



MOVING TOWARDS A CLIMATE NEUTRAL UN The UN system's footprint and efforts to reduce it

2010 edition

Ban Ki-moon welcomes new report on efforts to green the UN, saying sustainability can make the UN "more efficient, more effective and less exposed to risk"

Ban Ki-moon believes that improving the UN's in-house sustainability performance will "make us a better organization – more efficient, more effective and less exposed to risk."

The Secretary General makes the statement in the Foreword of the UN's new sustainability report, *Moving Towards a Climate Neutral UN 2010,* which was launched at the CEB meeting in Nairobi on April 1st 2011.

Moving Towards a Climate Neutral UN 2010 reveals the total greenhouse gas emissions from 52 UN organizations employing over 200,000 staff in 2009.

The result is 1.7 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent, or 8.3 tonnes per capita. Over 50% of these are from air travel and 37% are from buildings. The report also provides details of efforts to reduce these emissions and outlines ambitions to move beyond climate

change to address wider sustainability impacts.

The result for ESCWA is 4,070 tonnes of CO2 equivalent, (which represents 0.24% of the overall total UN emissions), out of these, 19% are from air travel and 79% are from building, or 12.6 tonnes per staff capita. The high amount of emissions per staff capita mainly from building, is due to the low electrical generation efficiency of our source of supply: the electricity sector in Lebanon, and to the fact that we are occupying a building which was originally not built according to energy efficiency standards.

According to Ban Ki-moon, the work of greening the UN is driven by a moral imperative:

"The United Nations has played a key role in elevating the profile of climate change on the international agenda, and continues to support Member States in their efforts to reduce emissions, strengthen adaptation and respond to this immense global challenge. Such work has a natural complement in our in-house drive to reduce the UN's own carbon footprint. What we demand of others, we must do ourselves."

According to Rima Khalaf, Executive Secretary of ESCWA, "Challenges to human security in our region range from the threats to peace and lives posed by the Israeli occupation, to economic and political marginalization that result from fragile structures and violations of human rights. The gravity of such threats should not, however, lead us to underestimate those emanating from climate change. Science tells us that sea water will rise to drown large parts of our lands, and that further desertification, droughts and the intrusion of seawater into our aquifers, will erode the quality and quantity of our waters and have dire ramifications on livelihoods, food security and human wellbeing. ESCWA will not only work with member countries to help them avert such threats, but will also continue its efforts to move towards making its own facilities and operations climate neutral."

ESCWA has in fact increased the use of teleconferencing and videoconferencing, thus reducing the need for international travel. The associated technology, including new telephone/videophones, and computer equipment have been purchased and installed to facilitate video and tele-conferencing. ESCWA has also undertaken reduction efforts such as reduction to half lighting in office floors at 3:30 pm, switching off lights at 6 pm, and turning off air-conditioning in office floors at 3:30 pm during working days. Water heating is done for the minimum time with an automatic shutoff thermostat control, water heating is switched off during summer and water saving faucets have been installed. Staff are encouraged to take the stairs, and the temperature has been raised in offices to reduce power consumption. Paper recycling is being undertaken by staff, double sided printing is set as default for all networked printers, and there is a continued development of workflows to reduce the amount of paper used. Photocopiers, scanners and printers at ESCWA have energy -saving mechanisms, with new units purchased, taking into account the energy-saving requirements. ESCWA no longer procures desktop printers and focuses on network shared printers.

The Secretary General highlights some of the key achievements of the UN in 2010 in

improving its sustainability performance. These include:

- The on-going work of UN organizations in developing Emission Reduction Strategies that will be published in 2011.
- The launch of *Greening the Blue* an award-winning UN-wide communications campaign designed to engage staff in efforts to make the UN more sustainable in its operations
- The publication of a guide to sustainable travel in the UN (travel currently accounts for over 50% of the UN's emissions).
- The work of staff-led green groups across the UN including over 50 Green Champions to green their individual offices. Examples include the promotion of tap water over bottled water in Geneva, the introduction of better light bulbs in New York and efforts to reduce energy consumption in Beijing.

The Secretary General goes on to outline his ambitions for the future in greening the UN:

"Looking forward, I am determined to see sustainability embedded throughout our operations – in how we procure and use energy and other resources; in our modes of transport, our buildings and our waste disposal."

Moving Towards a Climate Neutral UN 2010 represents the result of a year-long UN-wide process coordinated by the United Nations Environment Programme. The report details of the greenhouse gas emissions of 52 individual UN organizations, efforts to reduce them, case studies, key challenges faced in greening the UN and next steps.

Further details about the process and the actions of individual organizations are available on www.greeningtheblue.org.