

Promoting Climate Neutrality and Environmental Sustainability at the HLPF

A Guidance Note

- Integrating sustainable development in all aspects of the work of the United Nations and promoting efforts to reduce the UN's carbon footprint with the ambitious goal to make the United Nations a climate neutral organization is a priority of the Secretary-General.
- The UN is taking concrete steps to minimize its environmental impact and actively promotes sustainability measures.
- All participants in the annual session of the HLPF are encouraged to contribute to those sustainability efforts.
- Environmental impact will arise in the form of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, water usage and waste from participants' travel, materials consumption and transportation and resource use.
- This note seeks to outline the UN's commitment to sustainability measures and help participants in the HLPF to contribute towards sustainability and the conservation of resources.
- Questions regarding sustainability measures and efforts to promote climate neutrality at UNHQ can be directed to Greeningunhq@un.org

Waste Management



- The UN is determined to reduce and dispose of its waste sustainably.
- Participants are encouraged to comply with procedures and waste separation signage, bring reusable bottles/mugs and avoid the use of disposable cups and plastic water bottles.
- A No Single-Use Plastics policy took effect at UNHQ in June 2019. The policy includes concrete measures to eliminate all single-use plastics from the complex to reduce the impact of plastic pollution on the environment and human health.
- Water fountains are available throughout the UN building and are marked on the building directories. Participants are encouraged to bring their own reusable bottles.
- Recycling bins for glass, plastic, paper and metal cans are available on the premises.

Food and Beverage



- Caterers are requested to eliminate single use items, whenever possible, donate safe unserved food, pursue composting for food waste that can't be donated as well as source products which are fair trade, local and organic, whenever possible.
- Reusable containers are on sale at UNHQ food outlets and at the UN gift shop.
- Participants are encouraged to avoid the use of disposable items and single use bottles.
- Choose vegetarian or vegan meal options, which have overall smaller environmental impact than meat-based dishes.
- Be considerate of food waste before purchasing food.

Paper Consumption



- Participants are urged to use portable devices as the main way to access documentation, including the daily *Journal of the United Nations*, to limit demand for printed materials and reduce paper consumption.
- Official documentation can be retrieved online through the Official Document System (<https://documents.un.org>).
- All paper used for unavoidable printing and photocopying should be 100 percent recycled.
- Participants are encouraged to distribute documentation electronically.

Transportation



- Transportation generally has the highest carbon footprint for conferences.
- Participants are urged to identify and minimize GHG emissions relating to their travel to and participation in meetings.
- This could be done by limiting delegation size, taking the most direct travel route to New York, minimizing layovers, opting for economy-class, and trying to pack lightly to reduce emissions.
- If long-distance travel is unavoidable, participants are encouraged to consider offsetting GHG emissions through reduction measures elsewhere:
- A simple tool to calculate your CO2 emissions from air travel can be found at <https://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/Carbonoffset/Pages/default.aspx>
- UNFCCC offers an easy-to-use platform for removing GHG emissions from the atmosphere through their certified projects: <https://offset.climateneutralnow.org/>
- In New York City, public transportation is one of the best ways to get around.

Accommodation



- Participants are encouraged to consider their carbon footprint also when selecting accommodation.
- Participants are encouraged to stay at hotels located near public transport and identified to be committed to environmental improvement.
- Many hotels are within walking distance to UNHQ thereby reducing the need for motorized transportation.
- Consider accommodations' implementation of energy efficiency measures, compliance with green building standards and usage of renewable energy sources as methods to help to reduce the carbon footprint.

GREENING THE BLUE

The UNEP/Sustainable United Nations (Sustainable UN) facility and the Greening the Blue campaign were established in 2008 with the aim to coordinate and monitor United Nations' system internal environmental performance towards achieving climate neutrality and environmental sustainability. Areas of work relate to corporate reporting, environmental management systems, waste management, sustainable facilities, supply chain, communications and also sustainable events. For more information, please visit: <https://www.greeningtheblue.org/>