



UNEP

# **MOVING TOWARDS A CLIMATE NEUTRAL UN** **THE UN SYSTEM'S FOOTPRINT AND EFFORTS TO REDUCE IT**

*2015 Edition*

# Message from the UN Secretary-General

The publication of this report comes on the eve of the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris – an historic opportunity for governments to address the threat and put the world on a safer, healthier, more equitable and sustainable path.

I am encouraged by the phenomenal changes that are leading the world towards a new energy future. Rising investments in renewable energy and other steps are putting wind in the sails of climate action. Yet it is clear that the world needs to raise ambition – or risk raising temperatures above the 2-degree Celsius threshold, beyond which science tells us, lie dangerous and uncontrollable consequences.

The United Nations is making its own contribution to the transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future. After all, we must lead by example. In 2014, the United Nations again measured and reported its greenhouse gas emissions. This report also documents the other efforts, many of them highly innovative, we are taking to reduce and offset emissions. We hope to prove that it is possible for large, public sector organizations to manage and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We encourage other organizations that have not already done so to join this journey.

I commend UNEP and UNFCCC for their leadership and support in ensuring that the UN delivers on this commitment. Together we must and we can achieve full climate neutrality by 2020.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ki Moon Ban". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized.

**Ban Ki-moon**  
United Nations Secretary-General

November 2015

# Overview

Since 2007, the UN system has been working to reduce its environmental footprint with a focus on climate change. The efforts made by UN agencies, funds and programmes in recent years can be summarized as:

1. Measuring and reporting the greenhouse gas emissions of each organization, using accepted international standards,
2. Undertaking efforts to reduce these emissions, and other environmental impacts, from facilities and operations including travel, and
3. Moving towards climate neutrality by 2020.

The UN has published an annual greenhouse gas emissions inventory each year since 2009 and reporting has improved in both accuracy and scope, providing an ever-more detailed picture of the UN's emissions and their sources. Work on reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with the UN's activities continues. More than 300 stories of greening efforts have been reported on the web portal [www.greeningtheblue.org](http://www.greeningtheblue.org), showing the scale and scope of efforts to move the UN towards climate neutrality.

At the end of 2015, 18 UN system organizations reported having an Emission Reduction Strategy and at least nine are implementing an Environment Management System or reached the highest standards in building management. As many as 21 organizations have gone further and have become climate neutral through the purchase of carbon credits, with one further agency offsetting from its headquarters.

Staff members continue to show their support by getting involved in the Greening the Blue campaign. Through organizing events in celebration of World Environment Day, or cycle-to-work schemes, these initiatives play a critical role in raising awareness of the issues.

The work on creating a more sustainable UN is still in its early stages and the UN has to improve on several fronts. But clear and tangible improvements are taking place every year towards implementing the UN climate neutral strategy.

# Emissions from UN Entities for 2014

*This information has been*

UN entity	Number of personnel	Total emissions <sup>+</sup>	Emissions <sup>+</sup> per personnel	Emissions from air travel	Share of air travel of total emissions	Emissions from air travel per personnel	Facility-related emissions intensity
		tCO <sub>2</sub> eq	tCO <sub>2</sub> eq/personnel	tCO <sub>2</sub>	%	tCO <sub>2</sub> /personnel	kgCO <sub>2</sub> eq/m <sup>2</sup>
BRS	69	355	5.14	353	100	5.12	1.18
CBD	150	1,882	12.55	1,809	96	12.06	22.14
CTBTO	375	1,909	5.09	1,368	72	3.65	28.14
ECA	1,709	5,135	3.00	4,768	93	2.79	2.88
ECLAC	700	3,437	4.91	2,133	62	3.05	62.56
ESCAP	978	5,078	5.19	2,000	39	2.04	51.53
ESCWA	416	4,555	10.95	689	15	1.66	91.24
FAO	11,000	35,675	3.24	16,628	47	1.51	70.59
FM DFS/DPA/DPKO <sup>1</sup>	123,955	1,155,708	9.32	359,230	31	2.90	404.16
IAEA	2,909	25,789	8.87	22,456	87	7.72	20.46
ICAO <sup>2</sup>	807	6,242	7.73	2,904	47	3.60	74.69
IFAD	997	3,932	3.94	3,449	88	3.46	11.03
ILO	3,640	11,810	3.24	8,800	75	2.42	40.19
ITC-ILO	440	1,621	3.68	1,058	65	2.40	15.92
IMF	3,454	76,229	22.07	50,877	67	14.73	85.38
IMO	337	4,110	12.20	1,076	26	3.19	124.45
ITC	420	2,895	6.89	2,771	96	6.60	16.06
ITU	917	2,971	3.24	2,640	89	2.88	5.30
OHCHR	600	3,252	5.42	3,188	98	5.31	2.90
Ozone secretariat	17	554	32.56	540	98	31.76	51.63
UNAIDS	837	5,779	6.90	3,653	63	4.36	43.71
UNCCD	62	575	9.28	545	95	8.79	4.84
UNDP <sup>2</sup>	16,445	68,733	4.18	28,946	42	1.76	77.31
UNEP	1,265	10,310	8.15	8,920	87	7.05	45.19
UNESCO	6,113	26,149	4.28	12,385	47	2.03	40.34
UNFCCC	580	4,885	8.42	4,746	97	8.18	2.73
UNFPA	3,743	20,840	5.57	8,787	42	2.35	79.95
UN-Habitat	441	752	1.71	455	61	1.03	38.41

*For this edition of the UN greenhouse gas inventory, the UN Department of Field Support continued to host and maintain the UN greenhouse gas calculator and reporting tool. Emissions due to air travel were calculated thanks to the International Civil Aviation Organization's custom-built interface to its Carbon Emissions Calculator.*

*Find out more about the methodology used to calculate the UN greenhouse gas emissions at [www.greeningtheblue.org/our-approach/measuring-our-impacts](http://www.greeningtheblue.org/our-approach/measuring-our-impacts)*

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UNHCR	850	1,481	1.74	1,425	96	1.68	1.06
UNHQ <sup>3</sup>	5,739	47,404	8.26	25,357	53	4.42	87.80
UNICEF	13,900	66,915	4.81	24,748	37	1.78	100.81
UNIDO <sup>2</sup>	1,951	14,362	7.36	9,117	63	4.67	32.91
UNOG <sup>4</sup>	2,762	6,836	2.48	6,261	92	2.27	3.08
UNON	868	1,936	2.23	594	31	0.68	35.36
UNOPS	3,004	14,416	4.80	5,489	38	1.83	65.18
UNOV <sup>5</sup>	988	5,029	5.09	3,573	71	3.62	32.87
UNRWA	3,966	13,151	3.32	349	3	0.09	83.85
UNU	82	871	10.62	343	39	4.18	80.40
UNV	150	320	2.13	240	75	1.60	5.97
UNWomen	448	2,454	5.48	799	33	1.78	126.54
UNWTO	174	532	3.06	295	55	1.70	32.23
UPU	252	1,091	4.33	665	61	2.64	32.61
WFP	11,367	165,725	14.58	111,271	67	9.79	13.58
WHO	2,159	20,721	9.60	18,480	89	8.56	22.22
WIPO	1,386	8,264	5.96	7,829	95	5.65	2.66
WMO	340	5,307	15.61	5,167	97	15.20	0.73
World Bank Group <sup>6</sup>	16,501	215,425	13.06	132,716	62	8.04	105.42
WTO	845	3,364	3.98	3,189	95	3.77	3.92
<b>Entities reporting emissions prior to 2014</b>							
OPCW (2010)	611	5,163	8.45	3,573	69	5.85	75.86
UNCDF (2013)	43	918	21.34	691	75	16.07	181.87
UNITAR (2012)	124	728	5.87	713	98	5.75	10.45
<b>Total UN system</b>	<b>251,886</b>	<b>2,093,572</b>	<b>8.31</b>	<b>920,058</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>3.65</b>	<b>115.24</b>

(1) Field Missions (FM) DFS/DPA/DPKO refers to peacekeeping operations, special political missions and support missions. It includes the emissions resulting from the use of armoured vehicles • (2) where available, previous data has been updated with emissions for 2014 • (3) includes New York-based operations of DFS, DPA and DPKO • (4) includes UNCTAD, UNECE, UNIDIR, UNISDR, UNJSPF, UNRISD, JIU & Geneva offices of: OCHA, UNODA, CEB and OIOS • (5) includes UNODC • (6) includes IBRD, IDA, IFC, ICSID, MIGA, GEF • (+) GHG emissions excluding optional and biomass emissions.

Owing to the diversity and complexity of the UN system, it is easier for some organizations to collect data than for others. The table reflects the best available data for 2014. A more detailed breakdown is available on the reverse of this poster and at [www.greeningtheblue.org/what-the-UN-is-doing](http://www.greeningtheblue.org/what-the-UN-is-doing).

# Methodology

The journey towards climate neutrality starts with the compilation of a greenhouse gas emissions inventory – a list, by source, of the type and volume of emissions discharged into the atmosphere during a given time period. Within the UN, this is coordinated by UNEP’s Sustainable United Nations (SUN) facility and undertaken by individual UN organizations. The methodology used to estimate the UN’s emissions is based on the Greenhouse Gas Protocol Corporate Standard developed by the World Resources Institute (WRI) and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD).

The agreed common minimum boundary includes emissions from facility operations – electricity and heating (generated on-site or purchased), use of refrigerants for air-conditioning or cooling – and travel paid for by the UN. Some activities outside the common minimum boundary can be voluntarily reported by organizations under the category ‘optional emissions’ e.g. personnel commuting, projects implemented by external entities, couriers and postal mail, waste and water treatment. The UN’s inventory accounts for six greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulphur hexafluoride) that are covered by the Kyoto Protocol. Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) are not covered by Kyoto but are governed by the Montreal Protocol and are reported under the ‘optional emissions’ category. Greenhouse gas emissions are reported separately for each gas, both in terms of their mass and as an aggregate using the common comparable unit of carbon dioxide equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>eq), based on the global warming potential (GWP) of each gas.

A total of 62 UN entities compiled greenhouse gas emissions inventories for 2014 with an additional three submitting the most recently available data. This takes the total number of reporting entities to 65. Every year since the first *Moving Towards a Climate Neutral UN* report in 2009, air travel emissions have accounted for more than half of the UN’s total emissions. In 2014, the apportionment of facilities-related emissions (43%) almost equalled that of air travel emissions (44%) with regards to UN total emissions. This is due to the addition of updated data for Field Missions DFS/DPA/DPKO for 2014. The latter account for more than half of both the UN total personnel and greenhouse gas emissions. Their emissions distribution therefore has a significant impact on the emissions apportionment of the UN system as a whole.

## One UN Rwanda ‘walking the climate talk’

Over the last three years, the One UN Rwanda mission has been pushing forward efforts to reduce the environmental impact of all agencies, with the support of all UN staff in the country. Significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions per personnel have been achieved already, with a reduction of over 10% against 2012 baseline measures. The reductions have come through increased efficiencies in the use of fuel, electricity, water and consumables.

A new car-pooling system is just one example of the innovative projects that have been introduced. The car pool is available to any UN staff attending meetings and during field missions, and has led to substantial reduction in fuel consumption. Electricity consumption has also declined, thanks to a reduction in the number of light bulbs in UN offices and the replacement of traditional high-energy-consuming bulbs with energy-saving bulbs.

The One UN Rwanda example shows how progress can be made quickly with a co-ordinated effort to reduce environmental impacts.



## Next steps

**M**oving a system as large and complex as the UN towards climate neutrality is a challenging task. It implies a reconditioning of culture, procedures and infrastructure as well as the mobilization of human and financial resources. It also means, for some organizations, embracing goals that were not part of their original mandate.

Achieving greater environmental sustainability is, however, necessary to ensure the UN reduces risks, rationalizes its impacts on the natural world and uses its public funds wisely. It is important to ensure that the funds, agencies and programmes that make up the UN family are well managed organizations that bring peace, security and well-being to the planet while also respecting their staff and ensuring their working environments reflect their values.

Over the past years the *Moving Towards a Climate Neutral UN* reports have shown with increasing accuracy and scope the climate footprint of the UN system. The report has provided an opportunity for UN organizations to analyze their contributions to reducing the footprint as well as understanding their shortcomings. The process has also allowed many organizations to re-organize themselves internally and integrate environmental sustainability into their daily work.

We are still far from reaching the vision of a climate neutral UN system as set out by the Secretary-General in 2007, but we have initiated a process that can only move forward.

For more information visit

[www.greeningtheblue.org](http://www.greeningtheblue.org)



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