-back schemes 3. Define a list of phase-outs in line with the objectives of the strategy, such as the elimination of ozone-depleting substances, persistent organic pollutants and short-lived climate pollutants 4. Integrate environmental considerations into supply-chain risk evaluation and monitoring and build capacity among suppliers 5. Ensure that current and future system-wide sustainability initiatives, such as those relating to women, young people and persons with disabilities, are aligned with global sustainable procurement principles, and that procurement is leveraged to further these interests 6. Enhance current public reporting on United Nations sustainable procurement efforts 7. Incorporate the true cost of environmental impacts on goods purchased	Percentage of United Nations entities with policies and guidance that integrate sustainability considerations into procurement Percentage of tenders with sustainability criteria at the entity and system-wide levels
Human resources	Environmental management is integrated in United Nations existing capacity-building and	Increased awareness and understanding among United Nations	1. To increase awareness, develop mandatory system-wide environment training in the workplace for United Nations staff and invest in job-specific environmental training, for example, for facilities	Percentage of staff trained per agency Number of relevant staff members recruited with

Management function	*Objective*	*Goal*	*Step towards goal*	*Indicator of achievement by 2030*
	accountability frameworks	staff of the importance of walking the talk	managers, engineers, procurement officers and programme managers 2. To increase accountability, integrate environmental improvement requirements into all senior-level compacts and senior-management performance requirements 3. To attract qualified staff, integrate requirements for environmental capacities into relevant job descriptions, such as those for facilities managers, engineers, logistics experts and programme managers 4. Integrate the environment into core competencies 5. Integrate environmental stewardship into the staff codes of conduct and the core competencies of the United Nations and entities	environmental management expertise
Travel	Reduction of travel-related greenhouse gas emissions of the United Nations	Reconsideration of current travel policies, taking into account the need to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of the United Nations	1. Harmonize approaches to travel with the objective of reducing emissions 2. Provide incentives for staff to voluntarily downgrade class of travel and disincentives for business- and first-class travel 3. Integrate remote meeting options into travel operating procedures in line with the steps under the entries “Events” and “Information and communications technology” below This is same as the commitment under greenhouse gas emissions, but is repeated in light of the importance of travel for the United Nations environmental footprint	Percentage of system-wide greenhouse gas emission from travel Percentage reductions in emissions from travel per staff member
Facilities management	All United Nations facilities, led by United Nations common premises, follow sustainable building standards or harmonized	Maximize the resource efficiency and resilience of United Nations facilities and	1. Integrate environmental requirements into negotiations with host governments and landlords 2. Integrate harmonized United Nations guidance into the processes for existing United Nations premises, including cost-benefit evaluations,	Percentage of facilities implementing building standards Percentage reductions in environmental impacts

Management function	*Objective*	*Goal*	*Step towards goal*	*Indicator of achievement by 2030*
	guidance for sustainable building management	minimize their environmental footprint	environmental evaluations and building management systems, with obligatory energy and water meters and submeters in all United Nations facilities 3. Carry out environmental audits in existing larger United Nations buildings 4. Develop, for all United Nations premises, templates for sustainable building management plans, including for energy, waste and hazardous waste (including electronic waste) and water management and, where relevant, biodiversity management plans	from environmental inventory in facilities
Events	United Nations events on any topic showcase the commitment of the United Nations towards sustainability	All large United Nations events (over 300 participants) are sustainable and climate-neutral	1. Integration of sustainability considerations into events planning 2. Analysis of the virtual meeting patterns of entities and design of a comprehensive United Nations plan for encouraging remote events and meetings 3. Secretaries-General and all Under-Secretaries-General will not attend large United Nations events that are not climate-neutral	Percentage of sustainable and climate-neutral events with over 300 participants
Information and communications technology	Align the ICT function with the ambitions of the strategy		1. Obtain a baseline and perform an analysis of how the ICT sector is supporting the goals of the sustainability policy, and define a specific strategy for this function, including: (a) To ensure that ICT complies with sustainability guidelines, such as the reduction of data centre footprints, consideration of data centre consolidation in and adoption of greener solutions, use of energy-saving computers, use of network printers, use of the Cloud, procurement from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) ISO 14001-compliant businesses, effective disposal of electronic waste generated, establishment of a maintenance plan	

Management function	*Objective*	*Goal*	*Step towards goal*	*Indicator of achievement by 2030*
			to ensure that computers are repaired or replaced once their energy efficiency diminishes; (b) To use ICT to support sustainability with online meeting tools and specific software and/or analysis, and by ensuring the availability of reliable, working equipment so that staff are confident that online meetings can be conducted without technical issues; (c) To expand use of iCloud technologies to reduce the use of data centres and electronic equipment.	

[a] For the past 10 years, sustainable procurement has been considered to integrate both environmental and social considerations. The target outlined here does not imply that environmentally responsible procurement and socially responsible procurement need to be separated.