United Nations

Review of mainstreaming environmental sustainability across organizations of the United Nations system

Report of the Joint Inspection Unit

Prepared by Gopinathan Achamkulangare

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Executive Summary

Mainstreaming environmental sustainability across organizations of the United Nations system

Remain prisoners of the past, or strive to become harbingers of a sustainable future?

The organizations of the United Nations system should reimagine the internal management functional areas so that environmental sustainability considerations are embedded in them and should make decisions within their competence, without seeking repeated endorsements by the legislative organs and governing bodies. Any such transformation would imply a few prerequisites: obtaining the commitment of the leadership; dedicating the necessary financial and human resources; accessing technical expertise not available within the entity; changing mindsets; making modest investments in business and market intelligence rather than relying on outdated practices and products; establishing mechanisms to explore, absorb and internalize modern business practices; encouraging programme managers and business process owners to embrace basic changes needed to usher in a new organizational culture; and influencing staff behaviour in ways that promote environmental sustainability in internal and external performance. At the same time, it is recognized that the current liquidity crisis and the ongoing global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic have severely impacted the ability of United Nations entities to promote and integrate environmental sustainability within their internal management.

United Nations entities have not paid adequate attention to integrating or mainstreaming environmental sustainability in their internal management functional areas. Related actions have often been left to individual initiatives, resulting in suboptimal gains. Consequently, the entities have missed opportunities to realize efficiency gains and long-term benefits by systematically incorporating environmental sustainability considerations into internal management.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasized the imperative of incorporating sustainability considerations into activities and operations of United Nations entities. By adopting the Climate Neutral Policy and Strategy in 2007, executive heads of the United Nations organizations made a commitment to become climate neutral through emission reduction actions and offsetting and to include sustainability goals in the programming of facilities and operations.[1] The then Secretary-General had set the ambitious target of the United Nations system becoming climate neutral by 2020.

In May 2019, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) endorsed the Strategy for sustainability management in the United Nations system (2020–2030).[2] The first phase of the Strategy covers environmental sustainability in the area of management. It is aimed at aligning internal operations of United Nations system organizations with relevant elements of the 2030 Agenda. It outlines objectives, commitments and indicators for identified management functions with regard to enhancing environmental sustainability, as well as environmental governance and environmental impacts. The Strategy lays the foundations of environmental sustainability management to address and manage risks to natural environments in which the United Nations operates, to the health of its staff and to the credibility and reputation of the United Nations system. Environmental sustainability management provides opportunities to derive efficiencies in the use of natural resources and finances and promotes accountability and transparency in how the United Nations manages the delivery of its mandates.

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[1] EMG/AM.07/11.
[2] CEB/2019/1/Add.1.

As custodian of the conventions, treaties and norms concerning climate change, environmental protection, the pollution of the air, water and oceans and related areas, and as the chief advocate of sustainable development in all its aspects, the United Nations system should be seen to practise internally in the different management areas what it preaches to the outside world. This is the most compelling rationale for improving environmental sustainability internally in different management areas across organizations of the United Nations system.

The challenge for United Nations system organizations is to revise current international procedures and practices to derive maximum benefits from them, with appropriate modifications and adaptations to suit the values of the United Nations.

In procurement, the time is right to take a close look at the underlying philosophy and tenets behind the current policies and practices and to fashion a more judicious approach to procurement that is underpinned by sustainability considerations beyond the simple adherence to "international competitive bidding".

Official business travel policies have been developed with cost savings as a primary consideration, irrespective of considerations of personal health, well-being or inconvenience of the staff member. The environmental footprint of any travel undertaken has not been found to be a factor in the design of the travel policies. The domain of travel should be reviewed, with the objective of developing and putting in place a policy that prioritizes the environmental footprint, health and well-being of staff.

The organizations of the United Nations system should move away from advocacy practices aimed merely at raising awareness and should instead assume responsibility for implementing the 2030 Agenda within their own operations and activities. They should fully seize the opportunities arising from the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic for serious digitalization and resource footprint reduction, including in the realm of travel.

The present report contains 10 formal recommendations, of which 1 is addressed to the legislative organs and governing bodies and 9 are addressed to the executive heads of all Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) participating organizations. The formal recommendations are complemented by 55 informal or "soft" recommendations that have been classified by theme for ease of use by participating organizations.[3] These are indicated in bold text as additional suggestions, typically in the form of good practices, to the executive heads and business process owners, for effecting further improvements.

The present review includes a number of suggestions for organizations of the United Nations system to mainstream environmental sustainability in their internal management areas, including:

- **Showing high-level attention from Member States, demonstrating their role in exercising effective oversight and providing strategic guidance and direction, with obligations for the entities to monitor activities and operations pertaining to mainstreaming environmental sustainability in internal management areas, and to report back to the legislative organs and governing bodies**

- **Demonstrating a strong commitment from the leadership of the organization through repeated and frequent reiteration and appropriate messaging**

- **Taking a whole-of-the-organization approach, rather than a segmented one**

- **Developing and implementing policies and associated strategies, regulatory frameworks, guidelines, due diligence measures and operating procedures, especially in critical management areas such as human resources, procurement, travel and information and communications technology (ICT) services**

- **Developing tools for the preparation of business cases and cost-benefit analyses that incorporate environmental sustainability considerations into internal management functions and processes**

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[3] See annex X for a classification of soft recommendations by theme.

- **Encouraging the conduct of rudimentary business intelligence and market surveys**

- **Making policy decisions along the following lines:**

  - **Following the recent example of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and making all other organizations go completely paperless by the end of 2022 by not using paper or printing, and requesting other entities to henceforth transmit all communications, letters, documents and reports electronically**

  - **Making all conferences, events and meetings organized by the entities paper smart by the end of 2022**

  - **Making all official documentation, reports, publications, brochures, publicity, and communication and advocacy materials available only online by the end of 2022**

  - **Discouraging the display of all promotional, publicity, advocacy and other materials printed on paper at any events, conferences or meetings organized by all United Nations entities by the end of 2022**

  - **Making all traditional post-event reports and communications availably only online by the end of 2022**

  - **Making the above-mentioned policies equally applicable to all programmatic activities, including those funded by Member States through extrabudgetary, earmarked or voluntary contributions**

- **Developing guidelines, including through appropriate inter-agency mechanisms and networks, for short, medium and long-term investments in energy-efficient technologies and non-fossil fuels, and refraining from engaging with companies that deal with fossil fuels, so that net-zero ambitions can be formalized into commitments or targets over time**

- **Strengthening internal coordination with regard to actions to promote environmental sustainability among different management areas, including by designating a focal point, as needed**

- **Systematically collecting data, monitoring and reporting to legislative organs and governing bodies**

- **Developing specific training modules related to promoting environmental sustainability**

- **Promoting organizational learning, knowledge management and change management and influencing staff behaviour in a way that leads to mainstreaming environmental sustainability**

- **Incentivizing and adequately rewarding conduct and responsible behaviour at all levels through appropriate forms of recognition and performance appraisal**

- **Identifying, sharing and disseminating good practices and lessons learned**

- **Enhancing the effectiveness of the existing mechanisms for inter-agency cooperation and coordination and putting in place measures for drawing up clear terms of reference, making records of meetings, and assigning identified officials for follow-up action, monitoring and review**

- **Strengthening oversight by encouraging oversight offices to periodically conduct, or include in their ongoing work, reviews and assessments of internal environmental sustainability management**

- **Strengthening risk management procedures for the assessment and management of risks relating to environmental sustainability.**

The current context provides an opportunity for the United Nations organizations to reimagine the system by making their policies, practices and operations, including internal management, environmentally sustainable. It would be most unfortunate if the organizations did not utilize this opportunity and instead lapsed back into the old ways and "business as usual". Therein lies the challenge before the entities: remain chained to the past, or play a pioneering role in ushering in a sustainable future for all?

Recommendation 1

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should, by the end of 2022, develop an organization-wide policy for environmental sustainability in the areas of internal management functions.

Recommendation 2

The legislative organs and governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should, by the end of 2022, direct the executive heads to embed environmental sustainability considerations into the management of their organizations and request them to include in the annual report on the work of the organization the results of efforts to mainstream environmental sustainability in the internal management functions of the organization.

Recommendation 3

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should, by the end of 2022, devote adequate resources in specific budget plans, including by better utilizing existing available resources, to mainstreaming environmental sustainability in their respective organizations, and report on the implementation to their legislative organs and governing bodies from 2023.

Recommendation 4

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should, by the end of 2022, task procurement offices with incorporating specific provisions for integrating environmental sustainability considerations into procurement policies, procedures, manuals and guidelines, including through the relevant inter-agency mechanisms, as necessary.

Recommendation 5

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should, by the end of 2022, ensure that all recruitment and selection processes, as well as performance appraisal systems, incorporate and give adequate weight to environmental sustainability understanding and behaviours, and report on the implementation to their legislative organs and governing bodies from 2023.

Recommendation 6

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should, by the end of 2022, with the support of the resident coordinator system and the United Nations country team mechanisms, strengthen the coordination between the headquarters and field agencies, as well as among field agencies, in pursuing measures to reduce the environmental impact of field presences, and report on the implementation to their legislative organs and governing bodies from 2023.

Recommendation 7

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should, by the end of 2022, make all conferences, events and meetings organized by their respective organizations "paper smart", while providing printed material only upon official request and with adequate cost recovery measures following a differential pricing system in respect of different customer groups – such as official delegates, research institutions, other conference participants and students – and report on the implementation to their legislative organs and governing bodies from 2023.

Recommendation 8

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should, by the end of 2022, task the relevant offices responsible for organizing conferences, meetings and events with developing a policy for incorporating provisions relating to environmental sustainability considerations into policies, procedures, manuals and guidelines, including through the relevant inter-agency mechanisms, as necessary.

Recommendation 9

The executive heads of organizations of the United Nations system should ensure that, by the end of 2022, information and communications technology services' actions and projects comply with environmental sustainability considerations, including ensuring that greenhouse gas emissions are at a level compatible with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Paris agreement.

Recommendation 10

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should, by the end of 2022, make all official documentation, publications, brochures, and communication and advocacy materials available online, including through online conferencing applications or other information technology means, and report on the implementation to their legislative organs and governing bodies from 2023.

Contents

Acronyms and abbreviations

CEB	United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
CD	compact disc
DVD	digital videodisc
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICT	Information and communications technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
LED	light emitting diode
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PDF	portable document format
QR Code	Quick Response Code
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

UN-Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization
UPU	Universal Postal Union
USB	Universal Serial Bus
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

I. Introduction

A. Context

1.   Ever since the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, organizations of the United Nations system have accorded a high priority to protection of the natural environment and related areas, as exemplified by the series of summits and conferences held, conventions and treaties ratified, and resolutions, reports and programmes of action adopted by their respective legislative organs and governing bodies. The report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) and the Agenda 21 adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992) were important milestones in this context, as were the three landmark conventions, namely, those on climate change, biodiversity and desertification. The Future We Want (2012) and, more recently, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), consisting of 17 Sustainable Development Goals, have provided further momentum. Organizations of the United Nations system have responded with considerable enthusiasm by making efforts to integrate environmental sustainability into their policies, operations and activities.

2.   The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals highlighted the importance of environmental sustainability as a part of overall sustainability (inclusive of its social dimension). With the main message of "leave no one behind", the 2030 Agenda emphasizes mainstreaming sustainable policies and practices in organizations of the United Nations system, encompassing programmes of work as well as internal operations. The pursuit of the 2030 Agenda requires the system to also respond by addressing and mainstreaming environmental sustainability in its internal management functional areas.

3.   The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasized the imperative of incorporating sustainability concerns into activities and operations of United Nations system organizations. By adopting the Climate Neutral Policy and Strategy in 2007, the executive heads of the United Nations system organizations committed to becoming climate neutral through a combination of emissions reduction actions and offsetting, and to include environmental sustainability goals in the programming of facilities and operations. The then Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon had set the ambitious target of the United Nations system being climate neutral by 2020.

4.   If opportunities are judiciously assessed, and risks are assessed and managed, all while taking into consideration their specificities, environmental sustainability can serve as a useful instrument in supporting the work of organizations of the United Nations system to help them deliver on their mandate and in supporting Member States in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

5.   To assess the specificities and features associated with environmental sustainability and how these can make the organizations environmentally sustainable, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) reviewed contemporary policies and practices in mainstreaming environmental sustainability in the United Nations system organizations as part of its programme of work for 2020, following a proposal submitted by the United Nations Secretariat.

6.   In May 2019, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) endorsed the Strategy for sustainability management in the United Nations system (2020–2030)[4] (hereinafter "the Strategy"), which JIU identified as an appropriate vehicle for exploring the subject matter of the review. The first phase of the Strategy covers environmental sustainability in the area of management. It is aimed at aligning internal operations of United Nations system organizations with the relevant elements of the 2030 Agenda. It outlines objectives, commitments and indicators for identified management functions (procurement, human resources, facilities management, conference management, and information and communications technology services, with travel added subsequently)

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[4] CEB/2019/1/Add.1.

with regard to enhancing environmental sustainability as well as environmental governance and environmental impacts. The Strategy lays the foundations of environmental sustainability management to address and manage risks to natural environments in which the United Nations operates, to the health of its staff, and to the credibility and reputation of the United Nations system. Environmental sustainability management provides opportunities to derive efficiencies in the use of natural resources and finances and promotes accountability and transparency in how the United Nations system manages the delivery of its mandates.

B. Objectives and scope

7.   The scope of the present review is system-wide, covering all JIU participating organizations and four bienniums spanning from 2012 to 2019. Data for the year 2020 was also reviewed, as available, to consider the recent system-wide developments for the purpose of conducting a readiness assessment.

8.   **Definition**. In the absence of agreed definitions of "environmental sustainability" and "environmental mainstreaming", the Inspector used the "working definition" set out in the Strategy endorsed by CEB in 2019[5] and sought further evidence from the participating organizations of environmental sustainability in their activities.

9.   **Management focus**. The present review addresses the internal management of corporate environmental sustainability. For this purpose, JIU used the Strategy for sustainability management in the United Nations system (2020–2030) as the basis for its review with regard to environmental sustainability management and management functional areas (procurement, human resources, facilities and infrastructure, travel, events and conferences, and information and communications technology (ICT)). JIU also identified other "enabling management functions" as relevant to consider (risk management, finance and budget, public information and communication, and partnerships).

10.   Since in the present review the Inspector addresses the internal management of environmental sustainability, he did not review development results or programming related to the environmental agenda, except insofar as the programmatic aspects had an impact on the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability in the management of United Nations organizations.

11.   **Readiness assessment**. Since the Strategy was endorsed only recently, the Inspector did not assess the effectiveness of implementation in each of these management functions. He did, however, make a readiness assessment and capture progress trends insofar as they enabled or impinged on the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability, with the purpose of identifying potential challenges and gaps vis-à-vis implementation of the Strategy.

12.   **Consideration of contexts**. The opportunities and challenges arising from the management of environmental sustainability in organizations of the United Nations system vary depending on the specific geographical and operational contexts. The Inspector sought to distinguish between headquarters and field locations and recognized the specificities of humanitarian and peacekeeping mission settings, to identify patterns and lessons linked to them.

13.   The Inspector sought to follow up and build on past JIU reports[6] on the topic or related topics to determine the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in those reports, provide any updates as necessary, and identify any information gaps requiring further data collection and analysis, while considering the work done by other oversight offices, as appropriate.

14.   In the light of the above, the objectives of the present review are to:

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[5] See para. 6.

[6] The review builds on the foundation and perspectives provided by related previous JIU studies, namely: JIU/REP/2015/5; JIU/REP/2014/4; JIU/NOTE/2011/1, particularly recommendation 8 on environmentally responsible procurement policies; JIU/REP/2010/1; and JIU/REP/2008/3.

- Determine the extent to which environmentally sustainable policies have been developed and respond to contemporary needs and objectives of the United Nations system and of the 28 JIU participating organizations

- Examine the implementation of environmentally sustainable operations and practices at the organizational and system-wide levels, with a view to drawing lessons learned and identifying best or good practices

- Assess the readiness of selected functional areas (such as procurement, human resources, facilities management, travel, conference services and ICT) to implement the Strategy

- Consider the effectiveness of governance, accountability, coordination, risk management and oversight mechanisms in supporting the implementation of environmentally sustainable operations and practices

- Consider the relevance of the practices of other international organizations with a view to identifying good practices and drawing on relevant international standards in respect of environmental sustainability in organizations of the United Nations system. Among others, comparator entities such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), [7] the European Commission, [8] the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Trade Organization (WTO),[9] the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Organization for Standardization, the World Bank Group in Washington D.C., the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the European Organization for Nuclear Research and the World Resources Institute participated by providing inputs for the review.

15.   The Inspector examined the commitment of the leadership of the organizations to adapt rapidly to major decisions in the area of environmental sustainability, along with their readiness to embrace technological advances and innovations to attain the set objectives. He sought to identify areas of weakness and critical gaps between aspirations and practice. He also sought to assess, from an oversight perspective, how key management functions could more effectively enhance sustainability management internally, through the identification of gaps, good practices and remedial actions. He examined the governance, accountability and oversight architecture in respect of environmentally sustainable policies and practices across the system. The Inspector also sought to assess the potential reputational risks associated with the current policies and practices and identify good practices and lessons learned among the different entities.

C.   Methodology

16.   The Inspector employed a mixed-method research approach, which consisted of:

- A desk review of legislative mandates, policies, guidelines and oversight reports related to environmental sustainability in United Nations system organizations, as well as reports of the Secretary-General on the subject matter.

- A desk review of environmental sustainability-related documentation attained through online searches from other international organizations, public and private sector entities, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions, to identify the following elements related to environmental sustainability: policies, guidelines, definitions, objectives, principles, criteria, cost-benefit analysis procedures, performance assessment criteria, best practices and risks.

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[7] OECD is an observing member of the Issue Management Group. It participates in meetings and best practice sharing but does not report with the official Group members.

[8] Though not part of the Issue Management Group or the Environment Management Group, the European Commission is an active participant in other inter-agency networks promoting sustainability, such as the Inter-Agency Network of Facilities Managers and the International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications.

[9] IOM and WTO are part of the Issue Management Group and report to the Greening the Blue initiative.

- An organizational questionnaire circulated to all JIU participating organizations covering: the conceptualization of environmental sustainability; legislation, policy and procedures governing environmental sustainability; procedures for decision-making on and the management of environmental sustainability; the evolution of environmental sustainability, including trends, constraints, opportunities and risks; internal capacity and coordination; and governance and oversight.

- Follow-up interviews (based on the analysis of responses to the organizational questionnaire) held with JIU participating organizations remotely (via phone and videoconferencing tools).

- Interviews with other identified international organizations to learn about good practices and lessons learned with regard to environmental sustainability.

17.   All the 28 JIU participating organizations provided responses to the corporate questionnaire, albeit with varying levels of detail. Of these, only six organizations provided financial quantitative data, with data from the United Nations covering headquarters, offices away from headquarters (the United Nations Office at Geneva), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), regional commissions (the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)), peacekeeping operations, special political missions and other entities.

18.   In total, interviews were conducted with approximately 500 staff members and officials from the entities referred to in the preceding paragraphs. All information and views gathered through the questionnaire responses and interviews have been treated in accordance with the usual respect for confidentiality observed by JIU.

19.   There are limitations of the present review that need to be acknowledged. Several organizations provided only limited responses to the JIU questionnaire. Follow-up interviews did not always yield a considerable amount of additional value, as some of the interviewees identified by the organizations had at times limited experience in and knowledge of the subject matter. Consequently, many good practices and lessons learned highlighted in the present report emanate from a limited number of organizations.

20.   The present report contains 10 formal recommendations, of which 1 is addressed to the legislative organs and governing bodies and 9 are addressed to the executive heads of all JIU participating organizations and can be dealt with as part of management reform processes where relevant. The timely and effective implementation of the recommendations addressed to the executive heads will be greatly facilitated by the explicit support of the legislative organs and governing bodies for these recommendations and their follow-up with the executive heads to verify implementation. The formal recommendations are complemented by 55 informal or "soft" recommendations that have been classified by theme,[10] indicated in bold text, as additional suggestions, typically in the form of good practices, to the executive heads and business process owners, for effecting further improvements.

21.   To facilitate the handling of the present report and the implementation of its recommendations and monitoring thereof, annex XII contains a table indicating whether the report was submitted to the relevant organizations for action or for information. The table specifies whether the recommendations require action by the organizations' legislative organs and governing bodies or by the executive heads.

22.   The Inspector wishes to express his appreciation and gratitude to all the officials of the United Nations system organizations and representatives of other organizations who assisted in the preparation of the present report, particularly those who participated in the interviews and so willingly shared their knowledge and expertise.

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[10] See annex X.

II. Mandates, policies, guidelines, standards and reports

A. Organizational mandates

23. Most participating organizations do not specifically employ the term "environmental sustainability" but consider it to be partially or fully embedded within the frameworks of their policies, regulations, rules and procedures. Environmental sustainability is not perceived as a distinct topic that cuts across all internal management functions, requiring integration or "mainstreaming". A common definition and conceptualization of environmental sustainability would therefore help organizations to better describe and specify its content. **To this end, deliberations should be undertaken through relevant inter-agency platforms such as the CEB High-level Committee on Management to arrive at a common, system-wide conceptualization of environmental sustainability**.

24. In responses to the organizational questionnaire, the JIU participating organizations indicated that 16 of them had received a mandate from their respective legislative organs and governing bodies, of which 13 had a written policy, and 6 had specific provisions in their strategic framework.

25. In addition to resolutions on the substantive aspects of environmental issues, from the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)[11] to the creation of the three conventions agreed at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil,[12] among others, the General Assembly also adopted the following resolutions aimed at promoting in-house environmental sustainability:

- In its resolution 66/288, the General Assembly called on the programmes, funds and specialized agencies to mainstream the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development throughout the work of the United Nations system.

- In its resolution 68/210, the General Assembly reiterated the call for the further mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system and invited the Secretary-General to continue to report to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, on progress made, including for the consideration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

- In its resolutions 70/205 and 71/228, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit an action plan for the Secretariat that was designed to work within existing procurement rules and policies aimed at integrating sustainable development practices into the organizations' operations and facilities management, building on existing efforts and promoting cost-effectiveness.

- In its resolution 70/286, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to reduce the overall environmental footprint of each peacekeeping mission, including by implementing environmentally friendly waste management and power generation systems.

- In its resolution 72/219, the General Assembly endorsed the Secretary-General's action plan for integrating sustainable development practices into Secretariat-wide operations and facilities management and requested the Secretary-General to implement his relevant recommendations within existing resources.

- In its resolution 73/236, the General Assembly reiterated its earlier calls (in its resolutions 67/215 and 66/288) for the Secretary-General to promote renewable energy, energy efficiency and related sustainable practices in all United Nations facilities and operations around the world.

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[11] See General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII).

[12] The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (see General Assembly resolution 47/195), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (see General Assembly resolution 47/195), and the Convention on Biological Diversity (see General Assembly resolution 49/117).

26.   **The Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum**. These entities have been supporting sustainable development efforts in the context of the 2030 Agenda at the regional and country levels.[13] They aim to enhance knowledge-sharing and regional and international cooperation.[14] Further information regarding resolutions and decisions of the legislative organs and governing bodies of JIU participating organizations may be seen in annex I.

27.   **Human rights-related mandates**. The Human Rights Council has been addressing adverse impacts of environmental degradation on the enjoyment of basic human rights, especially economic, social and cultural rights. Mandate holders of the special procedures mechanisms of the Council have regularly addressed such adverse impacts in their work. Noteworthy among these have been the report of the Independent Expert on human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment[15] and the report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment[16] containing framework principles on human rights and the environment. Notably, principle 13 indicates that States should cooperate with each other to establish, maintain and enforce effective international legal frameworks in order to prevent, reduce and remedy transboundary and global environmental harm that interferes with the full enjoyment of human rights. In addition, the subject is also addressed in the report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment titled "Right to a healthy environment: good practices".[17] Since 2008, the Human Rights Council has adopted a number of resolutions on human rights and climate change.[18]

28.   **Treaty bodies**. The treaty bodies entrusted with the scrutiny of periodic reports submitted by States parties to the respective treaties have been examining the compliance with and implementation of their obligations. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has expressed concern about the investments in companies with a "problematic reputation" made by the sovereign wealth fund of a State party and the serious human rights implications of some of the fund's investment portfolios, emphasizing the need to conduct a rigorous human rights risk assessment and human rights due diligence measures and to subject all investments of the fund to a rigorous process of ethics assessment.[19]

B.   Organizational policies

29.   **Policies**. For the purpose of the present review, a policy on environmental sustainability is a document available in the public domain that demonstrates the commitment of an organization to the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability in all aspects of its normative and operational work. This would necessarily include the forums through which deliberations on such work are carried out and decisions taken. A consistent policy that comprehensively addresses all aspects of environmental sustainability will help to create trust, both within and outside the organization, that it is willing to walk the talk by ensuring that it respects and observes the related principles and procedures in all relevant stages of its work.

30.   The United Nations Secretariat uses as its framework the Secretary-General's bulletin entitled "Environmental policy for the United Nations Secretariat" (ST/SGB/2019/7), promulgated as part of the implementation of the action plan (A/72/82) endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 72/219.

31.   While many policies with a direct or indirect bearing on environmental sustainability are in place, organizations could not identify any reviews undertaken to assess the effectiveness of their implementation. Strengthening accountability in respect of

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[13] See the political declaration adopted by the high-level political forum on sustainable development (E/HLPF/2018/L.2).
[14] See General Assembly resolution 72/305.
[15] A/HRC/25/53 of 30 December 2013.
[16] A/HRC/37/59 of 24 January 2018.
[17] A/HRC/43/53 of 30 December 2019.
[18] See annex II for further details.
[19] See chap. V, sect. H on finance and budget.

environmental sustainability and the role that oversight offices can play in this regard are discussed further in chapter III.

32.   The challenges identified by organizations in establishing a policy on environmental sustainability included lack of interest or indifference from the leadership, resistance from Member States and staff members or associations who perceived it negatively, administrative barriers from organizational rules and staff regulations (human resources policies) that made it difficult to adopt an environmental sustainability policy, and financial barriers from the prevailing procedures and practices that did not allow for the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability.

33.   Among officials, views were mixed on the question of whether a dedicated environmental sustainability policy was needed at all. Many interviewees favoured having an organization-wide policy; however, some cautioned that an overarching policy might not be practical due to the specificities of the organizations' mandates. Additionally, as the benefits of environmental sustainability are often subject to local conditions, a global policy that does not take into account or provide for specificities arising from local conditions may not be very effective. Officials in many entities welcomed a potential recommendation on developing an environmental sustainability policy, as the absence of a formal policy could have an adverse impact on internal controls, decision-making and follow-up by management on the subject.

34.   Most of the substantiating documents provided seemed to treat environmental sustainability as a subset of manuals, procedures, frameworks and directives on different management functional areas and standard operating procedures.[20] Participating organizations noted that, while there might not be explicit references to the term "environmental sustainability" in their policies and procedures, detailed directives and guidance contained in these documents were as relevant and applicable to environmental sustainability as they were to other management actions.

C.   Organizational guidelines

35.   While policies on environmental sustainability may not be commonly available, some organizations have issued guidance documents that outline specific measures for mainstreaming environmental sustainability. These are not stand-alone documents; rather, the guidance is embedded in instructions pertaining to individual management areas. The key elements of these guidance documents may inspire other organizations in the development of their own policies and guidelines.

Conclusion: need for a policy in all organizations

36.   There are no international standards or benchmarks on environmental sustainability that are accepted and used on a system-wide basis by the United Nations system organizations. Their absence leads to variations in practices and implementation at headquarters and in field presences. The absence of system-wide standards also leads to variations in practices and implementation across organizations. Such variations make the task of measuring and reporting on implementation of mainstreaming environmental sustainability challenging. Indicators, benchmarks and definitions should follow the United Nations standards. That is, they should either be convention-based, included in the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, or be aligned with sustainability indicators developed by the United Nations Global Compact.

37.   As seen from the existing policies, guidelines and standards, many elements necessary for organizations to develop a comprehensive policy on environmental sustainability already exist in some form or another. Where such policies and guidelines were absent, instances were found of inadequate appreciation of the importance of environmental sustainability in all its dimensions. It is up to each entity to establish a policy that sets out minimum criteria

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[20]   See annex III for further details.

for environmental sustainability, as well as guidelines on how the policy can be implemented in practice.

38.   Staff responsible for different management areas from the relevant units should be involved in the development of policies and guidelines. Collective buy-in for designing and implementing them should be facilitated by awareness-raising rather than by relying exclusively on formal instructions or processes. To strengthen system-wide consistency in benchmarks and standards, while taking into consideration their own specific realities, organizations should undertake consultations through relevant inter-agency forums dealing with environmental sustainability.

39.   In addition, given the need to take into account the specificities of each organization based on its own realities and requirements, the following recommendations, if and when implemented, could lead to greater organizational effectiveness in mainstreaming environmental sustainability by furthering a common understanding on the subject.

40.   The following recommendations are expected to enhance effectiveness in reducing the environmental impact of the respective organizations of the United Nations system and, in turn, of the United Nations system as a whole:

Recommendation 1

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should, by the end of 2022, develop an organization-wide policy for environmental sustainability in the areas of internal management functions.

Recommendation 2

The legislative organs and governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should, by the end of 2022, direct the executive heads to embed environmental sustainability considerations into the management of their organizations and request them to include in the annual report on the work of the organization the results of efforts to mainstream environmental sustainability in the internal management functions of the organization.

III. Governance, accountability and coordination for environmental sustainability

41. The present review explored ways of strengthening and enhancing accountability, as well as ownership and coordination for mainstreaming environmental sustainability in organizations of the United Nations system by reviewing existing mechanisms, both at the system-wide and organizational levels.

A. Mechanisms at the system-wide level

1. United Nations Environment Programme Sustainable United Nations facility

42. Since 2008, efforts to measure, reduce and offset the carbon footprint of the United Nations facilities and operations have been undertaken by the UNEP Sustainable United Nations facility,[21] which has been supporting the implementation of the 2007 Climate Neutral Policy and Strategy and coordinating system-wide reporting and environmentally sustainable activities under the Greening the Blue initiative and the facilitation of the Issue Management Group focal points network. The Sustainable United Nations facility's efforts are aimed at ensuring that environmental considerations are factored into key United Nations initiatives and at providing templates, frameworks, technical support and advice to the Issue Management Group. It also conducts a system-wide campaign to engage staff at all levels of the organization, detailing efforts to make the United Nations environmentally sustainable and ways staff can get involved through the Greening the Blue campaign. Greening the Blue is the platform for raising awareness about environmental sustainability within the system and was set up to share system-wide efforts to make the system environmentally sustainable and to engage personnel for this purpose. Its scope has gradually been expanded from a focus on measuring, reporting and offsetting greenhouse gas emissions to supporting the adoption of environmental management systems, and more recently to including a targeted measurement and management of waste and water.

43. **Facilitation of the Issue Management Group focal points network**. While system- and organization-wide ownership and accountability mechanisms have yet to manifest in a coordinated manner, the enthusiasm of focal points and other pockets of interested staff committed to the topic, along with facilitation by the Sustainable United Nations facility, have pushed the process forward since 2008. The rise in the number of organizations reporting under the Greening the Blue initiative suggests that the interactions with the Sustainable United Nations facility have contributed to increased ownership among entities by clarifying the requirements under the inventory indicators and their relevance. In 2017 and 2019, 54 entities[22] of the United Nations system reported data on greenhouse gas emissions, covering 255,741 personnel distributed worldwide, while a total of 45 entities provided data on waste. In 2017 (the first year of reporting on freshwater use), 45 entities provided data on water. The same year, 26 entities adopted or were in the process of implementing a systematic approach to reducing their environmental footprint (implementing an environmental management system or receiving certificates of excellence for their environmentally sustainable building management practices). Some entities mentioned the dialogue launched within their organizations as a positive spin-off of the Greening the Blue process. The representation of the Sustainable United Nations focal points network has evolved in a positive way. In addition to facilities managers, environmental experts are also stepping in, so that there is now both substantive and managerial representation in the

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[21] The Sustainable United Nations facility, established and hosted by UNEP since 2008, manages and supports the Issue Management Group on Environmental Sustainability Management and leads the United Nations system's efforts to measure and reduce its impacts.

[22] The following United Nations Secretariat related entities are accounted for separately: the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, ESCAP, ESCWA, field missions, OHCHR, UNEP, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Headquarters, the United Nations Office at Geneva, the United Nations Office at Nairobi and the United Nations Office at Vienna.

network, thereby demonstrating an expanding interest. The interviews with focal points and the questionnaire responses demonstrated an almost unanimous buy-in for the sustainability strategy, which contrasts with the fact that no expeditious actions have been taken to implement it.

44.   **Facilitation of Greening the Blue**. Although the Greening the Blue process has won wide acclaim, the existing reporting framework does not favour accountability or transparency. It focuses on whether entities report on various aspects (greenhouse gas emissions, waste, water, an environmental management system and offsetting) rather than on individual and collective performance in reducing the United Nations system's environmental footprint. Procedures to address "underperformance" are absent, while the lack of recognition of good performance has inhibited environmental sustainability mainstreaming. The rationale for such an approach was to recognize that numbers did not tell the full story and that "context" was a major enabling or hindering factor. Greening the Blue reporting includes entities in different geographical and operational contexts (small offices and large organizations, normative and operational entities, and headquarters-based and field-deployed entities, including humanitarian and peacekeeping mission settings). These factors affecting underperformance or overperformance have to be integrated into the reporting to ensure that the approach tells the story of the outliers and that it provides a basis for holding each reporting entity accountable for its results and identifying those that need increased attention. With no "interpretation" of the data reported through the Greening the Blue initiative, it remains a mere compliance process.

45.   **Internal quality assurance and reporting mechanisms for Greening the Blue**. Reporting mechanisms, as well as quality assurance and coordination of internal environmental sustainability data, are often dependent on individuals, with little institutional support. The complexity of some organizational structures, such as the United Nations Secretariat, both in the number of entities and the different mandates and operational environments, as well as the enterprise resource planning system used (Umoja), add to the complexity of validated and quality-assured data collection processes. The collection of field data has been a challenge for many entities across the system. The United Nations Secretariat, for example, started reporting on the greenhouse gas emissions inventory of field missions in 2014. Although this effort has accelerated since 2017, measurements are being refined to: account for the complexity and fragmentation of the Secretariat; incorporate changes from recent reforms and enhanced delegation of authority; allow for the collection of at least three years of data so as to account for fluctuations, address inconsistencies and effect improvements in measurement; account for all entities and their locations; and consider the scale of peace operations. Collecting detailed information to measure the environmental performance and manage the associated risks of peacekeeping operations has been a major endeavour. With regard to accounting for all entities and their locations, the establishment, transition and closure of field missions must be considered, as this affects the carbon footprint of the organization. In addition, most missions have not been metering electricity production or consumption, and no consistent data has been collected during site inspections. Partly as a result of these factors, Greening the Blue reporting cannot portray a realistic picture of the United Nations system footprint. The data collected as part of the inventory on greenhouse gas emissions from 2016 to 2018 were not updated by some organizations but merely copied from the previous year's report.

2.   **Strategy for sustainability management in the United Nations system 2020–2030**

46.   In May 2019, CEB endorsed the Strategy for sustainability management in the United Nations system (2020–2030).[23] In outlining objectives, commitments and indicators for furthering environmental sustainability, members of CEB declared their intention to mainstream environmental sustainability, both collectively within the United Nations system and individually within their respective organizations. The Strategy has been developed in two stages. Phase I covers environmental sustainability in the area of management. It focuses on the continued reduction of environmental impacts via the systematic consideration of risks and benefits to the environment from United Nations activities in relevant corporate

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[23] CEB/2019/1/Add.1.

management decisions of all United Nations entities. Phase II, for endorsement by CEB in 2021, would address internal environmental and social sustainability in policies, programming, facilities and operations, as outlined in the Framework for advancing Environmental and Social Sustainability in the United Nations System. The second phase calls for a holistic approach and the interlinkages between cross-cutting issues such as human rights, gender equality, accessibility and disability inclusion, and safety and security. With regard to enabling the second phase, interviewees pointed to the lack of an inter-agency coordination mechanism to address sustainability, while cautioning about the complexity of lumping all aspects of sustainability together.

47. **Strategy data challenges**. The Sustainable United Nations facility team recently made a thorough analysis of the targets and indicators contained in the Strategy. This analysis showed that, out of the 36 indicators, data had already been collected for 19 of them through the Greening the Blue inventory, but only 11 indicators had been reported on in the Greening the Blue annual report. The following major challenges were identified in collecting data against the indicators contained in the Strategy:

- Lack of a common definition for some terms and concepts (environmental management system, waste, environmentally sound management standards, low global warming potential equipment, etc.)

- Lack of a clear reporting framework within the organizations

- Lack of baselines for some indicators (percentage increase in entities' expenditure on environmental issues)

- Lack of robustness of some indicators, which are sometimes vaguely formulated (percentage of sites with water efficiency measures (taps, leak-reduction plans); percentage of sites for new premises that have been screened for biodiversity impacts; and statistics on relevant staff recruitment).

48. As reliable and trackable data and results cannot be systematically generated, data may not be accurate and comparable. Therefore, the United Nations system cannot claim that it has a full understanding of its environmental footprint. **Data quality assurance processes and reporting mechanisms should be established or clarified to enhance organizational accountability. The data should be verified, validated and quality-checked before reporting, so as to ensure an accurate and reliable measurement of the system's environmental footprint against objectives of the respective environmental policies and of the Strategy**. The relevant inter-agency coordination mechanism (in this case, the High-level Committee on Management) should be tasked with tracking implementation of the Strategy across United Nations entities annually and in a transparent manner, and this tracking should be integrated into the dashboard currently being finalized.

49. While the Strategy includes a holistic approach to aspects such as greenhouse gas emissions, waste management and biodiversity conservation, most entities consider environmental sustainability mainly from the perspective of the "traditional" functions of facilities (electricity and heat) and travel (aircraft kerosene). Other sources of greenhouse gas emissions could also be considered (such as car fuel, refrigeration equipment, agricultural practices supported through catering, manufactured goods and construction work). Rather than making environmental sustainability the sole responsibility of a specific management function, **entities should prioritize aspects (in the absence of a policy or strategy) for a whole-organization approach**, avoiding falling into the trap of administrative silos and "ticking the box" attitudes. For example, the European Commission adopted the practice of adapting its environmental policy targets when they were over-optimistic or under-optimistic.

3. Role of other inter-agency mechanisms

50. **Role of CEB**. At the level of the United Nations system, the Inspector analysed the roles of CEB, the United Nations Environment Management Group [24] and its Issue

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[24] The Environment Management Group is a system-wide coordination body on environment and human settlements with a membership consisting of the 51 specialized agencies, programmes and organs of the United Nations.

Management Group on Environmental Sustainability Management [25] managed by the Sustainable United Nations facility,[26] which operates through UNEP and coordinates the Greening the Blue initiative.

51.   The endorsement of the Strategy by CEB was a turning point in expressing the United Nations system's commitment to mainstreaming environmental sustainability (beyond the mere aspect of climate neutrality) in the internal management of the entities. However, the role of CEB in this process is limited, as it does not have the mandate or the authority to monitor the implementation of or assess the progress made under the Strategy.

52.   **Additional inter-agency mechanisms**. Such mechanisms have been identified and assessed in the present review (see annex XI).

53.   **Role of the Environment Management Group and the Issue Management Group**. Although the Environment Management Group acts as a system-wide coordination body, it operates on a voluntary basis, choosing the topics to deal with based on the sense of urgency and need. In 2010, the Group brought the United Nations system together to focus on climate change. The Environment Management Group and the Issue Management Group were respectively assessed as "very useful" by 39.29 per cent and 57.14 per cent of the participating organizations through questionnaire responses, while none of the respondents found them "useless" or "very useless". Some organizations (the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO)) emphasized the need to have a closer link between the Environment Management Group and the Issue Management Group, in order to: establish a stronger system for recommending system-wide and organization-wide policies based on evidence collected through Greening the Blue; verify compliance and accountability of the entities; and increase the dissemination of knowledge and good practices. The peer reviews organized by the Environment Management Group (and conducted by panels composed of two representatives of United Nations agencies and two external experts) were particularly useful for helping an agency improve its carbon footprint. To enhance ownership, accountability and efficiency, **the Environment Management Group should: adopt a co-chairing arrangement between UNEP and another agency (on a rotating basis) to allow for enhanced ownership; review the process of selection of its topics; include in its agenda for the regular meetings a standing item on the system-wide coordination of environmental sustainability management; and continue the series of nexus dialogues to determine how organizations' mandates can be complementary so as to achieve system-wide environmental sustainability, especially on the humanitarian-environment nexus. These efforts should be aimed at determining realistic targets and establishing a common "language" between development and humanitarian agencies**.

54.   Though recognizing the role of CEB, the Environment Management Group, the Issue Management Group and the Sustainable United Nations facility, in the absence of a system-wide accountability mechanism to track and oversee progress, the ownership of the Strategy remains with individual entities, which have to translate and incorporate their respective commitments into organizational policies and strategies. Consequently, it is up to the individual entities to implement any scheme to make themselves environmentally sustainable. To date, policies on environmental sustainability management are absent in many organizations,[27] while the existence of policies does not necessarily mean effective action on

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[25] The work to create a more sustainable United Nations system is coordinated through the Issue Management Group on Environmental Sustainability Management.

[26] The Sustainable United Nations facility, established and hosted by UNEP since 2008, manages and supports the Issue Management Group on Environmental Sustainability Management.

[27] To date, 43 per cent of the 28 participating organizations claim to have an internal environmental sustainability policy (the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UNEP, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), ITU, and UNIDO; 36 per cent have a strategy; 36 per cent

the ground either. As a consequence, JIU assessed the ownership of participating organizations in mainstreaming environmental sustainability as being uneven and inadequate.

4.   Strengthening the sharing of good practices within and among entities

55.   The Inspector sought to identify useful guidelines and good practices in organizations of the United Nations system with regard to enhancing environmental sustainability management. While good practices and useful guidelines exist within several entities, knowledge about them has not been shared optimally or adequately. Relevant offices addressing different aspects of environmental sustainability were largely unaware of the work being done in other offices and duty stations within the same organization, let alone in other organizations. Even in the same geographical location, this was often found to be the case. The inadequate state of coordination was even more striking given the existence of several inter-agency and intra-agency coordination mechanisms, at least on paper, to address the topic of environmental sustainability management directly or indirectly within the broader topic of sustainable development.

56.   Data collected through interviews and questionnaire responses indicated that most organizations participated in one or more inter-agency mechanisms (task teams, task forces, working groups, support groups, partnerships, networks and annual meetings) related to environmental sustainability management. Even though mechanisms dedicated specifically to internally mainstreaming environmental sustainability did not exist, the subject was being addressed, according to interviewees, through mechanisms related to broader themes such as common premises, facilities, infrastructure, documentation management, duty of care and diversity. Participants described the mechanisms as useful platforms for exchanging information, sharing experiences and connecting responsible professionals at a working level, which also facilitated developing solutions in a practical, though not always formal, manner. Apart from the positive aspects, participants regretted the absence of concrete follow-up action on the production of system-wide or entity-wide guidance, such as guidelines and standards on environmental sustainability management. Similarly, while interviewees valued the Greening the Blue efforts to collect system-wide data, most regretted the lack of interpretation of the data and policy actions taken as a result at the organizational and system-wide levels.

57.   Other concerns and challenges with respect to the functioning of inter- and intra-agency mechanisms and the suggestions and recommendations for remedial measures made by interviewees include the following:

- There is an uneven commitment to environmental sustainability by leadership in organizations across the United Nations system. The institutional setting of inter-agency coordination on environmental sustainability management should be formalized and co-chaired at a high level, and a full-time person with expertise in planning, managing and coordinating management-related questions should be assigned to it.

- Organizations leading the way on matters related to environmental sustainability management perhaps tend to benefit less from engagement in inter-agency mechanisms, owing to the one-way nature of the knowledge exchange.

- Working groups and task forces are often too large to be functional, with many enthusiastic discussions but vague outputs. The fact that nominees are often not at the same or comparable levels is not helpful, as there is a significant divergence in experience. Functionality could likely be improved by assigning a small group of experts to study a specific topic and present recommendations to a larger group.

- Some task forces have been inactive for several years and need to be revived with clear terms of reference and monitoring and follow-up mechanisms.

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have an action plan; 32 per cent have a management system; and 50 per cent have administrative or regulatory measures in relation to environmental sustainability.

58.   The inter- and intra-agency coordination mechanisms hold considerable potential for knowledge-sharing regarding good practices and for the development of concrete system-wide guidance on the subject matter.

59.   The executive heads of United Nations system entities should instruct their representatives participating in inter-agency and intra-agency coordination mechanisms to: establish clear terms of reference for all such mechanisms addressing environmental sustainability management; periodically review and update the existing terms of reference for continued relevance; ensure that individuals nominated to serve on them are technically competent and familiar with the substantive and operational aspects; and ensure that meetings are held regularly and that summary records are prepared and circulated in a timely manner, identifying the entities responsible for implementing all action points in a timely manner and reporting back to the mechanism.

5.   United Nations management and development system reform and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

60.   While efforts have mostly focused on headquarters, field operations have progressively been called upon to reduce their impact on the environment. For peacekeeping missions, section 3.3 of the United Nations Secretariat Climate Action Plan 2020–2030 describes the major challenges and opportunities involved, including the geographic spread of the United Nations Secretariat and security-related issues. As for humanitarian contexts, a long-running partnership between the former Department of Field Support and UNEP was formalized in 2016, through which the Rapid Environment and Climate Technical Assistance was established to support field missions in improving environmental performance by providing technical assistance coordinated by the Environmental Technical Assistance Unit in the Global Service Centre. This partnership continues with the new Department of Operational Support, and a new project document is to be signed for phase 2 of the Rapid Environment and Climate Technical Assistance.

61.   Field presences should be encouraged to work together to promote environmental sustainability. The following elements from the United Nations reform are relevant to environmental sustainability mainstreaming.

62.   **Management reform**. The composition and scope of the senior-level Steering Group on Environmental Sustainability Management has been expanded to incorporate Secretariat-wide representation, including field missions and the Development Coordination Office, thereby providing an overarching coordination mechanism for environmental management systems across the Secretariat.

63.   **Common premises and services**. These can play an important role in improving the environmental sustainability of the United Nations system. Organizations in the same location (in Bangkok, Geneva, Nairobi, Rome and Vienna) have been cooperating, coordinating and collaborating on management aspects to achieve efficiency gains and minimize overheads; they could also promote environmental sustainability in internal management. They have shown that anticipating problems and putting in place mechanisms for their smooth running are imperative. Rather than finding themselves in situations where disagreements erupted over several issues and became major irritants, arrangements were worked out well in advance. These measures can be replicated in places where common premises are in operation.[28]

64.   **Development system reform**. The United Nations Secretariat Climate Action Plan 2020–2030 refers to contributing to reforms, particularly the development system reform, and applies to all entities of the Secretariat, including the resident coordinator system. The Department of Operational Support and the resident coordinator system should encourage joint mechanisms or activities to mainstream environmental sustainability. The Inspector sees opportunities for further mainstreaming environmental sustainability in United Nations

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[28]   See chap. V, sect. D on facilities and infrastructure management.

country teams, operational efficiencies,[29] the integration of joint operations at the country level,[30] and positive impact for the communities where the United Nations is present (see recommendation 6 in chap. V, sect. D on facilities and infrastructure management).[31]

65.   **2030 Agenda**. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasized the imperative of incorporating sustainability concerns into activities and operations of United Nations organizations. Recalling the indivisible nature of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Inspector explored leveraging the linkages between the management of environmental sustainability and the 2030 Agenda. The links between programmatic and management endeavours should be made explicit by identifying how contributions are made organizationally towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Conclusion: Greening the Blue should enhance accountability and transparency

66.   The information provided through Greening the Blue reporting could be used for recommending system- and organization-wide policies and actions. While enhancing transparency alone may increase the pressure to make superficial changes or inflate reporting data, enhancing accountability would avoid situations where the reporting data were not updated or quality assured. Similar to the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women regarding gender equality in the United Nations system,[32] the Greening the Blue process could adopt an approach that preserves the balance between accountability and transparency.

67.   **As with the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women model, the executive director of UNEP should address communications annually to executive heads of other United Nations system organizations, to link responsibility for implementation of the Strategy to the leadership of the entity, inviting a response from the entity's executive head to address the challenges raised, and encourage the leadership to share the letter and its response with the respective legislative organs and governing bodies.**

68.   **The Strategy should be used to revise the template of the Greening the Blue report, aligning it with the Strategy and transparently publishing the individual and collective results achieved in relation to each performance indicator compared with performance from the previous years, using 2020 as a baseline.** Greening the Blue should pivot to follow the Strategy, should be added to both national and regional level business operations strategies, and should be guided by the business operating task team under the United Nations Sustainable Development Group so as to act country-by-country and ensure that common premises, fleet management and common travel services have action plans.

69.   The report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system should present both aggregated and disaggregated figures for individual reporting entities, accompanied by narratives where necessary, to analyse specific situations. It should also be presented to the legislative organs and governing bodies of other entities. **The report should be expanded by 2022 to indicate progress achieved by individual reporting entities on the implementation of the Strategy, using**

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[29] The transition to "climate smart operations" (climate-friendly infrastructure, clean and affordable energy, and other low-carbon and innovative solutions in environmentally sustainable operations) yields substantial and permanent operational efficiencies.

[30] Two of the ongoing and planned solutions to improve the coherence, cost effectiveness and impact of country-level United Nations activities are shared facilities and shared services.

[31] The Organization has a combined operational footprint in over 100 countries. The largest peacekeeping operations are in fragile States that face severe sustainable development and climate change adaptation challenges.

[32] See the JIU review of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on gender equality in the United Nations system, JIU/REP/2019/2.

a standardized and comparable narrative, and by identifying the drivers of success and the challenges faced in making their operations environmentally sustainable.

B. Mechanisms at the organizational level

70. With regard to organizations of the United Nations system, the Inspector analysed: the commitment of the leadership; the existence of environmental management systems, policies and strategies, and internal coordination structures; the role of informal groups; and the role of the legislative organs and governing bodies and oversight functions.

1. Commitment of the leadership

71. The communication and messaging of the executive head – often described as the "tone at the top" – such as issuing regular administrative instructions and messages to staff, including in periodic publications, dedicating a specific section in the annual report, making statements on important occasions, and demonstrating readiness to embrace technological advances, are of critical importance. The commitment of the leadership facilitates greater ownership and accountability, helps turn strategies into practice and progressively helps raise the bar of environmental performance. The gap between rhetoric and the resource base has been significant, as the executive heads did not receive any specific mandate, nor did they undertake any initiative, to familiarize their staff with the Strategy and the requirements related to its endorsement. Mainstreaming environmental sustainability does not seem to be a priority, especially as Member States also have varied levels of commitment. In addition, the leadership has an important role to play in enabling buy-in from those staff members who are, in relative terms, adverse or indifferent to environmental concerns, by institutionally positioning environmental mainstreaming not as a function of one facility manager or an environmental "expert" but as everybody's business. **The "tone at the top" from the executive heads and senior management should express, promote and demonstrate to staff and Member States their commitment to internal environmental sustainability, while taking responsibility for the implementation of the Strategy within their respective organizations**.

2. Environmental management systems

72. In April 2013, CEB made a commitment to develop and implement an environmental management system[33] in each organization to further reduce its footprint, supporting the idea that sustainable development was not only about ensuring that economic, social and environmental perspectives were reflected in the strategic planning process of United Nations organizations but that, together, these perspectives formed a holistic way of "doing business", a process of thinking at all levels that guided the kind of strategic planning and operational choices that followed.[34]

73. **Environmental management systems as a governance mechanism**. There is no system-wide commitment for United Nations entities to have internal environmental coordination structures beyond the 2013 High-level Committee on Management agreement to implement environmental management systems at the facilities and operations level. Few entities have invested in a holistic approach through an environmental management system. According to the 2019 Greening the Blue report, only 12 entities (including 4 from the United Nations Secretariat, indicating that coordination remains scattered at the working level) had adopted an environmental management system. This number does not represent the investment in environmental sustainability management, since Greening the Blue has adopted a more encompassing definition of an environmental management system, whereby

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[33] An environmental management system is a holistic, systematic and long-term environmental strategic planning framework that provides for a structured environmental approach through the following main elements: management support; identification of the environmental aspects to be tackled; environmental policy; environmental objectives and action plans; roles and responsibilities; resources; measurement and monitoring through management reviews and environmental audits; and corrective actions for continuous improvement of environmental performance.

[34] A/68/79-E/2013/69.

entities having a policy under way and designated roles and responsibilities, at least at their headquarters, are considered to have an environmental management system. There is no system-wide rolling out of environmental management systems, and progress on mainstreaming environmental sustainability and reducing the environmental impact of the United Nations system remains uneven and uncoordinated. **Organizations of the United Nations system should adopt and implement environmental management systems internally at the facilities and operations level, while seeking system-wide coordination and guidance in doing so for greater progress towards mainstreaming environmental sustainability. To provide an accurate picture of investments made by the United Nations system in environmental performance and to avoid inflating the number of environmental management systems, adopting a strict definition of an environmental management system in Greening the Blue reports, starting in 2022, would be desirable.**

3. Varied internal coordination models

74. While all internal coordination models identified in the present review[35] have pros and cons and different levels of associated commitment to the topic, too often the responsibility of internal environmental coordination is left to an administrative focal point with little substantive knowledge or authority to mobilize all the necessary parts of the organization towards a common purpose. Regardless of the organization chart placement or the appropriateness of human resources, **business process owners should be given enough authority to enable efficient internal coordination of management functions meant to contribute to reducing the environmental footprint of the organization. For this purpose, internal environmental coordination structures should be reviewed with a view to enhancing organization-wide accountability and coordination of results under the respective environmental policies and the Strategy**.

4. Channelling the efforts of informal structures

75. Most interviewees identified staff behaviour as a key element to an environmentally sustainable organization (indicating that, in order to convince staff members that environmental sustainability is a priority, it must be mainstreamed in administrative procedures). While behavioural change must be tackled at the organizational level, spontaneous staff initiatives have emerged to foster staff engagement and pressure management into action. The Inspector identified 10 informal "green (environmentally sustainable) groups" in the United Nations system, similar to initiatives like the "Young United Nations", with varied levels of influence. Some are associated with management decisions, while others are not.

76. Views of "green groups" members were sought through a short survey. The level of commitment of the members who join environmentally sustainable networks on a voluntary basis is admirable; more than 50 per cent of them indicated that they participated in those groups because they believed that their respective organizations were not doing enough to address environmental sustainability. Some 85 per cent of respondents confirmed that the most important objective of such a group was to enhance office-related environmentally sustainable behaviours among the organization's personnel and to increase staff awareness concerning climate change and sustainability. While members of the environmental sustainability groups believed that the "tone at the top" was crucial to keeping management committed to and accountable for incorporating environmental sustainability, they were not convinced that a shift of the group from an advocacy role to one of holding management accountable or providing checks and balances alone would be entirely beneficial (36 per cent indicated yes, 28 per cent no, while 36 per cent did not know). The respondents were most concerned with the environmental issues of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, managing waste and avoiding single use plastic. When answering a question on the ways in which organizations could strengthen the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability in their internal management, the respondents suggested the following avenues: "take a new look at administrative procedures"; "further explain environmental sustainability roles in the job

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[35] See annex IX.

descriptions"; "envisage incentive schemes"; and "embed environmental key performance indicators in the overall strategic plan and into organizations' workplans".

77. The Inspector did not fail to recognize that there were also a few shortcomings of the young environmental sustainability groups. Members sometimes get carried away by their passion and enthusiasm, which is characteristic of any advocacy group. As a result, some of their suggestions turn out to be less realistic and less practical; in rare cases, the activism is used to grab attention. Notwithstanding these shortcomings, they play an invaluable role as useful pressure points on members of management, who are often not sensitive enough to environmental sustainability considerations.

78. In the light of the positive role played by environmental sustainability groups in mainstreaming environmental sustainability, **members of senior management should provide the necessary support and encourage "environmental sustainability groups" to continue coming up with suggestions and innovations to enhance environmental sustainability and should establish appropriate channels through which to consider these efforts and proposals.**

5. Leveraging internal expertise for the benefit of the entire United Nations system

79. **Better leveraging of internal expertise**. It became apparent during interviews that the United Nations system possessed abundant knowledge and expertise in environmental sustainability. The Inspector identified ways in which organizations of the United Nations system could make use of their core mandates and substantive capacities to contribute to mainstreaming environmental sustainability across the United Nations system and further mainstream the environmental agenda in the business processes of the United Nations' partners. Although no organization explicitly agreed to enlist existing capacities for the benefit of the United Nations system, the Inspector makes a few suggestions on ways to better leverage internal expertise for the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability.[36]

6. Leveraging environmental conventions for the benefit of the entire United Nations system

80. The Inspector collected information from the secretariats of the major multilateral environmental agreements and conventions through a questionnaire and interviewed representatives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity to assess how their accumulated expertise and internal knowledge could be leveraged to support organizations of the United Nations system in reducing their environmental footprint. The questionnaire had a response rate of only 29 per cent (5 responses out of 17 secretariats contacted),[37] and therefore no common trends could be identified.

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[36] See annex VII.

[37] Multilateral environmental agreements administered by UNEP include: atmosphere-related conventions (the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (1985)); biodiversity-related conventions (the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds; the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas; the Agreement on the Conservation of the Black Seas, Mediterranean and Contiguous Atlantic Area; the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats; the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (1973); the Bonn Convention on Migratory Species (1979); and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (2000)); chemicals and wastes-related conventions (the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987); the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol; the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal (1989); the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (1998) (joint interim secretariat with FAO); and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (2001)); and multilateral environmental agreements administered by other bodies (the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea; the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme; and the UNESCO World Heritage Convention).

81.   In addition to these conventions, all five conventions or multilateral environmental agreements negotiated under the auspices of ECE [38] have entered into force. These conventions have been supplemented by a number of protocols. [39] The ECE secretariat services the governing bodies of these multilateral environmental agreements and helps those bodies to monitor the implementation of the agreements by the States parties. Notwithstanding the fact that these agreements began as regional legal instruments, many have since become global, and States outside the ECE region have been participating in the activities under these agreements, which have transformed the legal and environmental landscape in the ECE region and beyond.

82.   **The secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements and conventions should contribute to the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability in the United Nations organizations. Equally, the existing inter-agency mechanisms should enlist those secretariats to participate in and contribute to the collective efforts. With their expertise, they could help to study and assess the "real environmental impacts" of measures with potential negative impacts (such as a ban on plastics, the introduction of e-vehicles, a product to replace plastic bags, the environmental costs associated with batteries for e-vehicles, and energy sources for recharging e-vehicles) before their implementation.**

Conclusion: need to strengthen oversight from Member States and from oversight offices

83.   Just as staff members look to the executive heads for signals about the priority assigned to any given area, so do the latter look to Member States in the legislative organs and governing bodies for signals about the priority they attach to any given area, including the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability. Therefore, Member States in the legislative organs and governing bodies of the organizations bear responsibility for providing effective oversight and overall strategic guidance, including for mainstreaming environmental sustainability in internal management areas.

84.   The topic of environmental sustainability management could benefit from greater systematic legislative attention, more systematic monitoring and reporting, and the adoption by legislative bodies of resolutions on the topic on a regular basis. Only a few annual reports include references to internal environmental sustainability (only 7 out of 28 organizations of the United Nations system referred to their environmental footprint in the respective 2019 annual reports).[40] The executive heads could secure the buy-in and support of Member States in the legislative organs and governing bodies for mobilizing greater political and institutional support for dedicating adequate resources to improving environmental sustainability management.

85.   **Views of Member States**. Member States' views, concerns and perspectives on mainstreaming environmental sustainability in the internal management functions of organizations of the United Nations system were sought through a short questionnaire disseminated among a representative selection of their permanent missions in New York and Geneva. [41] Member States encouraged United Nations entities to actively promote and integrate principles of environmental sustainability into their operational processes. This would enable them to play their part in addressing climate change and fulfilling the

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[38] The Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution; the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context; the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes; the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents; and the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.

[39] The main protocols among these are the Protocol on Water and Health; the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment; the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers; and the Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters (the latter has not yet entered into force).

[40] ICAO, ILO, UNDP, UNIDO, UNOPS, WFP and WIPO.

[41] See annex VIII for the results of this questionnaire.

Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. Efforts to reduce their environmental footprint could be improved; so too could communication with the Member States on the efforts undertaken. Many Member States pledged to continue supporting suggestions, initiatives and improvements in this area.

86.   **Only a few action plans**. Despite the adage "what gets measured gets done", only a few organizations (the peace operations of the Department of Operational Support, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) have embedded environmental management objectives and indicators into their results frameworks. Clear action plans on environmental policies or environment-related components of corporate policies are often absent. Reporting to legislative organs and governing bodies should be a necessary tool for furthering transparency and accountability; however, there is currently no requirement in any organization to separately report on the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability.

87.   In the absence of specific legislative decisions in many cases, organizations do not submit reports on performance that would enable the legislative organs and governing bodies to assess what has worked well and suggest improvements for mainstreaming environmental sustainability. Several interviewees noted that, while such reports could be prepared, there had been no requests or demands to do so thus far. The executive heads of entities would also benefit from the monitoring of performance, the systematic collection of data and regular reporting, which would serve as effective management and accountability tools enabling the legislative organs and governing bodies to exercise their oversight responsibilities and provide strategic guidance to the entities in respect of environmental sustainability.

88.   **Oversight functions**. As part of the present review, JIU looked at the attention paid by oversight offices to the topic in their work and explored the actual or potential role that the oversight offices had been playing or could play with regard to mainstreaming environmental sustainability. JIU also examined ways of encouraging them to do so, with due regard for their mandate, charter and independence.

89.   Independent oversight offices can serve as an important accountability tool in helping Member States and executive heads of organizations of the United Nations system by providing an independent assessment of compliance with agreed-upon actions and mandates to enhance environmental sustainability management.

90.   While there have been various oversight reports on related subjects, the topic of internal environmental sustainability management has not received due attention in the work of the oversight offices of organizations of the United Nations system. Consequently, few recommendations have emerged on the subject. However, while no dedicated audit reports on environmental sustainability have been issued by oversight bodies of JIU participating organizations, the topic has been addressed as part of broader reports.

91.   **JIU past reports**. Ten years after the issuance of the JIU review on the in-house environmental management policies and practices of the United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2010/1), only 56 per cent of the recommendations made in that review have been accepted by the JIU participating organizations, while the average rate of acceptance for JIU recommendations is about 65 percent. The JIU participating organizations were asked to assess the continued relevance of the recommendations contained in the 2010 review. Each of the 12 recommendations was considered to still be relevant by an average of 21 out of the 28 organizations.[42]

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[42] See annex V.

IV. Mainstreaming environmental sustainability in the United Nations system

92.   While entities of the United Nations system are advocates of the 2030 Agenda, not all of them have incorporated the same message in their internal management functional areas, giving rise to a paradox whereby entities are perceived as not practising what they preach. As the custodian of conventions, treaties, and norms and standards in the realms of climate change, environmental protection, the pollution of air, water, and oceans, and related areas, and as the chief advocate of sustainable development, it is imperative that the system is seen as practising internally what it preaches to the outside world. This argument provides the most compelling rationale for improving environmental sustainability internally across organizations of the United Nations system. Bottlenecks of inadequate resources, gaps between rhetoric and practice, and other factors enable or hinder the United Nations system's environmental impact.

A. Challenge of resource prioritization

93.   Among the challenges confronting an organization when paying attention to environmental sustainability management internally, the inadequacy of resources emerged as the most recurring concern. While this could be justified to an extent, this might not tell the full story. Like in the case of "uniqueness" and "specificity" of mandates and context specificity, a lack of adequate resources has come to provide a convenient and handy excuse, as this would spare most entities from a serious self-examination of the priority accorded to the utilization of available resources.

94.   **Various funding sources and mechanisms**. Only a few entities devote regular resources to internal environmental sustainability, some via an internal levy (the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)), and some through corporate funds (the World Health Organization (WHO), UNDP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), WIPO and FAO). JIU attempted to capture the financial implications of the JIU participating organizations' environmental performance. Most entities could not provide financial data, either because they did not track that information or because they did not allocate specific resources to environmental sustainability but rather mainstreamed environmental management into their regular business processes. Only six organizations shared financial data, with four of them indicating only the cost incurred on the post dedicated to environmental sustainability within the organization. While not offering this as an excuse not to track financial data, some entities pointed to the danger in isolating expenditure without accounting for the potential efficiencies or savings created by incorporating environmental sustainability into business processes. The cost-benefit perspective would help to debunk the misperception that making an entity environmentally sustainable is costly.

95.   **The cost-benefit challenge**. Budgetary processes and short-term cycles act as obstacles to promoting environmental sustainability, discouraging upfront investments. The absence of an accountability framework that includes an environmental policy and action plans means that it is difficult to "sell" investments that may not bring short-term financial benefits. A "cost lens" is often not compatible with an "environmental sustainability lens", as both have different timelines. Environmental benefits cannot always be costed or translated into purely financial terms. For example, the cost estimate of safety and security brought by the use of solar or hybrid energy does not include the loss of diesel by theft or pilferage, which often occurs. **A refined cost-benefit approach should be adopted for determining immediate investment needs for returns on investments with a longer time-horizon, not necessarily in the same budget cycle, including better costing of dealing with harm done to the environment as a moral obligation to future generations.** This can only be enabled if appropriate measurements and metrics are in place.

96. **Member States' perspective**. Many interviewees underscored the imperative of "mainstreaming" environmental sustainability across the work of all United Nations system organizations. There was not enough evidence to pinpoint any trend as to whether interviewees believed the resources provided were commensurate with the declared commitment to environmental sustainability; only two permanent missions indicated that resources were insufficient.

97. The following recommendation is expected to help executive heads of the participating organizations enhance efficiency and possibly support significant financial savings:

Recommendation 3

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should, by the end of 2022, devote adequate resources in specific budget plans, including by better utilizing existing available resources, to mainstreaming environmental sustainability in their respective organizations, and report on the implementation to their legislative organs and governing bodies from 2023.

B. Identifying and remediating gaps between rhetoric and reality

98. The enabling environment to support behavioural change is somewhat weak, potentially causing a reputational risk. To improve its overall environmental performance, the United Nations system should not only demonstrate leadership in integrating the sustainable development agenda into management planning and processes but should also ensure that the enabling factors to achieve the goals of the agenda are put in place to better manage the reputational risk. The Inspector identified the following factors constituting an enabling environment: establishing management structures under the executive head with delegated authority and clear roles and responsibilities; allocating sufficient resources for activities to meet the targets of the organizations' environmental policies and of the Strategy; creating action plans to accompany environmental policies or environment-related components of organizational policies; setting up informal structures to provide checks and balances; and ensuring technology awareness and innovation support. In the absence of such an enabling environment, environmental sustainability is not considered to be part of the United Nations system's "duty of care" and instead remains "nice to have". The absence of a strong enabling environment contributes to the gap between commitments and reality.

99. Entities could draw upon their own experience in integrating environmental sustainability concerns into their programmatic and substantive activities and the ways in which this experience could be replicated in mainstreaming environmental sustainability concerns into internal management functional areas. In this context, it would be instructive to see how they could benefit from experiments under way in the United Nations Secretariat, UNDP, WIPO, WFP and a few other entities with regard to how the programmatic and the internal management functional areas could be combined.

100. The experience of JIU itself was instructive in this context. An entity with a policy on environmental sustainability since 2011 had made little progress, whereas another that had adopted its policy in 2016 had made remarkable progress. Having a policy is not enough; more important is the commitment of the entity to effectively implement the policy. Even in cases where an entity had adopted procedures for the disposal of waste, it was astonishing to find that the contractor had been seen mixing up all types of waste in the basement, with no separation of plastic, paper and glass, or recyclables and non-recyclables, thereby making a mockery of the policy. A few interviewees admitted that the exercise had been reduced to one of paying lip-service, ticking boxes and playing it "safe". The goal had become to enumerate a large number of key performance indicators so as to make it completely meaningless, overly time-consuming and of little practical utility to measure, monitor and report on them. Another example was a function organized by an entity for donating electric and hybrid vehicles to beneficiaries, where the country director had arrived in the biggest

sport utility vehicle available locally as the official vehicle of the entity. The apparent irony was lost on the entity and its country director.

101.   The intersection and apparent contradiction between, on the one hand, including environmental sustainability as an important consideration at the programmatic or project-level, fuelled mostly by pressure from the major contributors, and, on the other hand, the relative neglect of environmental sustainability in the internal management areas, with the excuses of a lack of resources, lack of attention from the senior management and the absence of pressure from major donors, were too stark to ignore.[43]

102.   An examination of the roles played by the "main drivers", both external ones (buy-in from Member States, pressure exerted by major contributors on account of their domestic agenda and parliamentary pressure), and internal ones (the commitment of the leadership and the activism and passion of the young "green (environmentally sustainable) champions"), and a comparison with their roles in mainstreaming other cross-cutting issues such as gender equality would be pertinent.

103.   Potential contributions of entities with expertise and experience in environmental sustainability on account of their mandate and core competence should be identified, and those entities should be convinced to contribute in the functional management areas. By doing so, the United Nations system will be in a position to leverage their "core competence" and substantive capacity to promote environmental sustainability. The Inspector did not detect much enthusiasm among such entities for contributing effectively to the efforts to mainstream environmental sustainability across the system, with many of them pleading inability on account of the non-availability of substantive capacity and expertise internally.

104.   There were also quite a few silver linings, however. The commitment to environmental sustainability at the level of senior leadership in many organizations was most impressive, often expressed as frustration with existing policies and practices and with the refusal to change them at the middle management levels. One senior official suggested that the best possible reform for the system would be the total abolition of the purchase of paper and printing.

C.   Thematic environmental impacts: biodiversity and climate neutrality

105.   Activities of the United Nations entities have an impact on biodiversity, climate neutrality, ecosystems, sustainable natural resource management, disaster risk reduction, cultural heritage and indigenous peoples' rights. Although these aspects would be addressed in phase II of the Strategy, the Inspector explored two that came up extensively in interviews, namely, biodiversity and climate neutrality. Although biodiversity has been defined in the Strategy,[44] the United Nations system's impact on biodiversity has been measured solely through its facilities (when premises are planned and constructed, sites need to be screened for possible adverse impacts on biodiversity and those impacts avoided through the application of safeguards). Biodiversity conservation should be about not only minimizing or neutralizing the impact, but also making a positive impact by: using the land and sea appropriately (such as by limiting the conversion of habitat into settlements and developing roof gardens); limiting multiple sources of pollution (in wastewater, plastic and litter that finds its way into the ocean); being mindful of invasive alien species coming from the transportation of goods, which can lead to the loss of endemic species; reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and limiting the unsustainable consumption of animals and other organisms. **The second phase should use and follow up on the Global Assessment Report on**

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

Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services developed by the related inter-governmental panel in 2019 to integrate the concept of biodiversity more robustly into the Strategy.

106.   **Climate neutrality commitment**. In 2007, the Secretary-General called for the United Nations system to become climate neutral. Despite the Climate Neutral Policy and Strategy committing all United Nations agencies to minimize their impact on climate change by following a three-part strategy to achieve climate neutrality, the Inspector identified the following constraints: the absence of resources or poor budgeting sometimes prevent entities from purchasing carbon credits; not all organizations are able to collect the necessary data and measure their emissions according to agreed quality and criteria (as they are unable to include field emissions); the concept of "offsetting unavoidable emissions" has been misused;[45] options to purchase carbon credits vary in levels of credibility, especially those purchased from voluntary markets;[46] and most organizations have been offsetting their carbon emissions as the only route to climate neutrality, rather than better investing in alternative means of operations.

107.   Although the parties to the Paris Agreement have not yet reached agreement on article 6 dealing with cooperative mechanisms, including carbon markets, the trend towards compensating greenhouse gas emissions using certified emission reductions is unlikely to stop. The clean development mechanism will continue to operate as the only United Nations-recognized mechanism until article 6 is made operational.

108.   **The United Nations system should follow the CEB advice to use certified emission reductions and the United Nations Platform for Voluntary Cancellation of Certified Emission Reduction Units, especially agencies with low annual greenhouse gas emissions and costs of certified emission reductions within the low-value procurement scope, and should mitigate budgeting challenges by using a central source of funding or cost-recovery measures.**

109.   **Energy consumption**. The energy systems used have important environmental impacts. Historical and current energy systems have been dominated by fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) that produce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases – the fundamental driver of climate change. The United Nations system is unable to determine how much energy it currently consumes. **If the United Nations is to meet its climate targets and reduce its impact on climate change, it needs a significant and concerted transition in its energy sources.**

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[45] The commitment is to first reduce emissions to the extent possible and then offset only the residual balance. Some agencies report on emissions beyond the minimum boundaries and offset these as well.

[46] In the last reporting cycle in 2019, 56 participating agencies reported emissions of 2.03 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalents. Of those, 45 did offset their emissions, totalling 1.90 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalents. And of those, 26 used certified emission reductions, totalling 1.53 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalents. Although no data was available for 2019, in 2017 11 agencies were using other options for purchasing carbon offsets: 6 purchased from the United Nations Platform for Voluntary Cancellation of Certified Emission Reduction Units, 3 purchased from UNOPS, and 2 purchased carbon credits not certified by the United Nations by using voluntary markets and their own procurement. The latter poses a reputational risk.

V. Mainstreaming environmental sustainability in specific management functional areas

110. In this chapter, the Inspector explores how different management functions can mainstream environmental sustainability in their policies, procedures and practices and thus contribute to the overall efforts of the entity towards this end. The Strategy for sustainability management in the United Nations system (2020–2030) serves as the basis for reviewing the main management functional areas (procurement, human resources, facilities and infrastructure, travel, events and conferences, and ICT), while other "enabling functions" are identified as being relevant to consider (risk management, finance and budget, public information and communication, and partnerships).

111. As the Strategy was endorsed only recently, the Inspector did not conduct an in-depth assessment of the effectiveness of implementation in each management function. He did, however, attempt to make a readiness assessment and capture progress trends insofar as they enabled, or impinged on, the mainstreaming of environmental considerations, in order to identify potential challenges and gaps vis-à-vis implementation of the targets set for 2030.

112. Each management area has its distinctive characteristics; however, the Inspector discerned common features that could be used to enhance environmental sustainability in the entity. These may not be apparent at first glance; a closer look at any specific area would help identify these commonalities. The programme manager or business process owner responsible would no doubt invoke the "uniqueness" and "specificities" of the particular domain in conceptualizing environmental sustainability, to preserve and protect maximum functional autonomy. However, organizations would benefit by recognizing the perils of fragmentation and making efforts to prevent fragmentation and duplication.

A. Risk management: risk assessment and mitigation

113. Broadly put, the United Nations system organizations run the risk that a lack of adequate oversight of environmental sustainability management can result in inefficiencies. Regrettably, environmental sustainability management has not received due attention in the work of oversight offices. The oversight offices of United Nations system entities should, with due regard for their mandates, independence and charters, periodically review the entity-level risks associated with environmental sustainability management and report on their findings to the executive heads and legislative organs and governing bodies. Their executive heads should deal effectively with risks associated with emerging trends, developments and practices in regard to environmental sustainability management.

114. Oversight offices claimed to be constrained by a lack of adequate resources. Much depends on the risks identified and managed by the offices of the executive heads and subsequently audited or evaluated by the oversight offices. As an internal audit unit provides assurances to legislative bodies on the use of resources, it cannot be expected to pro-actively assess the risks posed by insufficient attention to environmental sustainability. The oversight office would only look at risks identified as "significant", and only when their significance was assessed as "high enough". Entities have perhaps not assessed risks from environmental sustainability to be significant enough to be placed in that category until now.

115. In the present review, the Inspector delved into how the United Nations entities assessed and managed the three principal risks that had been identified, namely: the natural environment in which the entity operated; the health, safety, and well-being of its staff; and its own credibility and reputation. Interlocutors from the oversight community acknowledged that, framed in such terms, the risks appeared to be significant, though it was up to the management to assess and project them.

116. It would be difficult to rationalize how the design of projects and programmes funded by major contributors almost routinely includes environmental sustainability considerations, although not always effectively implemented, and why and how these are incorporated under pressure from those contributors. Recalling the experience of some multilateral organizations, some interviewees admitted quite candidly that it was only because of incessant pressure

from the major contributors that they had not only started paying attention, but also heavily invested financial and human resources and created a huge infrastructure for the purpose. All this was done only at the behest of, and because of the constant pressure exerted by, the major donors.

117. **The independent oversight offices of the United Nations system should review whether measures adopted by the offices of executive heads to manage risks relating to environmental sustainability management are in place and are adequate and effective, and should develop tools for analysing environmental harm.**

B. Procurement

118. In February 2009, the Procurement Network of the High-level Committee on Management adopted a joint statement on sustainable procurement[47] intended for adaptation by each United Nations entity in accordance with its mandate. Sustainable procurement has since been defined by the United Nations system[48] and, as from April 2017, under a global standard, ISO 20400.[49]

119. In 2004, the United Nations Global Compact set out 10 corporate responsibility principles, including 3 related to environmental sustainability.[50] Despite attempts to embed the 10 principles into screening questions as part of broader United Nations procurement processes, thus far, the only United Nations entity that awards bidding organizations a higher score for being a participant in the United Nations Global Compact is UNDP.

120. Sustainable Development Goal 12 ("ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns") and Target 12.7 ("promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities") point to public procurement as a strategy for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, providing a powerful and compelling argument for enjoining organizations to commit themselves to implementing sustainable procurement. Unfortunately, Member States and the United Nations system have yet to fully subscribe to that goal and target.

121. The readiness assessment of the procurement objective part of the Strategy, in which organizations were asked whether their procurement function supported the goals set by the United Nations sustainability strategy, showed that, out of 28 organizations of the United Nations system, 64 per cent were very likely or likely to adopt a sustainable procurement policy between 2020 and 2030, and another 64 per cent were very likely or likely to increase their percentage of sustainable tenders between 2020 and 2030. In other words, despite the exhortations at the level of CEB and the High-level Committee on Management, there has been little progress towards incorporating sustainability considerations into procurement actions in organizations over the past 10 years.

[47] Available at www.ungm.org/shared/knowledgecenter/document?widgetid=4108&documentid=823605.

[48] United Nations Global Marketplace, "What is Sustainable Procurement?", available at www.ungm.org/Shared/KnowledgeCenter/Pages/PT_SUST.

[49] International Organization for Standardization, "ISO 20400:2017: Sustainable procurement – Guidance", available at www.iso.org/standard/63026.html.

[50] The environment-related principles are: principle 7: businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges; principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Figure I
Responses to questions regarding procurement in United Nations system organizations
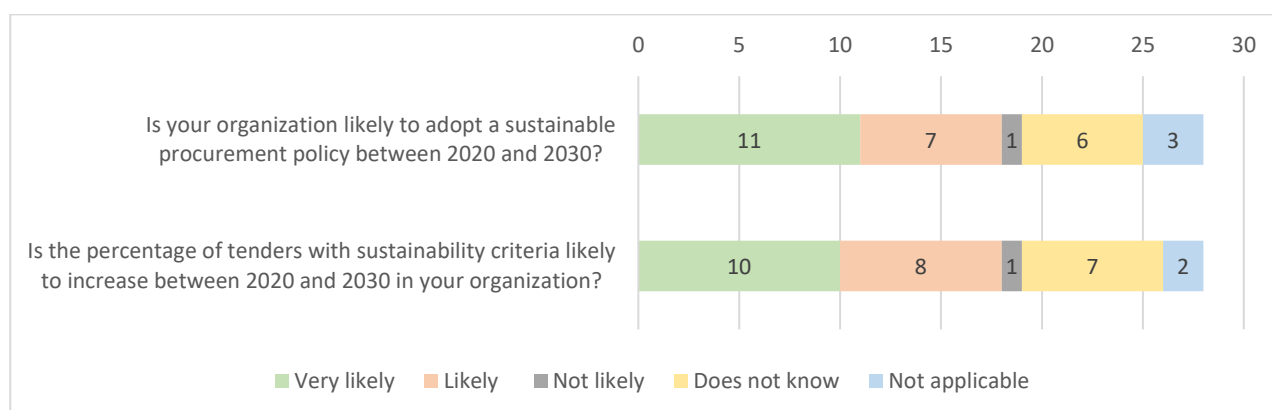
122. Organizations identified the following challenges in adopting sustainable procurement policies and in issuing tenders with sustainability criteria:

- The concept of sustainable procurement not being approved by the General Assembly (resolution 62/269), and hence in the United Nations Secretariat, as the concept was perceived to limit competition.

- Sustainable tenders not being adequately monitored and tracked, or no increase being foreseen in the number of sustainable tenders, as these have remained stable for organizations such as the International Trade Centre (ITC).

- The lack of training at headquarters and in the field on incorporating environmental sustainability criteria into procurement actions, as tender assessments continued to be based on prices, with no weightage for environmental sustainability to encourage good practices among suppliers. Recognizing the importance of sustainable elements in procurement, OECD provided a good practice by focusing on sustainable procurement.[51]

- The non-inclusion of sustainability criteria in long-term agreements that all country operations could use, and the inadequacy of procurement procedures, particularly in relation to system contracts or long-term agreements. Some interlocutors stressed that system contracts or long-term agreements were actually not competitive, were not environmentally friendly and did not create or add value for the clients. A telling example was cited by which computers for the Bangkok duty station were produced in China, flown to New York City, and then flown back to Bangkok. A judicious and sound revision of the delegation of authority in the United Nations Secretariat should help solve that paradoxical situation and enable more local supply. The same procurement processes and procedures were used for procuring supplies that were very different in nature, or where suppliers were limited (such as providers of enterprise resource planning systems or email services) and migration and transition costs might be high. This was particularly challenging when suppliers were limited, as was often the case with environmentally sustainable suppliers.

123. **The United Nations system should re-examine the existing procurement processes in terms of sustainability and cost-benefit. The concept of mutual recognition should be used to benefit from contracts of other entities, should these prove to be more "sustainable", particularly in the field. The United Nations system should also include environmentally sustainable standards for specific operations and goods (such as supplies brought by military contingents of troop-contributing countries for peacekeeping operations) and document any objections to these standards so as to track progress towards sustainable procurement.**

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[51] See annex IV, OECD good practice.

124. The inter-connectedness of security and environmental considerations for some types of goods. For example, United Nations convoys were often attacked to steal the fuel transported for generators. **The security and environmental benefits should be demonstrated to make the case for sustainable procurement.**

125. The false perception that environmentally sustainable procurement was costlier. **A cost-efficiency analysis of the total life cycle of specific goods should be conducted. For example, solar panels have become cheaper, and, despite the initial maintenance being costly, the additional costs will balance out over time. The United Nations system should more thoroughly integrate the principles of circular economy in its public procurement actions and should enact mandatory procurement for a range of products, including energy-efficient ones.**

126. Lack of verification or inspection to validate information and documentation. **Spot-checks of potential suppliers should be carried out. Eco-labelled products should be prioritized by the United Nations system, as they offer guarantees of third-party-verified compliance with critical environmental requirements.**

127. **Several interviewees suggested: modifying the procurement rules and procedures by adding criteria in the tenders and requests for proposals to recognize environmentally sustainable manufacturing practices (such as using lower quantities of plastic, having systems of recycling in place and using recycled cardboard) with a higher number of points in the technical assessment; shifting the short-term cost focus to a long-term one, using sustainable procurement options as the baseline from which to select the least expensive option; prioritizing sustainable options in clearly articulated and straightforward ways; and moving away from "old habits" (such as the use of diesel-only generators, fossil fuels and old aircrafts in emergency contexts) and conservative approaches by undertaking market intelligence on sustainable procurement, providing better access to such vendors and adopting innovative practices.**

128. Suggestions were made that United Nations entities should identify the product or service categories that had a potentially high environmental impact and, based on their relative procurement spend, use their leverage to "green" the procurement of those product or service categories. Environmental sustainability requirements should then be included in tenders where applicable, with the support of technical experts, in the event that requisitioners or procurement experts do not have the required specific technical knowledge.

129. The lack of clarity in the division of responsibility among different units within an organization for mainstreaming environmental sustainability in procurement actions has been a major challenge in implementing sustainable procurement. Most entities seem to have a gap in the accountability lines in respect of the responsibility to incorporate environmental sustainability criteria in procurement actions. Most procurement divisions only provide feedback on the goods requested (in cases where they have the capacity, or if their expertise is specifically solicited), while the responsibility for including environmental considerations in procurement requests rests with the requisitioners, who in turn expect the procurement division to provide them with relevant technical expertise, guidance and environmentally sustainable options to choose from, in the absence of such expertise among themselves. In the majority of cases, action on incorporating the environmental criteria falls through the cracks owing to unclear accountability lines. **The responsibilities and accountability lines between requisitioners and procurement functions should be clarified in the procurement manuals, so as to mainstream environmental sustainability criteria in procurement actions**.

130. In the present review, the Inspector determined that procurement divisions had an active role to play in shaping more environmentally sustainable markets and organizations. Noteworthy were the good practices of the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), which had implemented a supplier due diligence programme;[52] of UNFPA, which had proactively engaged with its suppliers to obtain environmentally sustainable goods;[53] and of the World Resources Institute, which had imposed a food policy aligned with

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[52] See annex IV, UNOPS good practice.
[53] See annex IV, UNFPA good practice.

environmental considerations.[54] **The procurement divisions of the United Nations entities should adopt a proactive stance and, in particular, implement the Sustainable Procurement Guidelines for United Nations Cafeterias, Food and Kitchen Equipment developed by the Sustainable United Nations facility to promote sustainable catering services and meal options.**

131. Programme managers and business process owners of most management areas outsource many of their operations to external commercial service providers. It is imperative that they write into the specifications and contract documents a clause stating that the service providers must demonstrate their commitment to sound, environmentally sustainable practices as a core consideration for awarding the contract to them, and that any infractions could lead to their disqualification.

132. The following recommendation, if implemented, is expected to assist legislative organs and governing bodies of organizations of the United Nations system in contributing to Sustainable Development Goal 12 and help executive heads of the participating organizations to clarify the accountability lines of sustainable procurement:


Recommendation 4

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should, by the end of 2022, task procurement offices with incorporating specific provisions for integrating environmental sustainability considerations into procurement policies, procedures, manuals and guidelines, including through the relevant inter-agency mechanisms, as necessary.

C. Human resources and learning

133. The readiness assessment of the human resources objective part of the Strategy, in which organizations were asked whether environmental management was integrated into existing staff capacity-building and accountability frameworks showed that, out of 28 organizations of the United Nations system, 57 per cent were very likely or likely to increase the percentage of staff trained in environmental management between 2020 and 2030. However, only 21 per cent were very likely or likely to collect recruitment statistics on the capacity of staff to understand environmental management between 2020 and 2030.

Figure II
Responses to questions regarding human resources in United Nations system organizations
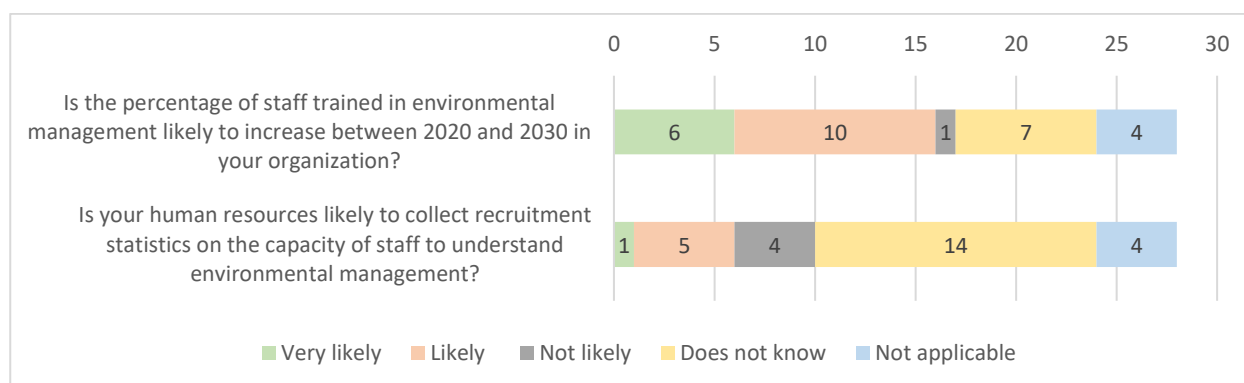
134. In the present review, the Inspector assessed environmental sustainability measures of the human resources function in a given entity. Questions addressed included: to what extent the entity had embraced environmentally sustainable practices in carrying out its functions; the desirability of testing and assessing attitudes towards environmental sustainability in the recruitment and selection process by stipulating qualifications and

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[54] See annex IV, World Resources Institute good practice.

experience as essential or desirable; to what extent training and learning programmes had addressed environmental sustainability as part of desired staff behaviour and required technical skills, depending on the function, onboarding, induction and specialized training modules; and whether performance appraisal systems for senior management and staff provided for recognizing environmentally sustainable "proactive conduct". In the present review, the Inspector analysed how the human resources function had been enabling behavioural change towards an environmentally sustainable United Nations system.

135. Environmental sustainability awareness and sensitivity are considered a given for United Nations staff. This awareness and sensitivity are never tested or assessed in the recruitment and selection processes and are rarely included in performance appraisal systems, while learning and training programmes alone cannot enable behavioural change. Overall, interviewees were reluctant to include environmental awareness in the recruitment, selection and performance appraisal processes. The human resources functions seemed to assume that their recruitment and selection processes were solid enough to enable them to hire staff with the right understanding and attitude towards environmental sustainability. They opposed taking any measures in this regard on the ground that it would be cumbersome to add additional values, competencies and skills to test in recruitment processes, especially those not directly related to the vacancy's technical requirements, and that it would be difficult to measure and assess environmental awareness. Attempts by entities to incentivize environment-friendly practices have had limited success. While entities such as the World Resources Institute have embedded environmental sustainability in their recruitment processes, the question arises as to whether environmental sustainability should remain a side issue in the United Nations system, or whether the human resources functions can utilize the climate emergency to shape an environmentally sustainable organizational culture. **The values and competencies frameworks should be elaborated to pay greater attention to environmental sustainability, allow for training on and testing of environmental sustainability awareness, and enable a preference for those with such awareness, all other competencies and technical skills being equal**. **The human resources functions should report on the indicators contained in the Strategy, including on recruitment statistics on the capacity of staff to understand and implement environmental management. Under the High-level Committee on Management's "new way of working", sustainability issues should be incorporated and competency frameworks adjusted to reflect the skill sets and competencies required for United Nations staff to operate in ways consistent with the 2030 Agenda.**

136. Except in rare cases, environmental management is not integrated into entities' performance appraisal frameworks for staff in general, although, within the Secretariat, senior managers' compacts include the objective of "integration of sustainable development practices in programme delivery and workplace practices", and the compacts for peacekeeping missions include the objective "to ensure maximum efficiency in the use of natural resources and minimum environmental risk to people, society and ecosystem in the area of operation." Most interviewees accepted the inclusion of environmental sustainability objectives in the "accountability compacts", together with the need to ensure that their staff understood environmental sustainability and were up to date on relevant mandatory training. Given the tendency among many organizations to play it safe by turning regulations and instructions into box-ticking exercises and not paying adequate attention to ensuring their effective implementation, environmental sustainability should not be mechanically inserted into the performance appraisals. The reaction of United Nations entities with regard to recruitment and performance appraisal should be contrasted with the attitude of the World Resources Institute, which has succeeded in influencing staff behaviour in ways that promote environmental sustainability through recruitment processes and the performance of staff and of the organizations.[55]

137. **The organizations of the United Nations system should include environmental sustainability in senior managers' performance systems (developing environmental sustainability goals for their functions) or "compacts". The human resources functions should review the performance management systems to consider the human element of**

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[55] See annex IV, World Resources Institute good practice.

performance (whether results are being achieved in a manner respectful of the environment) **and indicators for measuring staff's sensitivity to environmental sustainability** (such as proactive actions, innovative thinking and approaches informed by sensitivity to environmental sustainability, and contributions to mainstreaming environmental sustainability in their functions, rather than solely measurements such as the "number of pages printed").

138.   In the present review, the Inspector identified only a few relevant learning programmes. Most specialized training modules were undertaken at the behest of staff, relying on personal, rather than institutional, initiative. Generic training modules for staff were rare. Interviewees mentioned induction courses being crowded with too many "mandatory courses", and, although most organizations had committed to using, replicating and adapting the Greening the Blue tutorial, only four[56] had made it mandatory for all. Individual and organizational learning is important for influencing staff behaviour towards mainstreaming environmental sustainability. In its review of policies and platforms in support of learning,[57] JIU noted the views held by some that mandatory courses often just "stated the obvious" or that they were a "tick-a-box" exercise with no practical effect. The Inspector recognizes the values identified in mandatory courses in shaping a common culture and ensuring that core values are understood and implemented in the same manner at all levels, and that **environmental sustainability as a core value should be part of the United Nations system's common culture**. **Entities should equip their staff with minimum mandatory knowledge and relevant technical skill sets (such as environmental auditing and sustainable procurement). The Greening the Blue tutorial could be adapted to specific contexts (such as the humanitarian and peacekeeping contexts) and to enable reporting on the indicators contained in the Strategy. The human resources functions should collectively tap into the ILO efforts on the "Future of Work" to support a sustainable future.**

139.   The following recommendation, if implemented, is expected to enhance transparency and accountability:

Recommendation 5

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should, by the end of 2022, ensure that all recruitment and selection processes, as well as performance appraisal systems, incorporate and give adequate weight to environmental sustainability understanding and behaviours, and report on the implementation to their legislative organs and governing bodies from 2023.

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140.   The human resources function is an indispensable enabler of policies and practices that have a direct impact on mainstreaming environmentally sustainable behaviours (such as virtual learning, training and learning, virtual rosters,[58] a database of available internal expertise and resources, flexible working arrangement policies (such as teleworking, compressed time schedules and flexible working hours), temporary staff exchanges, inter-agency mobility, mentoring and coaching[59] and commuting benefits for cyclists), engagement with relevant functions (such as with ICT for access to information technologies, laptops, remote access to documents and systems, cloud drives and dashboards capturing relevant statistics; and with the advocacy and communication functions to promote environmentally sustainable behaviours), and the promotion of acceptance and implementation of these policies and practices for behavioural change.[60] As with the ICT function, the human resources function provides the philosophy on how delivery is to be

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[56] UNEP, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF. WFP has made the Greening the Blue tutorial available through its learning management system, and staff who complete it have it added to their training record, but it is not mandatory.

[57] JIU/REP/2020/2.

[58] See annex IV, UN-Women good practice.

[59] See annex IV, United Nations Secretariat good practice.

[60] See annex IV, World Resources Institute good practice.

achieved; these functions shape how the management environment and working practices may evolve in the future.

141.   The inclusion of internal environmental sustainability in staff surveys, such as the 2019 United Nations Secretariat Staff Engagement Survey[61] and the 2017 Young United Nations Global Ideas Survey,[62] was a good practice. Organizations should integrate internal environmental sustainability in their staff surveys.

142.   Having examined the human resources processes within organizations, the Inspector determined that, while internal processes had become more environmentally sustainable in some organizations, far too many remained yet to be fully equipped with the rules and regulations, capacity and technology necessary to enable staff members to limit their adverse impact on the environment. **All human resources functions should fully embrace modern technologies to ensure paper-smart and sustainable processes, using e-signatures, online platforms and videoconferencing, and should abandon the outdated practices of using paper signatures and of requiring candidates to travel for in-person or on-site interviews, among others.**

143.   To strengthen coherence in mainstreaming environmental sustainability in human resources policies and practices, and influencing behavioural change, **the human resources offices should develop and implement a common, system-wide, mandatory specialized training module on incorporating environmental sustainability considerations into their internal management areas, targeting, but not limited to, staff that deal on a regular basis with procurement, human resources, facilities and infrastructure, events and conferences, ICT services, travel, budget and finance, public information and communication, and training and organizational learning.**
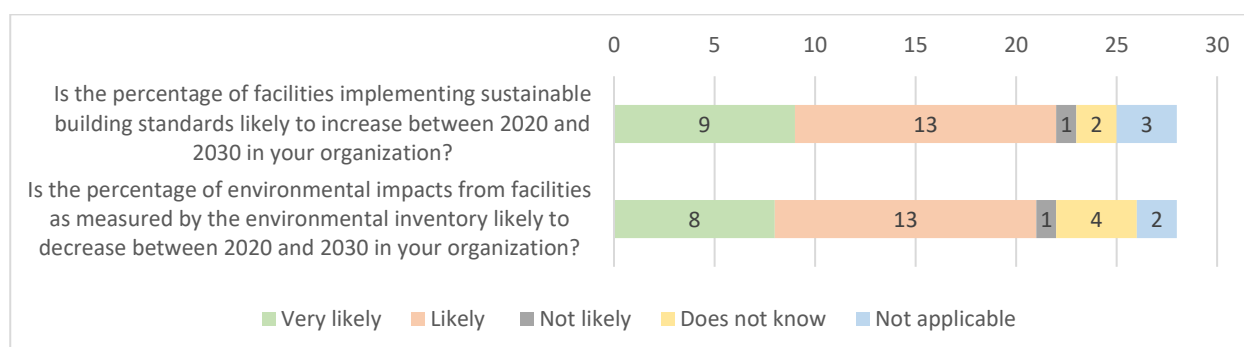
D.   Facilities and infrastructure management

144.   The readiness assessment of the facilities management objective part of the Strategy, which was aimed at determining whether all United Nations facilities (led by United Nations common premises) were following sustainable building standards or harmonized guidance for sustainable building management, showed that, out of 28 organizations of the United Nations system, 78 per cent were very likely or likely to increase the percentage of facilities implementing sustainable building standards between 2020 and 2030, and 75 per cent were very likely or likely to reduce the percentage of environmental impacts from facilities as measured by the environmental inventory between 2020 and 2030. Although facilities management linked to greenhouse gas emissions has been a priority for many entities since 2007, when CEB approved the Climate Neutral Policy and Strategy, greenhouse gas emissions from facilities in the United Nations system have continued to increase since 2010.[63]

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[61] Further information on the results of the survey is available at https://hr.un.org/article/staff-engagement-suvey.

[62] Further information on the results of the survey is available at www.young-un.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Results_Young-UN-Global-Ideas-Survey.pdf.

[63] See annex VI.

Figure III
Responses to questions regarding facilities management in United Nations system organizations

145. Facilities management had narrowly focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions linked to infrastructure in headquarters locations alone. The present review, however, included facilities and infrastructure management at headquarters and in the field, and elements of facilities management linked to biodiversity (such as land degradation, deforestation, ecosystems degradation and water resources depletion), waste management, wastewater management, energy consumption and renewable energy, and air quality.

146. The Inspector identified the following non-exhaustive list of good practices in respect of facilities and infrastructure management that **the organizations should consider replicating in their endeavours involving the construction of new buildings or the renting of new premises, with the aim of being environmentally sustainable. In particular, investments should be made in passive design strategies (involving orientation, glazing, material selection, thermal mass, shading, stack effect, insulation and landscaping for shading)**:

- **Energy**. Use renewable energy sources for heating and electricity; invest in solar panels or geothermal energy; regulate thermostat settings (warming less in winter and cooling less in summer); avoid air-conditioning as far as possible; prefer fans and smart temperature regulation with window-opening techniques; use light emitting diode (LED) lighting; consider the risk of malfunctioning light sensors; prefer low global warming potential equipment for refrigeration; [64] and track electricity consumption with Internet of Things techniques. [65]

- **Water management**. Install water saving taps and toilet flushes (such as composting toilets and no automatic sensor flushing); collect rainwater; and collect and use condensed water from air-conditioning units. [66]

- **Biodiversity**. Support ecosystems by developing roof gardens and vegetation on the sides of buildings, and better using existing gardens, including banning the use of pesticides; invest in a biodiversity-sensitive approach to the maintenance of gardens, including considering permaculture approaches to growing fruit and vegetables for staff consumption (like UNESCO); professionally care for beehives and other animals; and collect rainwater to avoid water resources depletion.

- **Waste management**. Separate waste in selective collection bins; verify that the chain of waste management is adequately functioning and ensure that the stipulated procedures are not compromised or subverted in the basements; adopt specific disposal procedures for batteries and ink cartridges; track the weight in kilograms of recycled goods; invest in organic and composting waste management systems, in particular for waste from catering; use food waste composting devices; and ban single-use plastics and individual printers.

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[64] Global warming potential is a measure of how destructive a climate pollutant is. Refrigerants today are often thousands of times more polluting than carbon dioxide.

[65] See annex IV, UNDP good practice.

[66] See annex IV, UNESCO good practice.

- **Air quality**. Use indoor plants.

- **Utilities**. Demand and invest in fleet management and electric cars with minimum greenhouse gas emissions; support parking modelling and calculation of the vehicles' footprint (the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) reduced parking spaces to provide bonus parking for environmentally friendly cars).

- **Certifications**. Consider environmentally sustainable building certifications such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification or others only if there is capacity to verify that there is no window-dressing involved in the exercise (one of the facility managers mentioned that, despite his unit being certified, he found out that the separated collected waste was going into the same bin).

147.   **Coverage, inventory and data collection challenges**. Interviewees often raised the challenges of collecting and using greenhouse gas emissions data from facilities for effecting policy change, ranging from those challenges directly related to coverage and calculation of the emissions to the complexity of identifying the factors influencing emission trends. Emission trends may change due to differences in mandates, management decisions (leading to a change in sources of energy), office space, the number of vehicles, the number of diesel generators, improved data coverage and data accuracy, changed parameters due to a shifting of the baseline, and the comparison challenge. UNFPA decided to overcome these challenges by targeting offices with the highest emissions. [67] The Inspector identified elements prompting the expansion of the greenhouse gas emissions coverage to include energy consumption from building tenants, scope 3 emissions[68] and some emissions from life outside the premises, such as personal vehicles. Regarding the latter, some organizations have already taken the initiative of developing car-sharing applications[69] or providing electric vehicles and bicycles for their staff. The need for clear guidelines, including on the installation of energy use calculation devices wherever possible, is underscored.

148.   **The organizations of the United Nations system should review, individually and through the relevant inter-agency mechanisms, the calculation of greenhouse gas emissions and consider expanding this calculation to include scope 3 emissions, while taking necessary precautions to avoid double counting, and with the inclusion of emissions from staff members' personal vehicles. The executive heads of the organizations should turn the inventory of greenhouse gas emissions into a useful database with accountability lines for emissions reduction, and organizations of the United Nations system should utilize greenhouse gas emissions data from facilities for effecting policy changes.**

United Nations system coverage of greenhouse gas emissions

Emissions are measured in ton of carbon dioxide equivalents. The total emissions include those from facilities, air travel and other travel. The coverage of facilities emissions includes purchased electricity emissions, stationary combustion emissions, purchased steam emissions, refrigerants emissions and on-site renewables emissions.

Buildings-related energy consumption is measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh) and includes energy used from purchased electricity, energy used from stationary combustion, energy used from purchased steam and energy used from on-site renewables.

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[67]   See annex IV, UNFPA good practice.

[68]   Scope 3 emissions are all indirect emissions (not included in scope 2) that occur in the value chain of the reporting company, including both upstream and downstream emissions. Scope 1 emissions are direct emissions from owned or controlled sources. Scope 2 emissions are indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy.

[69]   See annex IV, UNEP and ESCAP good practices.

Challenges linked to the current inventory of greenhouse gas emissions from buildings, leading to data inaccuracy

(a)   Users insert inaccurate emission factors under "purchased electricity" – the software could systematically ignore existing emission factors rather than manually deleting them one by one;

(b)   Data is duplicated or energy sources mismatched. Some confuse "purchased electricity" with "stationary combustion". An office with a generator could only report under "generator-derived electricity" or "purchased electricity". On-site generation of electricity from renewables is reported under "purchased electricity" as well as "on-site renewable";

(c)   For the electricity purchased (kWh) entry, the software automatically changes a comma within a chain of numbers into a full stop (for example, "1,389" becomes "1.389");

(d)   Reporting is duplicated under "emissions calculated by fuel usage" and "emissions calculated by distance travelled";

(e)   Questionnaires cannot be filtered by country.

149.   In most entities, the focus in facilities management has mainly been on making headquarters premises environmentally sustainable, while field premises have often been left to fend for themselves, dependent on the interest and commitment of the individual staff members in the location. The Inspector looked at common lessons and challenges from field premises, common premises and premises in peacekeeping and humanitarian contexts.

150.   **Field premises**. Despite a few attempts to adopt environmental management systems both at headquarters and in the field (such as in the United Nations Secretariat),[70] the absence of any systematic field-based approach to ensuring environmental sustainability, and the absence of the capacity to manage field facilities or environmental management systems in the field, are important limitations to reducing the environmental footprint of the United Nations system, which constitutes a reputational risk. The Inspector identified a few recurring risk areas in regard to field premises, such as: the inefficient use of energy and potable water; poor building insulation and glazing; poor spatial orientation; the absence of modern measurement systems and meters to monitor the use of electricity and water; the absence of water treatment plants; the absence of infrastructure to support waste minimization, separation, recycling or eventual disposal; old generators; excessive use of plastic and dumped waste; old car fleets; the absence of environmental clauses in leases; insufficient or poor implementation of the legislation in force (and the absence of updated legislation in many cases); and a preference for quick builds and quick tear-downs over sustainable options in humanitarian contexts.

151.   Interviews with staff in the field showed that it was imperative to: embed, at an early stage, security and environmental considerations in all aspects of premises management; nominate a staff member to assess the premises' data and maintain a dialogue with management to make policy changes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings; put in the lead a staff member with the necessary technical expertise and support from the administration unit; identify causes of the biggest environmental impact(s) and address them; formalize any initiative by obtaining institutional support from the head of the field office and from the management at headquarters; secure the active involvement of the unit responsible for facilities management; and possibly allocate a modest budget for initial investments.

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[70] In its policy, the United Nations Secretariat commits to the establishment of environmental management systems in the field under the strengthened delegation of authority, a major component of the management reform. Under a common framework, each field location is to address its specific environmental priorities.

152. Notwithstanding the absence of any systematic field-based approach to ensuring the environmental sustainability of field premises, the Inspector identified a few good practices from field locations with the potential for replication.[71]

153. **With the help of the Sustainable United Nations facility, a mechanism should be developed for replicating and scaling up existing good practices in the field (for example, by using the Internet of Things for energy monitoring) and templates for environmentally sustainable leases advanced by the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office.**

154. The resident coordinator system and the United Nations country teams should be enlisted to strengthen coordination among agencies at the field level. Further investments should be made in areas with obvious benefits and economies of scale, such as sustainable procurement and waste management. The resident coordinator should be designated to coordinate and lead these efforts.

155. **Similarly, support from the host country governments, building owners, facilities private contractors and commercial service providers to whom services have been outsourced should be sought and enlisted to facilitate environmentally sustainable solutions, where feasible.**

156. The following recommendation is expected to help executive heads of the participating organizations enhance coordination and cooperation and strengthen coherence in mainstreaming environmental sustainability in the field:

Recommendation 6

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should, by the end of 2022, with the support of the resident coordinator system and the United Nations country team mechanisms, strengthen the coordination between the headquarters and field agencies, as well as among field agencies, in pursuing measures to reduce the environmental impact of field presences, and report on the implementation to their legislative organs and governing bodies from 2023.

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157. **Common premises and services**. These can play an important role in improving the environmental sustainability of the United Nations system. Entities in the same location (Bangkok, Geneva, Nairobi, Rome and Vienna) have been cooperating, coordinating and collaborating on management aspects to achieve efficiency gains and minimize overheads; they could also promote environmental sustainability in internal management. Rather than finding themselves in situations where disagreements erupt over several issues and become major irritants, they worked out arrangements well in advance. They showed that anticipating problems and putting in place mechanisms for their smooth running were imperative. These measures can be replicated in places where common premises are in operation.[72]

158. In the present review, the Inspector looked at the management of common facilities and premises in a sample of locations (Copenhagen, Brussels, Nairobi and Bangkok). He came across excellent examples of how entities in a few specific locations such as Brussels and Copenhagen had successfully worked out arrangements well in advance. These included: designating a lead agency; setting up a working group with sufficient delegated authority to resolve any emerging issues; holding regular meetings, keeping meticulous records of discussions and decisions, and following up through implementation of the decisions; agreeing on formulae and percentages for apportioning common expenses based on sound logic and calculations well in advance; mandating the proportionate sharing of utility bills; agreeing on the proportionate sharing of the expenses over common areas; ironing out disagreements over occupancy versus space allocated; deciding upon standard operating procedures; and escalating any residual problems to the appropriate authority for resolution and decision-making. These measures helped ensure the relatively smooth functioning of the

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[71] See annex IV, UNESCO, UNDP, ESCAP and UNEP good practices.
[72] See chap. V, sect. D on facilities and infrastructure management.

management of common premises. **These good practices relating to environmental sustainability should be embedded in standard operating procedures wherever common premises are similarly in operation.**

159. Despite these good practices and the Sustainable United Nations facility engaging with the Task Team on Common Premises, mainstreaming environmental considerations into common premises does not seem to be adequate for various reasons. These include overall inefficient governance structures, conflicting priorities among organizations, varied levels of commitment and resources dedicated to the topic, lack of a dedicated budget for renovating existing premises, and constraints imposed by building owners and leases. As stated in the JIU review of common premises in the United Nations system,[73] the Inspector also found in the present review that the **planning and design stages of common premises should prioritize environmental sustainability**. **In addition, United Nations country teams may need more central guidance on how to consider environmental sustainability facets of common premises projects**.

160. **Peacekeeping context**. Building on the 2009 Environmental Policy for United Nations Field Missions, the then Department of Field Support developed an environment strategy for peace operations in consultation with field missions and partners such as UNEP. Designed for implementation from 2017 to 2023, the intention behind the strategy is to deploy environmentally responsible missions to achieve maximum efficiency in the use of natural resources; operate at minimum risk to personnel, local communities and ecosystems; and have a positive impact on these wherever possible. The strategy includes five pillars – energy, water, waste, wider impact and management systems – and a dedicated team at headquarters that provides tools and support to missions. The Department of Operational Support and UNEP formally established the Rapid Environment and Climate Technical Assistance project in June 2016, designed to support field and peacekeeping missions in improving environmental performance through the provision of technical assistance and coordinated by the Environmental Technical Assistance Unit in the Global Service Centre. This partnership continues, and a new project document is scheduled to be signed for phase 2 of the Rapid Environment and Climate Technical Assistance project in 2021.

161. Peacekeeping operations face a range of challenges on several fronts. Efforts to mitigate many of these include: the systematic management of environmental risks and impacts through the Peace Operations Environmental Performance and Risk Management Framework; the establishment of communities of practice (working groups) for each strategy pillar, which meet monthly and share a common web platform to exchange lessons learned and best practices; the establishment of a Steering Group on Environmental Sustainability Management; the promulgation and implementation of a number of operational guidance documents,[74] such as standard operating procedures; and the integration of environmental concerns into senior managers' compacts. Interviewees concluded that these measures had yielded fair results. All missions now have either an environmental officer or a small environmental team, whose members are primarily full-time staff dedicated to environmental management. Although the collaboration between the Rapid Environment and Climate Technical Assistance project and the environmental teams on the ground seems to work efficiently, **the assessment of and transparent reporting on compliance for peacekeeping missions could be strengthened further. In addition, bridges should be built between peacekeeping and development contexts** by helping countries to build the missing pieces

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[73] JIU/REP/2020/3.

[74] The Department of Field Support Environment Strategy (2017–2023), the Environmental Policy for United Nations Field Missions (2009); the Waste Management Policy for United Nations Field Missions (2018); the Standard Operating Procedure on the Development of Waste Management Plans for United Nations Field Missions (2018); the Standard Operating Procedure on the Development of Energy Infrastructure Management Plans for United Nations Field Missions (2018); the Standard Operating Procedure on the Environmental Impact Assessment for United Nations Field Missions (2019); the Standard Operating Procedure on Environmental Technical Assistance Requests from United Nations Field Missions (2017); the Guidelines for Senior Leadership on Field Entity Closure (2018); the Guidelines on the Directors and Chiefs of Mission Support, Chief Administrative Office and Chief Executive Officer End of Mission or Field Entity Report (2018); and the Guidelines on the Environmental Clearance and Handover of Mission, Field Entity and Field Entity Sites (2018).

of environmental infrastructure and to adopt a longer-term vision beyond yearly budgetary plans.

162. **Humanitarian contexts. The Inspector found a gap in the understanding of environmental sustainability in humanitarian contexts. An understanding of the implications of "causing no environmental harm", a methodology to determine whether entities are causing any harm, and an operating model (covering, for example, ways in which goods and people are flown in) are all to be advocated**. The Joint Environment Unit of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Office of Humanitarian Affairs, founded in 1994 and housed within the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Emergency Services Branch in Geneva, should help close this gap. The Unit assists countries affected by disasters and crises by coordinating international efforts and mobilizing partners beyond United Nations entities and works to enhance the environmental sustainability of humanitarian action, working with organizations dedicated to medium- and long-term rehabilitation to ensure a seamless transition from emergency response to recovery. The Environment and Humanitarian Action Connect digital tool [75] created by the Joint Environment Unit of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Office of Humanitarian Affairs brings the humanitarian and environmental communities together to support environmentally sustainable disaster management, as does the Environmental Emergencies Centre.[76]

163. Through interviews with humanitarian actors, the Inspector identified the following main environmental challenges in humanitarian contexts:

(a) Energy sources linked to the utilization of fuel generators. Although the Joint Environment Unit of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Office of Humanitarian Affairs is engaged in the global plan on energy and displacement settings, which includes a component on fuel, humanitarian operations continue to invest a great deal of money in fuel generators. The humanitarian operations of the United Nations system should move away from fuel generators, using the experience of entities that have already done so (for example, the ICRC Energy Challenge programme is intended to reduce dependence on fossil fuels).

(b) Waste management linked to solid waste, food security, camp waste management and medical waste management.

(c) Cash management in which cash is used to purchase cheap and low-quality shelter materials and goods that ultimately break faster and end up as waste.

(d) Biodiversity harm linked to agroforestry, livelihoods, deforestation from cooking energy and shelter construction.

164. **Organizations of the United Nations system should draw inspiration from the approach of ICRC to managing its environmental footprint**.[77]

165. In many duty stations, the tension between space management and adequate work environments for staff to be productive and healthy often came up, offering important lessons for facilities and infrastructure management. **In the context of shrinking office spaces, the increase in health-based risks caused by hot-desking and open spaces, and the need to reduce the United Nations system's environmental footprint, the facilities and infrastructure management function should work with the human resources function to offer greater flexibility with regard to staff members' physical presence in offices, while ensuring that, in the process, emissions are not transferred from office spaces to private homes**.

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[75] Available at https://ehaconnect.org/.

[76] For further information, see the Joint Unit's past activity report covering the period 2015–2017, available at www.eecentre.org/resources/un-environment-ocha-joint-unit-past-activity-report-2015-2017/.

[77] See annex IV, ICRC good practice.

E. Travel management

166. The readiness assessment of the travel management objective part of the Strategy, including air and ground transportation, showed that, out of 28 organizations of the United Nations system, 57 per cent were very likely or likely to reduce the percentage of greenhouse gas emissions from air travel between 2020 and 2030, and 64 per cent were very likely or likely to reduce the percentage of greenhouse gas emissions from ground transport between 2020 and 2030. Although there seems to be a commitment in principle to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from travelling, in practice, the Inspector found that the situation was far more complex, with organizations and Member States often showing resistance to changing their modus operandi.

Figure IV
Responses to questions regarding travel management in United Nations system organizations
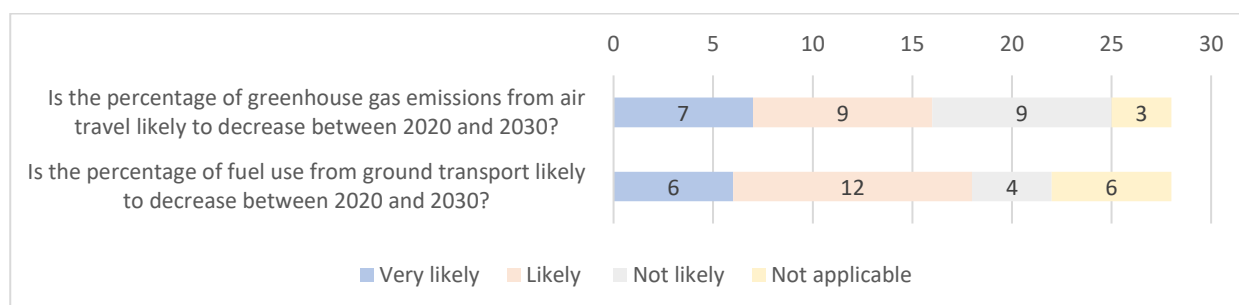
167. In 2018, travel accounted for the biggest share of greenhouse gas emissions by the United Nations, specifically 54 per cent (42 per cent from air travel and 12 per cent from other travel, with the remaining 46 per cent accounted for by facilities).[78] This portion of the inventory is estimated by using the ICAO Carbon Emissions Calculator and reported yearly to the Issue Management Group on Environmental Sustainability Management by each member organization.[79]

168. In the present review, the Inspector examined the extent to which JIU participating organizations had: adopted travel guidelines to improve the management and control of air travel (aside from calculating the resulting carbon emissions); considered a monitoring tool to allow staff to track their air travel emissions; published a list of "frequent flyers"; adopted specific mitigation measures in respect of air travel;[80] promoted remote meetings and alternative means to air travelling (the use of train or road transport); adopted serious measures to verify that air travel was undertaken only after other means of meeting the operational needs had been explored; addressed any technological limitations in measuring greenhouse gas emissions from travel; reached climate neutrality and used offsetting to do so; and used the common method of calculation of greenhouse gas emissions from travel and determined clear boundaries for that calculation.

169. In the area of travel funded by the organization, policies appear to have been deliberately designed to be complex, unwieldy and difficult to administer. The default consideration is the cost of a ticket, irrespective of considerations of personal health, well-being or inconvenience of the staff member. As for accountability, it is mainly up to the traveller to decide on his or her travel plan. Moreover, simple practices such as avoiding meeting or conference locations with a high-carbon cost[81] have rarely been considered owing to political considerations. For the most part, the environmental footprint of any travel undertaken that is funded by entities of the United Nations system seems to have merited little consideration when designing the travel policies.

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[78] According to the Greening the Blue report 2019, available at www.greeningthebluereport2019.org/greenhouse-gas-emissions.

[79] See annex VI.

[80] See annex IV, UNIDO good practice.

[81] ICAO provides a green meetings calculator to choose meeting locations based on participants' travel carbon footprint, available at https://applications.icao.int/igmc/(S(k4gxvwfxxaqa35e4nhoi4xyv))/.

170. Although accounting for a small share of greenhouse gas emissions from travel, ground travel and emissions from vehicle operations should be taken into account in travel policies. Actions such as upgrading to electric or hybrid vehicles (especially for representational vehicles) and driving more efficiently can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the source. Vehicle-tracking mechanisms may improve efficient driving behaviour, while reducing the costs of operating and replacing vehicles. Several organizations pointed to the challenge presented by security regulations for field cars and the lack of availability of electric vehicles and charging stations. It is pertinent to note that infrastructure for electric vehicles is increasing rapidly around the world and has already been installed in some United Nations premises. Greenhouse gas emissions from vehicle cooling can also be decreased, including by reducing leakage of refrigerants from air conditioning systems.

171. The Inspector noted with considerable interest the efforts by UNIDO to revise its travel policy[82] by capping air travel by management function and transparently publishing travel behaviours, as well as the approach adopted by a non-United Nations actor, the World Resources Institute, [83] which uses communication and campaigns to effect behavioural change. These should be emulated by the United Nations system. With its Sustainable UNDP Moonshot Facility, UNDP is demonstrating its motivation to reduce its environmental footprint, in particular its greenhouse gas emissions from travel, by engaging innovative thinking among staff and offices and instituting an incentive system for "environmentally behaved" UNDP offices. [84] To effect behavioural change, United Nations organizations should adopt approaches combining strengthened accountability and approval processes, travel ceilings, systematic and public communication through targeted emails and dashboards, and incentive systems that recognize and reward good behaviours.

172. Some entities like UNDP and UNICEF have been charging a levy (1 to 3 per cent) on official travel that goes into a central fund to offset greenhouse gas emissions from travel. Similar practices have been used by non-United Nations actors.[85] UNICEF shared examples of its good practice for promoting sustainable air travel.

173. The calculation of greenhouse gas emissions from travel is complicated by variations in what is included and what is not. Entities follow different practices when calculating travel greenhouse gas emissions. Some examples of factors that may vary in calculations are the inclusion of both staff and non-staff, the inclusion of travel whether funded by the organization or not, tickets purchased by "hosting bodies" for use by United Nations personnel, air travel and ground travel in the field (leaving out field travel using official vehicles), military aviation versus civil aviation, and emissions from other organizations using WFP aviation flights.

174. **The recommendations contained in the JIU review of air travel policies in the United Nations system,[86] in particular recommendations 1 and 2 on official and business travel, are reiterated, whereby executive heads of organizations of the United Nations system should implement measures such as enforcing annual travel-capping by management function and encouraging a levy on travel as a funding mechanism to finance environmentally sustainable activities. The domain of travel funded by United Nations entities should be reviewed, with the objective of developing and putting in place a policy that accords primacy to its implications for the environmental footprint, and the health and well-being of staff.**

F. Events and conferences management

175. The readiness assessment of the events and conference management objective part of the Strategy, which was aimed at determining whether events on any topic showcased the

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[82] See annex IV, UNIDO good practice.
[83] See annex IV, World Resources Institute good practice.
[84] See annex IV, UNDP good practice.
[85] See annex IV, OECD good practice.
[86] JIU/REP/2017/3.

United Nations' commitment to sustainability, showed that, out of 28 organizations of the United Nations system, 64 per cent were very likely or likely to increase the percentage of sustainable and climate neutral events with over 300 participants between 2020 and 2030. **The conference management services should make all meetings environmentally sustainable regardless of the number of participants.**

Figure V
Responses to questions regarding events and conferences management in United Nations system organizations
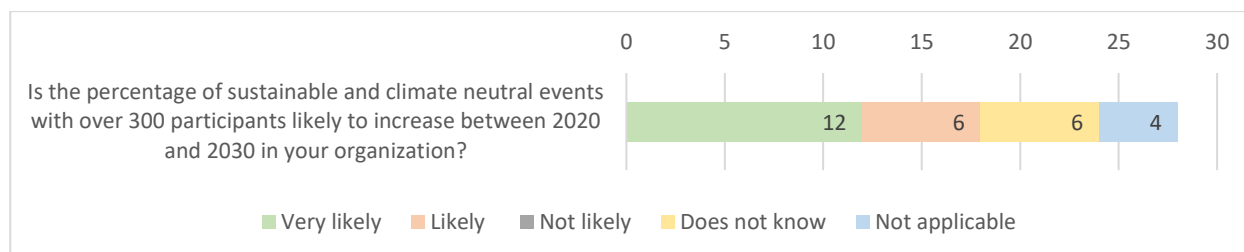
176. Although most entities stated that events and conferences organized at headquarters were currently sustainable and even climate neutral, the understanding of what constituted an environmentally sustainable event varied from entity to entity, despite the definition put forward by the Sustainable United Nations facility in 2009.[87] Furthermore, while the Sustainable United Nations facility had developed a "green meeting guide",[88] only a few organizations were using it, while 15 entities had developed their own guidelines.

177. The challenges faced by organizations in mainstreaming environmental sustainability when managing events and conferences have varied, depending on the services provided by the respective conference management units. While food and drinks are no longer allowed in the meeting rooms at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, it is not clear whether facilities management or the contractor concerned is obliged to dispose of, or recycle, waste from conference rooms in an environmentally sustainable manner. Recurring issues persist regarding: the level of acceptance of environmentally sustainable measures by conference participants and Member States; the events and conferences organized away from headquarters and in non-United Nation premises in the field or in remote locations; single-use-plastic-free meetings; the promotion of remote meetings; paper-smart meetings; and the loopholes in certification by the International Organization for Standardization.

178. The management of events and conferences is perhaps the most emblematic example of the disconnect between the rhetoric on mainstreaming environmental sustainability and the reality of its implementation on the ground. While the level of acceptance of environmentally sustainable measures by staff has been good overall, conference participants and delegates of Member States have been reluctant to let go of their "old habits". Although the Inspector identified some 13 policies to reduce printed documents,[89] not all entities had been able to fully implement "paper-free" events and conferences, mainly because of the demand from Member States, although the COVID-19 pandemic had forced most entities to make changes in that respect. Despite clear targets set out in the ILO programme and budget to have 100 per cent paperless pre-session documents, its Member States have been demanding hard copies during governing bodies' sessions. Failing to implement paper-free meetings, most entities have adopted "paper-smart" alternatives. The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations is the first and only inter-governmental body mandated to be paperless, which it has been since 2004 in accordance with a resolution of the Economic and Social Council. The initiative shown by some organizations in using new technologies to make events and conferences more environmentally sustainable is commendable. ILO introduced a mobile application to update agendas and documentation for its conferences, and ITC introduced mobile applications, Quick Response Codes (QR Codes), social media

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[87] See the "green meeting guide" issued by the Sustainable United Nations facility in 2009.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Such policies have been issued by ITU, WFP, FAO, the United Nations Secretariat, UNEP, UNICEF, UN-Women, WHO, UNAIDS, UNFPA, ICAO, UPU and WIPO.

and video reporting.[90] Yet, most United Nations entities have not adopted the use of new technologies and technological advances, such as online conferencing applications, to influence the conduct of participants and delegates from Member States. Discouraging the printing of voluminous documentation, making badge-printing compulsory, and levying even a modest charge per page or per copy for making available additional hard copies and documentation in advance of official sessions have not yielded the expected results. As a rule, all official documentation, publications, brochures, and communication and advocacy materials should be made available only online. This should apply equally to official documentation, publications, brochures, and communication and advocacy materials produced in relation to projects or programmes funded out of earmarked, extrabudgetary or non-core contributions from major contributors.

179. In November 2020, WIPO conveyed that it was "planning to move towards a paperless environment shortly", and, for that purpose, requested to henceforth receive all communications, letters and reports electronically. **The Inspector encourages other organizations of the United Nations system to follow the remarkable example set by WIPO in going completely "paperless" and to set their own targets and timelines for implementing this change.**

180. The following recommendation is expected to help executive heads of the participating organizations enhance effectiveness and efficiency and provide financial savings:

Recommendation 7

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should, by the end of 2022, make all conferences, events and meetings organized by their respective organizations "paper smart", while providing printed material only upon official request and with adequate cost recovery measures following a differential pricing system in respect of different customer groups – such as official delegates, research institutions, other conference participants and students – and report on the implementation to their legislative organs and governing bodies from 2023.

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181. Managing events and conferences organized away from headquarters and in non-United Nation premises in the field or in remote locations poses a significant challenge, as the responsibility for mainstreaming environmentally sustainable practices in such events is not clearly defined, either because they are not the responsibility of the "central" conference management services or because the responsibility is shared among conference management services, the substantive units and the host government or local host entity. Conference management services often engage with agencies of the host government arranging the event to advocate for environmentally sustainable practices, but with limited success. **The agreement concluded with an entity for organizing the event should contain unambiguous provisions on environmental sustainability and accountability, and the conference management services should engage with the procurement services to provide support locally with environmentally sustainable options.**

182. Only three United Nations entities[91] are certified as adhering to environmentally sustainable conferencing standards. While an interviewee referred to the "propaganda of the ISO certification", the Inspector noted some loopholes in the International Organization for Standardization certification processes[92] that needed continued attention and verification from central services.

183. Although the Sustainable United Nations facility's "green meeting guide" contains a checklist for making meetings environmentally sustainable, United Nations entities should adopt the following minimum mandatory criteria for making conferences and events environmentally sustainable: adopt a room temperature not heated above 20°C and not cooled

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[90] See annex IV, ITC good practice.
[91] ICAO, ITU and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).
[92] See chap. V, sect. D on facilities and infrastructure management.

below 6°C lower than the outside temperature; ban single-use plastics (including from packaging such as snacks, instant coffee and sugar bags); serve water in glass bottles without plastic bottles or cups; provide sustainable meal options; reduce food waste by adjusting the quantity served to the actual amount consumed on the first day; ban printed documents; and use the ICAO "green meetings calculator" to generate optimal meeting locations for the least possible environmental impact. These provisions should be incorporated into contracts with the suppliers engaged to supply food, services and goods. **The conference management services should implement the "green meeting guide" and invest in new technologies such as mobile applications and remote conferencing to make events and conferences environmentally sustainable.**

184. The following recommendation is expected to enhance accountability and effectiveness:


Recommendation 8

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should, by the end of 2022, task the relevant offices responsible for organizing conferences, meetings and events with developing a policy for incorporating provisions relating to environmental sustainability considerations into policies, procedures, manuals and guidelines, including through the relevant inter-agency mechanisms, as necessary.

G. Information and communications technology management

185. The readiness assessment of the ICT management objective part of the Strategy, which was aimed at determining whether ICT management was aligned with the ambitions of the Strategy, showed that, out of 28 organizations of the United Nations system, 68 per cent were very likely or likely to integrate environmental considerations into ICT services management between 2020 and 2030.

Figure VI
Responses to questions regarding ICT management in United Nations system organizations
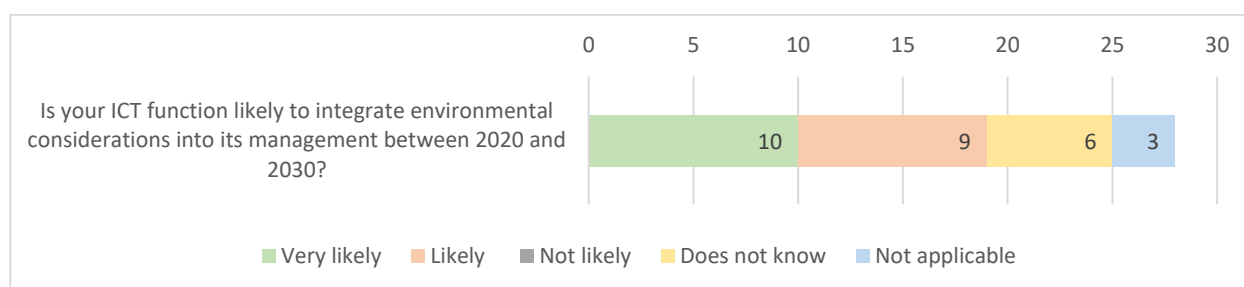
186. The Inspector considered the ICT services management function as an area that should make itself environmentally sustainable and as an enabler for other management functions to make themselves environmentally sustainable. He determined the extent to which United Nations entities had: adopted strategies to reduce the environmental footprint of ICT services; supported management functions with technical advice and with new, innovative technologies that had a positive environmental impact; supported a strong culture of maintenance and disposal of assets and equipment ("e-waste") to foster the principles of a circular economy; and considered the impact of digitalization on the environment.

187. Only 39 per cent of the 28 organizations have adopted norms and standards or guidance documents for environmentally sustainable ICT services. Considering the current context, their guidance and activities have mainly adopted a minimalist approach through: replacing desktop computers with low energy laptops to reduce energy consumption; replacing personal printers with pool printers; encouraging staff to avoid printing emails and documents; implementing badge-printing; promoting videoconferencing; making server rooms energy-efficient by using efficient cooling techniques and investing in cloud

computing to reduce the data centres' footprint; and reducing the archiving of paper documentation. ICT should be leveraged to help entities implement paperless internal processes and conduct paperless conferences and meetings. Relevant technologies and measures include e-signatures, e-registration at conferences, mobile applications for document-sharing, the updating of websites with the latest documentation, and the availability of tablets or laptops for use by participants. ICT services could influence staff behaviour by promoting car-sharing applications;[93] advocating for virtual conferencing and working practices to reduce or eliminate travel to meetings and support the efficient teleworking of staff; and adopting simple and efficient device settings, such as automatic power-off of ICT devices.

188.   Due to a lack of internal competencies and financial resources, organizations of the United Nations system have not exploited the full potential of the ICT management function to help the system reduce its environmental footprint, although some entities have been at the forefront of innovative technologies making a positive environmental impact. The UNDP Office of Information Management and Technology in Copenhagen has been using the Internet of Things for environmentally sustainable energy solutions at a minimal cost for the organization, adopting energy efficiency plans, including switching to renewable or low-carbon electricity supplies. [94] **Other entities of the system should also incorporate environmental sustainability considerations into their ICT strategies and promote and use ICT services as instruments for environmental protection and the sustainable use of natural resources.**

189.   As an enabler of environmentally sustainable practices and technologies, ICT services could help administrative services find innovative solutions for measuring corporate greenhouse gas emissions, as enterprise resource planning systems were often cited as being inadequate for such data collection exercises. By helping to develop indicators in the procurement process to measure the environmental impact of various ICT products, ICT services could act as advisors to assets management and procurement services and support a culture of maintaining assets and equipment in order to foster the principles of a circular economy and avoid polluting metals and chemicals entering the environment. They could also support the environmentally sustainable disposal of ICT-related devices by promoting practices for handling e-waste and recycling, inter alia, batteries, printer toner, compact discs (CDs) and digital videodiscs (DVDs), old computers and laptops. The disposal of ICT devices has been addressed in three ways: by donating them to an educational institution or a charitable organization, by recycling them locally and by destroying them. Considerable literature is available on the disposal of e-waste,[95] and many entities have active supplier partnerships with take-back and e-waste management schemes. For example, UNOPS has a partnership with a computer hardware manufacturer, and the WIPO Property Survey Board

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[93] See annex IV, UNEP and ESCAP good practices.

[94] See annex IV, UNDP good practice.

[95] See World Economic Forum, "A new circular vision for electronics: time for a global reboot", 2019; publications of the Global E-Waste Statistics Partnership (ITU, the United Nations University and the International Solid Waste and Public Cleansing Association), available at https://globalewaste.org/publications/; information on e-waste available on the ITU website at www.itu.int/en/action/environment-and-climate-change/Pages/ewaste.aspx; ITU, "Creating a circular economy for ICT equipment", available at www.itu.int/en/mediacentre/backgrounders/Pages/e-waste.aspx; ILO, "Decent work in the management of electrical and electronic waste", 2019, available at www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---sector/documents/publication/wcms_673662.pdf; UNEP, "An end to electronic waste: United Nations organizations highlight their commitment", available at www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/end-electronic-waste-united-nations-organisations-highlight-their-commitment; United Nations, "UN environment chief warns of "tsunami" of e-waste at conference on chemical treaties", available at www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2015/05/un-environment-chief-warns-of-tsunami-of-e-waste-at-conference-on-chemical-treaties/; United Nations University, "Reducing, reusing Europe's annual 2.5 million tonnes of plastic components in electronic waste", available at https://unu.edu/media-relations/releases/reducing-reusing-europes-annual-2-5-million-tonnes-of-plastic-components-in-electronic-waste.html#info; and United Nations, "Computer manufacturing soaks up fossil fuels, UN University study says", available at https://news.un.org/en/story/2004/03/96452-computer-manufacturing-soaks-fossil-fuels-un-university-study-says.

coordinates and manages the recycling and reselling activities for the disposal of ICT devices to brokers who sell the material on to end users. The recycling of ICT material using environmentally sustainable methods has a cost (in terms of financial costs, staff time and processing time) that not all organizations can bear, and access to suppliers that are able to handle harmful materials is limited in many countries. One way of reducing e-waste is to stipulate the proportion of recyclable waste in the request for proposals or the tendering process at the procurement stage.

190. Though not with any intention of avoiding the handling of e-waste, 11 out of 28 entities mentioned donating old ICT devices to schools, non-governmental or civil society organizations, refugee camps or other institutions. Many regarded this practice as questionable, for several reasons. For one, the entity was washing its hands of the responsibility to dispose of e-waste in an environmentally sustainable manner, creating a reputational risk. In addition, the non-governmental organizations, educational and similar institutions often found it expensive to upgrade the equipment and make it reusable. Also, in two or three years, recipients would have to deal with the e-waste without the resources that a United Nations entity could devote. In cases where the equipment was given away or sold at a nominal cost to an employee within the entity, the staff member would approach the ICT services for help with upgrading, and security and data protection also demanded attention.

191. **Donation practices should be revisited to ensure that the United Nations organizations are not seen as withdrawing from their responsibility to handle e-waste, that the system-wide guidance on e-waste**[96] **is implemented, and that the effectiveness and credibility of take-back and e-waste management schemes handled by third parties are monitored on a regular basis.** Also, ICT services could work with communication services to enhance carbon-consciousness among end users.

192. To reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, ICT services could draw inspiration from the measures recently adopted by ITU[97] and from the Geneva Plan of Action of the World Summit on the Information Society, adopted in 2003.[98]

193. The following recommendation is expected to help executive heads of the participating organizations enhance effectiveness and efficiency and provide financial savings:

Recommendation 9

The executive heads of organizations of the United Nations system should ensure that, by the end of 2022, information and communications technology services' actions and projects comply with environmental sustainability considerations, including ensuring that greenhouse gas emissions are at a level compatible with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Paris agreement.

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[96] United Nations Environment Management Group, "United Nations system-wide response to tackling e-waste", available at https://unemg.org/images/emgdocs/ewaste/E-Waste-EMG-FINAL.pdf; and the United Nations Environment Management Group, "The United Nations and e-waste: system-wide action on addressing the full life-cycle of electrical and electronic equipment", available at https://unemg.org/images/emgdocs/ewaste/E-waste%20Synthesis%20Report%20-%20unedited%20version.pdf.

[97] See ITU Recommendation ITU-T L.1470, "Greenhouse gas emissions trajectories for the information and communication technology sector compatible with the UNFCCC Paris Agreement", 12 January 2020.

[98] World Summit on the Information Society, "Geneva Plan of Action", para. 20 on e-environment, available at www.itu.int/net/wsis/docs/geneva/official/poa.html; and World Summit on the Information Society, "10-Year World Summit on the Information Society Action Line Facilitator's Reports on the Implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society Outcomes", executive summary of action line C7: E-environment, available at www.itu.int/net/wsis/review/inc/docs/ralfreports/WSIS10_ALF_Reporting-C7_E-Environment.Summary.pdf.

194.   The present review was aimed at determining whether the digital carbon footprint of the United Nations system had been considered and assessed in terms of the environmental impact of the online world and of the ICT industry in general and in the United Nations system in particular. Although not a trivial matter (constituting, by some estimates, 3.6 per cent of global energy consumption and possibly 14 per cent of total global carbon dioxide emissions by 2040, according to current projections),[99] the Inspector found that only ITU[100] and WIPO[101] were dealing with the ICT sector's own greenhouse gas footprint and the greenhouse gas abatement potential of ICT. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) recognizes in various research publications (such as the Information Economy Report and the Digital Economy Report) that the growing reliance on digital data consumes considerable energy, the digital carbon footprint being greatly dependent on the sources of that energy. ITU has produced publications[102] in which it acknowledges the carbon footprint of digital technologies and ICT. It has set up a focus group on environment efficiency for artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies, providing an open platform for studying the environmental impacts of digital technologies and developing measurement tools and other deliverables with the aim of minimizing these impacts.[103] In 2017, the University of Zurich developed an interesting study called "Opportunities and Risks of Digitalization for Climate Protection in Switzerland",[104] focusing specifically on the relationship between the direct and indirect impact of ICT on greenhouse gas emissions. ICT services of the United Nations system could draw inspiration from that study.

195.   Most United Nations entities have not undertaken any in-depth research on or assessment of the environmental implications of going digital and of ICT actions themselves. However, the Inspector identified a few good practices. Regarding guidance to reduce the environmental impact of emails, UNRWA encourages its staff not to use banners or signature blocks that take up a large amount of data storage space (in emails to colleagues). With respect to digital data retention policies and the handling of digital waste (not just material e-waste), the UNRWA digital data retention policy calls for retaining digital documentation for a maximum period of five years, while exceptions can be requested by data owners.

196.   Though ample space exists to use ICT to reduce the carbon footprint of the United Nations' activities, the measurement and monitoring of the digital and ICT sector's carbon footprint remain unchartered territory within the system. **The relevant inter-agency mechanism should task the United Nations Group on the Information Society, chaired by UNCTAD, with contributions from other relevant agencies including WMO and UNEP as facilitators of the World Summit on the Information Society action line on e-environment, with submitting, by the end of 2022, a report on measures to monitor the United Nations system's digitalization and specific, actionable recommendations for further improvements, using relevant outcomes from the Group's Dialogue on the Role of Digitalization in the Decade of Action.**

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[99] Jens Malmodin and Dag Lundén, "The Energy and Carbon Footprint of the Global ICT and E&M Sectors 2010–2015", table 6, page 28, available at www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/10/9/3027.

[100] See the information on the ITU website concerning climate change and ICT, available at www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Climate-Change/Pages/ClimateChangeMain.aspx, and on the work of study group 5 on environment, climate change and circular economy, available at www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/studygroups/2017-2020/05/Pages/default.aspx.

[101] See WIPO GREEN – The Sustainable Technology Marketplace, "Climate-friendly information and communication technology", available at www3.wipo.int/wipogreen/en/news/2020/news_0021.html.

[102] These include "Turning digital technology innovation into climate action"; "Frontier technologies to protect the environment and tackle climate change"; and "Guidance for ICT companies setting science-based targets".

[103] Further information on the focus group is available at www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/focusgroups/ai4ee/Pages/default.aspx.

[104] University of Zurich, "Opportunities and Risks of Digitalization for Climate Protection in Switzerland", October 2017, available at www.ifi.uzh.ch/dam/jcr:066776d8-d2b0-4c7c-b75d-6b7283cb5791/Study_Digitalization_Climate_Protection_Oct2017.pdf.

197.   The Inspector identified three other management functional areas that could be explored to enable the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability: finance and budget, public information and communication, and partnerships.

H.   Finance and budget: investment and banking management

198.   In the present review, the Inspector assessed the extent to which finance and budget services of the United Nations entities had reviewed the internal processes and budget procedures through an "environmentally sustainable lens", considered a cost-benefit analysis to make a business case for environmental sustainability, and adopted environmentally sustainable investment choices, in particular regarding the investments of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund.

199.   **Internal processes**. Most organizations of the United Nations system mentioned the promotion of a paperless environment in finance processes by using ICT systems and tools for payments, banking, reporting and transactional processing. Finance-related documents for governing body meetings, such as financial statements and programme budgets, are often, although not sufficiently, distributed electronically. Some entities mentioned exploring "frontier technologies" such as blockchain that may enable environmentally sustainable financing processes; others had adopted innovative funding mechanisms in the form of internal air travel levies to fund the implementation of environmental efficiency and purchase carbon offsets. For example, UNICEF levies a 3 per cent tax on its travel costs through the Green and Accessibility Fund, and UNDP levies 1 per cent of only headquarters travel costs (not of field travel costs).

200.   As demonstrated by the inability of six organizations to report on the amount of funding dedicated to internal environmental sustainability, enterprise resource planning systems have been inadequate or underused to track the budget and expenditure related to environmentally sustainable activities.[105] The absence of such data is a hindrance to making a business case for environmental sustainability and providing any cost-benefit analysis. **Systems that can track allocations and expenditures for environmental sustainability should be adopted to enable the United Nations entities to report, when called upon to do so, on funds devoted to and spent on promoting environmental sustainability.**

201.   **Budget procedures**. Budget procedures and short-term cycles do not seem to incentivize environmental sustainability, discouraging upfront investments for long-term gains (such as better waste management and sustainable procurement) and discouraging savings from environmental efficiency (such as savings from using renewable energies or from reducing electricity consumption), as they often result in budget cuts from Member States.

202.   **Cost-benefit analysis**. The United Nations system should examine ways to introduce a cost-benefit analysis of new in-house environmental regulations or measures. While the costs of environmental protection are quantifiable in monetary terms in principle (the costs of implementing and enforcing the regulatory measures in the budget), the benefits of organizational environmental policies and measures are often harder to calculate, as many benefits are not reflected in goods and services. It is difficult, for instance, for the United Nations system to assign a monetary value to elements linked to environmental harm irreversibility and to the impact of inaction on future generations. It is also difficult to determine whose costs and benefits should be counted and over what time period when considering an organizational environmental footprint. While United Nations entities have been struggling to demonstrate the costs and benefits of environmental sustainability, the European Commission has stressed that the aim behind mainstreaming environmental sustainability should be to set an example rather than to turn a profit. The European Commission developed a strong monitoring system to measure the costs of implementing a full-fledged environmental management system (the cost of staff employment and supporting contracts such as auditing, which amounted to 70 euros a year per person in 2019; costs and expenditures for all other utility aspects, such as energy and waste). Cumulatively savings in

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[105]   See chap. IV, sect. A on the challenge of resource prioritization.

Brussels' buildings energy consumption is estimated over 100 million euros between 2005 and 2019. **The United Nations system should lead by example, while considering cost-benefit analysis templates for the preparation of business cases spanning several budgetary cycles as needed, in order to estimate the expected long-term returns compared to initial environmentally sustainable investments. Finance and budget services should advise on and provide support for setting up adequate monitoring, reporting and enterprise resource planning systems to demonstrate that projected savings from incorporating environmental sustainability considerations into internal management functions and processes are realized.**

203.   **Investment and banking choices**. Apart from the firm exclusion of banks appearing on the United Nations' sanctions list (and other sanctions lists as applied broadly in procurement and vendor screening), United Nations entities do not maintain overt environmental standards when selecting investment or banking partners. Environmental sustainability has not been a selection criterion for banking partners through which cash or salaries are transferred, partly owing to the limited number of eligible banking partners and the general inconsistency of data on the environmental practices of banks in many countries. Most United Nations entities claim to adhere to environmental, social and governance guidelines on investment management, in particular with regard to liquidity, employee benefit fund portfolios and global equity portfolios. Despite the existence of guidelines and investment committees, finance and budget services continue to be challenged to move away from financial investment institutions, including private ones, that invest in harmful environmental activities, such as fossil fuels. The United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund has been under scrutiny for its investments in fossil fuels. It has, however, fully implemented a divestment strategy for thermal coal by September 2020 and has committed to preparing a divestment strategy for the rest of its direct holdings on entities that produce other fossil fuels (which only represent around 2.5 per cent of the Fund's investment portfolio) by the end of the first quarter of 2021. For this purpose, the Fund joined the United Nations-convened Net-zero Asset Owner Alliance[106] as a commitment to transition investment portfolios to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and committed to implement the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures.[107] The Fund has been enhancing transparency and adopting a conservative and soft divestment approach through value-based restrictions (on tobacco, arms and thermal coal) and environmental, social and governance principles integration.

204.   The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had expressed concern (see chap. II, para. 28) about investments in companies with a "problematic reputation" made by the sovereign wealth fund of a State party and the serious human rights implications of some of the fund's investment portfolios, emphasizing the need to conduct a rigorous risk assessment and implement due diligence measures related to human rights, and to subject all its investments to a rigorous process of ethics assessment. When making investment decisions, the United Nations entities should ensure that they avoid, through due diligence measures, investing in entities or financial instruments that deal with fossil fuels and have been proven to engage in practices and processes that cause environmental harm. **United Nations entities should develop investment policies that call for divesting from financial instruments that are not environmentally sustainable.**

I.   Public information and communication

205.   Environmental awareness varies significantly among United Nations staff, Member States and the public at large, as does the degree of their commitment to sustainability. The Inspector assessed the extent to which public information and communication services of the

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[106] Further information is available on the website of the UNEP Finance Initiative at www.unepfi.org/net-zero-alliance/.

[107] United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, "Press Release: UNJSPF Ramps Up its Climate Strategy Commitment", available at https://oim.unjspf.org/report/unjspf-ramps-up-its-climate-strategy-commitment/.

United Nations system had used communication and advocacy from three angles: internally to United Nations staff, externally to the public at large and to Member States.

206. While there is ample communication and advocacy on what the United Nations entities are doing about environmental sustainability programmatically, little has been done to communicate to staff and Member States about efforts made to "walk the talk" of environmental sustainability in their internal management areas, and much less to the public, as the matter is considered to be internal, disregarding any potential reputational risk. Although 64 per cent of the permanent missions that participated in the present review accorded a high priority to actions taken by entities to reduce their environmental footprint, they suggested that the United Nations entities should do more to communicate their efforts. Furthermore, public information and communication services can directly contribute to reducing the United Nations system environmental footprint by:

(a) Actively helping to understand and apply sustainability principles (such as the value of energy efficiency, the impact of avoiding waste compared with that of using renewables or recycling, and the impact of effectively reducing greenhouse gas emissions compared with that of purchasing offsets);

(b) Moving away from advocacy practices aimed at merely raising awareness, and taking responsibility for what the United Nations has not been doing on the matter of environmental sustainability;

(c) Engaging in actionable communication for behavioural change to raise awareness and encourage staff to take action for environmental sustainability. Communication for behavioural change is effective when the recipients are provided with hands-on practical tips or actions to undertake. Staff of the United Nations should be guided to be more self-aware about how they behave within the office premises (using a weekly internal newsletter, "How Do I?" mini-guides, intranet articles, etc. to provide concrete advice);

(d) Dealing with any form of resistance to changing practices that disregard the environment by developing communication plans to convert resistance and disbelief into support and change.

207. Reducing the environmental footprint of the United Nations system is a responsibility shared between organizations of the United Nations system and individual staff members of the United Nations family. **Staff members should individually reflect on their footprint and ways of reducing it. The public information and communication services messaging should support and promote environmentally sustainable behaviours inside and outside the office premises.**

208. The following recommendation is expected to help executive heads of the participating organizations enhance efficiency:

Recommendation 10

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should, by the end of 2022, make all official documentation, publications, brochures, and communication and advocacy materials available online, including through online conferencing applications or other information technology means, and report on the implementation to their legislative organs and governing bodies from 2023.

J. Partnerships

209. Partnerships could contribute to environmental sustainability management if organizations were to develop and implement due diligence procedures before contracting potentially harmful partnerships. They provide an opportunity to support colleagues in obtaining funding from government and private sector donors to enhance environmental sustainability and to obtain in-kind contributions from experts on environmental topics such as hazardous waste management, environmental management system development and the

carbon footprinting of contracted services. The Inspector assessed the extent to which the partnerships functions had supported reducing the organizations' environmental footprint through partnerships with host countries, implementing partners, private sector entities, donors, universities and other entities of the United Nations.

210.   Environmental sustainability-related clauses are absent from standard agreements and arrangements with host countries. Due diligence procedures for implementing partners are often adopted by organizations of the United Nations system; however, in practice, seeking accountability, compensation or restoration when implementing partners have harmed the environment has been a significant challenge. While donors express environmental requirements or conditions attached to funding, their interest in in-house environmental sustainability has been limited. Organizations of the United Nations system regularly contribute to joint research and studies on environmental sustainability undertaken by donors. In respect of the United States Agency for International Development study on humanitarian packaging waste,[108] the process is entirely funded and overseen by the Agency, and WFP, UNHCR, UNEP and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs are represented in a strategic advisory group, providing comments on methodology, structure and drafting. The Global Compact initiative plays a major role in the relationship between the United Nations and the private sector. Out of its 10 principles of responsible corporate citizenship, designed to foster respect for the United Nations universal values in the private sector, 3 of those principles deal specifically with the environment.[109] The Inspector identified the challenge of having a common system-wide approach to assessing the implications of causing environmental harm and the need for related due diligence. The 2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator[110] is aimed at supporting effective country-driven partnerships and partnership platforms for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. **System-wide efforts, including through the relevant inter-agency coordination mechanisms, to enhance consistent implementation of due diligence processes regarding potential environmental harm caused by United Nations entities should continue. United Nations entities should reflect specific partnerships in their action plans; for example, UNHCR is able to mobilize both expertise and funds for taking action on the sustainability agenda.**

211.   Some entities mentioned the opportunity to partner with other United Nations entities in the same duty station to enhance environmental sustainability. Rome-based agencies (FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and WFP) have established a team of locally based translators and interpreters, reducing travel emissions and costs associated with bringing in international staff. Similar initiatives could be pursued through collaboration among organizations in the same geographical location.

212.   Universities have seldom been partnered with for undertaking studies and research. In 2015, UNOPS had begun a partnership with the Environmental Change Institute of the University of Oxford to support the development of an evidence-based approach to infrastructure. The partnership was driven from both sides, with UNOPS benefiting from the academic expertise and rigour delivered by a world-leading university, and the Environmental Change Institute benefiting from the UNOPS track record of successfully delivering infrastructure projects in the most diverse and challenging of contexts.[111]

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[108]   United States Agency for International Development, "Sustainability in Humanitarian Supply Chains: A Preliminary Scoping of Improvements in Packaging Waste Management", available at www.usaid.gov/food-assistance/documents/preliminary-scoping-improvements-packaging-waste-management.

[109]   Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges; principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies. Available at www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles.

[110]   Further information is available at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/PartnershipAccelerator.

[111]   Over the past five years, the partnership has delivered a number of significant and impactful outputs.

Conclusion: Lack of adequate attention to mainstreaming environmental sustainability

213. Clearly, organizations have not paid adequate attention to mainstreaming environmental sustainability in the internal management functional areas. In practice, related actions have often been left to individual initiatives, resulting in suboptimal gains. Given that policies on environmental sustainability management are absent in many organizations, the pace of progress on mainstreaming has been slow and uneven. The process of assessing the implications for the environment of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas of management and at all levels, and making environmental sustainability an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes, has not always been fully systematic or consistent.

214. Recognizing environmental sustainability as a cross-cutting issue will help secure a higher degree of institutional support. It will help make activities related to environmental sustainability a part of the regular or core budget and secure the buy-in and support of Member States in the legislative organs and governing bodies of United Nations entities. The support and commitment of the executive heads is another critical aspect.

215. The regulatory framework consisting of rules, regulations and guidelines, as well as standard operating procedures and due diligence measures, in respect of each functional area can, and should, be modified to incorporate environmental sustainability considerations from the very outset.

216. Another critical way in which different functional areas can collaborate is by building up substantive internal capacity and expertise among networks of the same functional areas and through organized and meaningful exchanges and knowledge transfer, especially form entities that have built such substantive capacity and expertise over decades in areas relating to environmental sustainability. The mechanisms for inter-agency coordination and their committees, networks and working groups dealing with specific areas can contribute significantly to this effort.

217. Mainstreaming environmental sustainability in United Nations entities would be facilitated by the following:

(a)   Receiving high-level attention, direction and guidance from Member States, especially the major contributors, through the respective legislative organs and governing bodies, with obligations to systematically and regularly monitor and report back to them;

(b)   Demonstrating a strong commitment from the leadership of the organization through repeated and frequent reiteration and appropriate messaging;

(c)   Following a whole-of-the-organization approach, rather than a segmented one, or one that relies only on a relatively junior-level focal point within the entity, and with effective internal coordination;

(d)   Influencing staff behaviour by example from the leadership and through prudent policies, especially in critical management areas such as human resources, procurement, travel and ICT services;

(e)   Setting up communities of practice, where feasible; and,

(f)   Incentivizing and adequately rewarding conduct and responsible behaviour at all levels through appropriate forms of recognition.

VI. Concluding observations

218.   The fact that the legislative organs and governing bodies and the executive heads of organizations of the United Nations system have not paid adequate attention to mainstreaming environmental sustainability in their internal management areas over the past three decades is in itself a powerful message.

219.   In the present review, the Inspector makes a compelling case for taking a holistic view of the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability by business process owners responsible for different management functional areas within an organization.

220.   The Inspector calls for enhancing cooperation and coordination within and among organizations, to strengthen coherence in dealing with environmental sustainability management and improve organizational learning and the exchange of experiences, good practices and lessons learned, including the setting up of a community of practice.

221.   The Inspector offers a number of suggestions for organizations of the United Nations system to mainstream environmental sustainability. Most of the suggested measures constitute sound common sense and are relatively simple, and many can be undertaken as part of organizational management reform processes.

222.   Member States represented in the legislative organs and governing bodies have a responsibility to demand compliance with the suggestions and recommendations contained in the present review.

223.   It would seem reasonable for organizations of the United Nations system to make their own contributions to realizing the vision of principle 8 of the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and fulfil their obligations to "reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and promote appropriate demographic policies."[112]

224.   The following areas are offered for further study and analysis for the purpose of enhancing environmental sustainability, by individual entities, in small groups, through relevant inter-agency networks or by oversight offices: engaging in sustainable procurement; revamping the travel policy; encouraging entities with mandates closely related to environmental sustainability to work together, in order to significantly strengthen the capacity of organizations of the United Nations system to improve internal sustainability management across the system by utilizing their accumulated experience and substantive capacity in a more structured, organized and systematic manner; extending the WIPO exceptions and limitations for advancing environmental sustainability;[113] and tasking the relevant inter-agency mechanisms with putting forward actionable suggestions and recommendations for aggressively pursuing policies that support environmental sustainability management in organizations.

225.   Organizations of the United Nations system should assume their responsibilities, demonstrate their commitment and set an example by making their own contributions to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

226.   The current context provides an opportunity – one that is unlikely to recur in the foreseeable future – for organizations of the United Nations system to reimagine the system by making their policies, practices and operations, including internal management, environmentally sustainable. It would be most unfortunate if the organizations did not do so and, instead, lapsed back into the old ways and "business as usual". Therein lies the challenge before them: remain chained to the past, or play a pioneering role in ushering in a sustainable future for all?

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

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[112] A/CONF.151/26 (Vol. 1).

[113] As set out in the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled.

Annex I

Resolutions and decisions of the legislative organs and governing bodies of Joint Inspection Unit participating organizations

Excerpts from key decisions:

UNEP Governing Council decision 27/5 on coordination across the United Nations system:

> "*Recognizing* the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in enhancing coordination and collaboration across the United Nations system to achieve greater coherence in environmental activities. […] Invites the Executive Director in his capacity as the Chair of the [Environmental Management] Group to transmit a progress report on the Group's work to the governing bodies of the Group's members"

UNEP Governing Council decision 27/2 on implementation of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

> "*Decides* to consider additional measures to strengthen United Nations Environment Programme's voice and ability to fulfil its coordination mandate on environmental matters, and in this regard, *invites* the Secretary-General to take necessary steps to enhance United Nations Environment Programme's role in key United Nations coordination bodies"

The call by UNEP to strengthen its role in coordinating United Nations efforts regarding environment issues was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/213.

The UNHCR environmental policy, approved by the forty-sixth session of the Executive Committee of UNHCR in 1995, stipulates that environmental considerations have to be introduced in a consistent and coordinated manner into all relevant sectoral activities of the organization.

The WFP environmental policy was approved by its Executive Board in February 2017.[114]

The UNESCO Headquarters Committee, a subsidiary body of the General Conference, has had environmental management on the agenda at every session since at least the end of 2018.[115] In 2019, both the UNESCO General Conference[116] and the Executive Board,[117] in the framework of the strategic transformation of UNESCO, addressed the improvement of UNESCO environmental management and the new measures aimed at the establishment of an environmentally friendly management framework.

The ICAO Assembly resolution on the environment and climate change A40-18,[118] in which the ICAO Assembly requests the Council to continue to cooperate with the Climate Neutral United Nations initiative, remains at the forefront of developing methods and tools for quantifying greenhouse gas emissions from aviation with respect to the initiative, including the ICAO carbon emissions calculator, which also incorporates cargo emissions.

In 2008, the ILO Governing Body discussed whether funds should be used to offset carbon emissions from official air travel undertaken in 2007 (GB.301/PFA/1/1). Some government representatives urged the International Labour Office to invest these funds in energy efficiency improvements to the ILO building instead (GB.301/10/1(Rev.)).

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[114] See WFP/EB.1/2017/4-B/Rev.1.

[115] See 202 COM/SIEGE/Report/Rev. For the full list of new measures, see the report of the UNESCO Headquarters Committee, document 203 COM/SIEGE/3.

[116] See 40 C/55.

[117] See 207 EX/5.III.E.

[118] Available at www.icao.int/environmental-protection/Documents/Assembly/Resolution_A40-18_Climate_Change.pdf.

In other organizations, in-house environmental sustainability is addressed within the organization's strategic plan or programme budget. This is the case in UNDP,[119] FAO[120] and WIPO.[121]

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[119] See DP/2017/38.

[120] See FAO, *Director-General's Medium-Term Plan 2018–2021*.

[121] See WIPO, Program and Budget for the 2020/21 Biennium, available at www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/about-wipo/en/budget/pdf/budget_2020_2021.pdf.

Annex II

Human rights and environmental sustainability

Since 2008, the Human Rights Council has issued the following resolutions on human rights and climate change:

- Resolution 7/23 (2008): The Council expressed concern that climate change posed an immediate and far-reaching threat to people and communities around the world and requested OHCHR to prepare a study on the relationship between climate change and human rights.

- Resolution 10/4 (2009): The Council noted that climate change-related impacts had a range of implications, both direct and indirect, for the effective enjoyment of human rights and that such effects would be felt most acutely by those segments of the population who were already in a vulnerable situation.

- Resolution 18/22 (2011): The Council affirmed that human rights obligations and principles had the potential to inform and strengthen international and national policymaking in the area of climate change, promoting policy coherence, legitimacy and sustainable outcomes.

- Resolution 26/27 (2014): The Council emphasized the need for all States to enhance international dialogue and cooperation to address the adverse impacts of climate change on the enjoyment of human rights, including the right to development.

- Resolution 29/15 (2015): The Council emphasized the importance of continuing to address the adverse consequences of climate change for all and called for a panel discussion and analytical study on the impacts of climate change on the enjoyment of the right to health.

- Resolution 32/33 (2016): The Council urged parties to integrate human rights in climate change mitigation and adaptation and called for a panel discussion on the adverse impact of climate change on the rights of the child, to be held at its thirty-fourth session.

- Resolution 35/20 (2017): The Council noted the urgency of protecting and promoting the human rights of migrants and persons displaced across international borders in the context of the adverse impact of climate change.

- Resolution 38/4 (2018): The Council recognized that the integration of a gender-responsive approach into climate policies would increase the effectiveness of climate change mitigation and adaptation, requesting an analytical study and a panel discussion on the topic.

- Resolution 42/21 (2019): The Council recognized that the rights of persons with disabilities were disproportionately affected by the negative impacts of climate change.

- Resolution 44/7 (2020): The Council recognized that the negative impacts of climate change disproportionately affected the rights of older persons.

The Council has also addressed the issue of the impact of climate change in the framework of its work on human rights through the following resolutions. In these resolutions, the Human Rights Council has recognized that the impact of climate change on the full enjoyment of human rights is a global problem that requires a global solution, highlighting the importance of addressing human rights in the context of the post-2015 development agenda:

- Resolution 16/11 (2011)

- Resolution 19/10 (2012)

- Resolution 25/21 (2014)

- Resolution 28/11 (2015)

- Resolution 31/8 (2016)

- Resolution 34/20 (2017)
- Resolution 37/8 (2018).

Annex III

Existence of norms and standards or a similar type of guidance document in relation to environmental sustainability by management area

	Procurement	Events and conferences	Travel	Facilities	ICT	Human resources
United Nations and its offices:						
United Nations Secretariat	√	√	√	√	√	√
UNCTAD	√	√	√	√	√	
UNEP	√	√	√		√	
UN-Habitat	√		√	√	√	
ITC	√	√	√	√	√	
UNODC/United Nations Office at Vienna	√	√	√			
UNRWA						
United Nations funds and programmes:	√					
UNHCR	√		√	√		
UNAIDS	√		√			
UNDP	√	√	√	√	√	
UNFPA	√	√	√	√		
UNICEF	√	√		√		
UNOPS	√	√	√	√	√	√
UN-Women	√		√		√	
WFP	√		√	√		
United Nations specialized agencies:						
FAO	√	√		√	√	
ICAO		√	√			
ILO	√	√		√	√	
IMO	√	√				
ITU	√	√		√	√	
UNESCO			√		√	√
UNIDO	√		√	√		
UNWTO	√					
UPU	√					
WHO	√	√	√	√	√	√
WIPO	√	√		√	√	
WMO						
IAEA		√				
Total	**24**	**17**	**17**	**16**	**14**	**4**

Annex IV

Good practices from United Nations and non-United Nations actors

Travel

Good practice from the United Nations system: United Nations Industrial Development Organization travel policy to reduce travel with targets and ceilings by management function

The following reinforcing elements were introduced in the UNIDO travel policy to ensure that travel was undertaken only when absolutely necessary.

Accountability. The accountability of those who authorize and approve travel was reinforced. In awareness-raising workshops, it was stressed that the success of implementation of the travel policy rested with those who authorized the absence of staff from their duty stations and those who approved the travel authorization workflows in the system.

Planning. A quarterly travel planning process requires that personnel specify their planned contribution and highlight the expected results or outputs from their travel. As such, the travel must be linked to tangible results in line with the Organization's policy of results-based management. Authorizers and approvers are therefore required to ensure that such linkages exist prior to approving travel. An important consideration when authorizing the travel plan must be whether a face-to-face meeting is necessary. All efforts shall be undertaken to advocate for alternatives to travel, such as telephone and videoconferencing. Authorizers and approvers of travel must ensure that it is absolutely necessary to attend a particular event and that alternative means of communication cannot be used.

Travel ceilings in a calendar year. The justification for and frequency of travel on official business are based on the roles and responsibilities of each staff member.

Maximum of 30 calendar days for managing directors, directors and UNIDO representatives. Their managerial roles demand that they allocate a substantial amount of time to providing strategic direction. Their travel on official business may be justified due to their roles, including, inter alia, representing the Organization at high-level meetings or attending strategic meetings to secure resources or to strengthen or expand partnerships with Member States or other organizations or stakeholders. As a rule, managing directors, directors and UNIDO representatives may earmark up to 30 days in a calendar year for travel commitments that fall within their primary roles. Travel on behalf of the Director-General, a member of the Executive Board or, in the case of a UNIDO representative, a director, may be authorized over and above the ceiling of 30 days.

Maximum of 60 calendar days for all other staff members at headquarters, in liaison offices and in the field. Those staff members dealing directly with programmes and projects may be expected to travel more frequently as part of their regular functions. As a rule, travel may be justified for critical milestones or actions within the project cycle (such as the formulation phase, the mid-term review or the annual or terminal stakeholders' review), for flagship events or important project or programmatic milestones established in the Programme for Country Partnership, or for other specific programmatic reasons. As a rule, project managers may plan up to 60 days in a calendar year for travel commitments. Travel on behalf of the Director-General, a member of the Executive Board or a director may be authorized over and above the ceiling of 60 days.

Reporting. Approval of exceptions is escalated to managing directors. Regular reporting on compliance and exceptions serves to draw attention to how authorizers and approvers are managing (or not managing) their staff.

Good practice from the United Nations system: United Nations Children's Fund travel policy and practices

- **Login screen messages**. These serve the purpose of raising awareness among staff on the issue of eco-efficiency, linking eco-efficiency to the UNICEF mandate through simple messages, highlighting that the topic is an organizational priority, and sharing project success stories from the field to encourage other offices to follow suit.

- **Cyber Walkthrough**. This is one of the tools UNICEF created to support field colleagues in identifying eco-efficiency and accessibility gaps at the facility level, via a video call. The field staff member walks around the office with the camera on, and a team from headquarters points out any issues, as part of a preliminary assessment. This method is not only an efficient way to give technical support to field colleagues but also a way to strengthen the bond between headquarters support teams and field office teams.

- **UNICEF procedure on eco-efficiency and inclusive access in UNICEF premises and operations**. The procedure outlines the overall framework for managing eco-efficiency and accessibility under one team and one strategy, hence avoiding duplication and waste. Furthermore, it highlights the holistic approach taken by UNICEF to corporate social responsibility, by tackling the issues of the environment and staff well-being at once.

Good practice from a non-United Nations actor: World Resources Institute mainstreaming of environmental sustainability in travel

In its sustainability initiative, the World Resources Institute has taken several approaches to mainstreaming sustainability. It has been improving access to and the diversity of communications, customizing messages to different staff audiences, and creating internal dashboards that provide instant feedback on quarterly waste audits and live electricity use in the office. It transitioned its annual greenhouse gas inventory to a public, online dashboard for all audiences to follow and share. These dashboards help support a larger communication and engagement effort to respond to different audiences with different tools and messages. The business travel reduction campaign in 2019–2020 featured personalized monthly emails with greenhouse gas emissions, alongside more tangible greenhouse gas equivalencies (such as cars of coal, acres of forest and number of light bulbs) and cost and time data. The time-savings opportunity of reducing travel emissions helped to expand the perceived benefits of reduced travel among frequent travellers (see figure I). This approach also helped integrate sustainability actions into many other decisions. For example, the business travel discussion went beyond sustainability benefits to include conversations about operating costs savings and life-work balance. The lessons from this campaign will be part of an upcoming paper by the World Resources Institute.

Figure I
Sample email from a 2020 business travel campaign, launched before COVID-19 hit the United States of America

Shengyin, how do your travel emissions compare to your WRI peers? We crunched your numbers.

As WRI staff, we've joined this organization because we care about the environment. Air travel is particularly high-impact, making up roughly a quarter of our total GHG emissions.

Your total emissions from work-related air travel last year were 6,812 kg CO2e, which are equivalent to 5,442 pounds (2,469 kg) of coal burned.

Your GHG emissions are 42% higher compared to the average for WRI staff in similar positions (Associates / Managers / Fellows).

Period: Jan-Nov 2019
Total Miles Traveled: 28,024 (45,100 km)
Totals Trips: 8
Total Hours Lost to Travel: 85

While reducing travel seems daunting, it's not impossible! By rethinking how I travel and incorporating more frequent virtual communications, I managed to **reduce my air travel by 50% since 2016** and now only travel 2-4 ti... "super year" can be a fresh start for reducing our environmental impact: I encourage you to set a reduction goal for yourself by the end of January. For questions, reach out to SustainabilityCoreTeam@wri.org.

Steve Barker
CMA CFM MBA
VP CFOO - World Resources Institute

Set your reduction goal for 2020 by Fri, Jan 31 and stay tuned for monthly updates.

| I will not travel by air in 2020 highest ambition | 50% reduction high ambition | 30% reduction aligned with science-based targets |

| other follow up with me |

Good practice from the United Nations system: UNDP Greening Moonshot Facility

UNDP has adopted an ambitious Moonshot targets committing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from global operations by 25% by 2025 and 50% by 2030. Replicating and scaling existing initiatives, using lessons learnt, and enabling even more ambitious transformation will allow UNDP operations to run in an environmentally sustainable manner consistently across the organization. The Greening UNDP Moonshot Facility was set up to support this transformation by incentivizing contribution to the Moonshot targets. Several actions have been planned, including reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from travel, to effectively achieve the target and additional measures may be suggested by the applying offices.

Funding approach. Some measures require up-front investment (such as environmentally sustainable energy installations, or procurement of technology and equipment to increase connectivity). Conversely, some actions might save money for the organization and improve work/life balance for staff (for example by cutting out travel) but they require corporate policy and behavioural changes. To promote both types of actions a dual incentivization process was adopted via the Sustainable UNDP Moonshot Facility and Regional Greening Challenge funds:

Sustainable UNDP Moonshot Facility. Offices may apply for co-funding to invest in new and additional greenhouse gas reducing solutions or initiatives in the areas of staff travel, vehicle or facility operations (electricity, heating, cooling, etc.). Key award criteria include cost-effectiveness ($/greenhouse gas reduced), the payback period, the return on investment, the degree of cost-sharing and additional impacts on staff well-being or security. Only offices which have reported their greenhouse gas emissions for at least the previous year are eligible to apply for funding. This allows baselines and cost-effectiveness to be measured as part of the award decision-making process. In 2020, 14 projects were selected for Moonshot Facility funding. Jointly, these projects are expected to result in an annual greenhouse gas reduction of 1,045 tons of carbon dioxide equivalents, which results in an average cost effectiveness of $765.55 invested per ton of carbon dioxide equivalents reduced annually. With this, the Sustainable UNDP 2020 Moonshot Facility investment reduces the UNDP total annual carbon footprint by 1.4 per cent. The selected projects also result in total savings to the recipient UNDP offices of $257,523 per year and a payback period for this year's Moonshot investment (corporate Moonshot Facility funding plus committed co-funding from recipient UNDP offices) of 5.96 years. Noting that all but one of the proposal target greenhouse gas emission reductions from electricity consumption, via renewable energy or energy efficiency measures, concludes that the Moonshot Facility investment reduces 4.8 per cent of global UNDP greenhouse gas emissions from electricity use.

Regional Greening Funds. Several UNDP regional bureaux have set up regional green funds or funding mechanisms. Regional funds focus on catalysing innovative and creative initiatives in addition to cost-sharing Sustainable UNDP Moonshot Facility investments where needed.

Good practice from a non-United Nations actor: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development carbon pricing initiative

Recognizing that its activities can impact the environment, the sustainable use of natural resources, and public health and safety, OECD has made a commitment to "practise what it preaches" and limit the environmental impact of its work in a manner consistent with the wider goals of environmentally sustainable growth and sustainable development. Among the Organization's environmentally sustainable initiatives (which include the certification of buildings, energy and natural resources use optimization, waste management, a forest project, a beehives project and environmentally sustainable procurement), the internal carbon pricing initiative stands out. Directorates pay for carbon emissions from air travel for official missions, ensuring that the environmental costs of carbon dioxide emissions are taken into account and encouraging staff to consider alternative options to flying. The revenues are used to fund projects that have a direct impact on the environmental performance of OECD, including remote conferencing equipment as an alternative to travel, as well as raising staff awareness. Since 2018, the remaining emissions have been offset through the purchase of certified carbon credits from a forestry project in Sierra Leone. According to OECD, offsetting is not the solution, and emissions reduction should be prioritized. These efforts are described in the OECD Greening Report 2020.

Procurement management

Good practice from a non-United Nations actor: environmentally sustainable procurement in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

As sustainable procurement is a broad concept often leading to trade-offs between aspects of sustainability (such as support for gender issues, small and medium-sized enterprises or the environment), OECD focuses on environmentally sustainable procurement. In 2016, OECD created an environmentally sustainable indicator and an environment criterion in its tenders, specifically asking how responsible the company or supplier was and to what extent the product to be purchased was environmentally sustainable, establishing categories of low, medium and high environmental impact. Using the procurement training material from UNOPS, OECD organized training for high-risk management areas such as buildings management and information technology, debunking the myth that sustainable procurement was often more difficult. As a result, in 2019, 37 per cent of the calls for tender included environmentally sustainable criteria, and of those, 90 per cent included environmental sustainability criteria. OECD also implemented the ISO 14001 standard in its facilities management in 2019.

Good practice from the United Nations system: United Nations Office for Project Services sustainable procurement

UNOPS implements a sustainable procurement framework

In January 2020, UNOPS launched its sustainable procurement framework, making sustainable procurement a mandatory requirement for most formal tenders. The framework takes into account what is bought, how it is bought, why it is bought and from whom. With this approach, procurement officials are empowered to push back and educate requisitioners on their requests. The framework is divided into three parts: mandatory requirements for specific types of solicitations and contracts; mandatory sustainability requirements for 10 of the most procured categories; and a list of products that should no longer be purchased. Since launching the framework, which was accompanied with the introduction of an online training course on sustainable procurement, UNOPS has achieved more than 80 per cent compliance globally (as at August 2020). The sustainable procurement framework also includes enhanced requirements for supplier due diligence and is aligned with the United Nations system-wide sustainable procurement indicators that enable tenders to be identified as sustainable on the United Nations Global Marketplace.

UNOPS advances supplier diversity and inclusion

The UNOPS Possibilities Programme is a UNOPS supplier diversity and inclusion programme that, through tools, engagement and capacity-building activities, provides an opportunity for local micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and diverse suppliers (businesses owned by women or youth and other businesses owned by minorities) to do business with UNOPS. Launched in 2015, the programme has so far allowed UNOPS to globally engage with approximately 1,000 diverse suppliers (which have also registered with the United Nations Global Marketplace) through UNOPS Possibilities forums, supplier engagement events (hosted in Jordan, Ethiopia, Brazil, Myanmar, Ghana and Argentina) and the UNOPS Possibilities Portal, an online platform for companies to submit their commercialized solutions for consideration by procurement officials. In 2019, this programme was awarded the World Procurement Awards for Supplier Diversity and Inclusion.

UNOPS launches supplier due diligence programme

In 2018, UNOPS launched the Delivering Responsibility in Vendor Engagement (DRiVE) programme, which is a vendor assessment, inspection and corrective action-planning programme. Delivering Responsibility in Vendor Engagement has a particular focus on the associated areas related to human rights, labour rights, health and safety, ethical conduct, sexual exploitation and abuse, and environmental responsibility. It is a data-driven supplier due diligence programme developed and implemented to ensure that vendors operate responsibly and in accordance with high standards of integrity in line with the United Nations Supplier Code of Conduct and the UNOPS General Conditions of Contract. The programme was mainstreamed into the UNOPS procurement policy through its

inclusion in the UNOPS Procurement Manual (section 1.5.4.1) and also forms part of the UNOPS sustainable procurement framework. The mandatory inclusion of the Delivering Responsibility in Vendor Engagement questionnaire in all formal solicitations processes (invitations to bid and requests for proposals) for goods and services came into effect on 1 January 2020. As at August 2020, the questionnaire had been included in 430 tenders and had been completed by 1,647 suppliers from 126 countries.

Good practice from the United Nations system: United Nations Population Fund collaborative sustainable procurement to shape markets

UNFPA uses its procurement leverage to shape the market in the environmental area. In particular, it has adopted a collaborative approach with condom suppliers (creating incentives for suppliers) by:

(a)   identifying the commodities that have the highest environmental impact and focusing efforts on these commodities;

(b)   asking suppliers in the tenders issued for these commodities what they currently do in the area of corporate responsibility, informing suppliers about the intention of UNFPA to help suppliers become ISO 14000 certified, and asking suppliers to confirm their willingness to become ISO 14000 certified;

(c)   providing more points in the evaluation to those companies that have made a commitment to environmental sustainability (implemented from 2019);

(d)   establishing multi-year long-term agreements and, during the validity period of those agreements, monitoring the progress of the suppliers towards becoming ISO 14000 certified;

(e)   measuring the resulting environmental impact.

UNFPA has also redesigned its dignity kits by:

(a)   moving from plastic dignity kits to paper kits;

(b)   measuring the resulting environmental impact.

This approach provides incentives for suppliers with the highest potential environmental impact to be environmentally sustainable and accompanies them in the process.

Human resources

Good practice from a non-United Nations actor: how the World Resources Institute mainstreamed environmental sustainability for behavioural change through human resources activities

The World Resources Institute has taken several approaches to mainstreaming sustainability through its sustainability initiative. One such approach has been to shift expectations of sustainability from an optional activity to an essential part of its role as an environmental organization. Working with the human resources function, sustainability was added to many of the processes for new staff. Questions about sustainability are posed to some candidates during their interviews, such as "how do you walk the talk on the mission of the World Resources Institute in your personal life?" Once candidates are hired, they are also presented with sustainability actions on the first day of induction (see figure II below), including the food-policy-aligned lunch (all vegetarian) and commuting benefits for cyclists, and are given a sustainability tour showcasing the zero-waste, sustainable purchasing and environmentally sustainable building initiatives. The World Resources Institute has incorporated sustainability into performance reviews in various ways, including by issuing sustainability competency ratings for all staff, setting performance goals for sustainability for those staff members who volunteer on environmental sustainability teams, and establishing a long-term priority for sustainability in the Stand-Out Performance system. While the systems and framework for evaluating the performance of staff have changed, the presence of sustainability in annual review conversations between staff members and supervisors is set as an expectation.

Figure II
Sample screenshot from the World Resources Institute staff induction

The World Resources Institute has been incorporating lessons from behavioural science into their staff sustainability campaigns. For various environmental topics, it laid out specific calls to action and also narrowed audiences for these campaigns. It then used lessons from behavioural science, such as relying on defaults by design, key reminders and nudges, and made some use of pledges and commitments. This allowed it to adapt to different interests and bring in staff members who may have been interested in only one aspect and not the full range of sustainability programmes. For example, the zero-waste programme started with a "recycle right" call to action, focusing on correcting key mistakes while also making waste bins consistent throughout the office. It then incorporated the compost and food waste reduction campaign. With regard to commuting, the approach has been focused on normalizing cycling and convincing new staff to try cycling to work immediately (see figure II) before establishing a routine. Similarly, the World Resources Institute business travel campaign featured social norming as a tactic by sharing peer averages alongside staff members' personalized performance data. The approach was expected to increase engagement on sustainability from different angles; not all cycling commuters would participate in the zero-waste events or would be impacted by business travel campaigns, but engaging them in activities that they were passionate about would provide opportunities to raise awareness and share overall progress towards greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals. For example, in 2019 the World Resources Institute launched live submeters showing zones of electricity use and piloted efforts to engage staff in phantom load reductions (switching off power strips), another good example of staff engagement.

Good practice from the United Nations system: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women temporary virtual roster

During the COVID-19 pandemic, UN-Women developed a temporary virtual roster to help staff in different parts of the organization and different duty stations support each other. This allowed staff members to work virtually across countries without needing to travel, thereby having an indirect positive effect on greenhouse gas emissions.

Good practice from the United Nations system: United Nations Secretariat Conecta platform

Similar to the practice at UN-Women, the United Nations Secretariat enabled a rapid response initiative called "conecta4covid" with 140 volunteers and 20 projects. The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the importance of being able to pool resources and work collaboratively with colleagues in other departments, organizations and duty stations and has demonstrated an appetite for the concept.

Facilities management

Good practice from the United Nations system: United Nations Population Fund approach to greenhouse gas emissions from facilities

UNFPA targets the highest total emitting offices, as this is how the highest reduction in ton of carbon dioxide equivalents can be achieved. Offices with a small number of staff may have higher per capita emissions than others, but the overall impact of those offices is much smaller than that of bigger offices. The strategy of concentrating on the high emitting offices irrespective of per capita emissions provides the best return on investment.

Good practice from the United Nations system: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific RideShare car-sharing mobile application

RideShare is a ride-sharing application developed by the Bangkok branch of the Office of Information and Communications Technology for ESCAP agencies, facilitating vehicle pooling by matching the itineraries of people belonging to the United Nations community. Using RideShare is a small and easy act that contributes to reducing air pollution and the United Nations carbon footprint by sharing rides; together these small acts can make a positive impact on climate change.

The RideShare application is limited to use by United Nations staff for reasons of security and accountability. Staff members can register and log in to the app using an active and valid United Nations organization email account and their existing enterprise credentials. The users can enter optional profile details and upload a photo. If the user intends to offer rides, he or she can register the vehicle (indicating the type, number of seats and colour). Users can set some default settings like their maximum accepted deviation in distance or time for ride searches. To match rides, drivers can post rides that will be offered to other users by specifying a combination of starting location, destination and time. The driver can also select whether he or she accepts pickup or drop-off along the route. All users who have requested or subscribed to similar rides are notified about the posting, based on notification criteria they specify in the system. This will enable users to see which rides are currently offered, with the option to search and filter the rides. From the results, the user can select to view more details of the ride and make requests. If a matching ride is found, the users are invited to join the ride. If no matches are found, users can save the request and be notified if any matching rides are offered at a later stage.

The application offers real-time carbon emissions tracking and tracks the amount of emissions avoided per person per ride. The progress is recorded and monitored on a dashboard in the application, showing the carbon avoidance on a chart. This is used to label users with appreciation labels such as "ambassador", "veteran" and "expert" based on their progress.

The application provides a reward system. The avoided carbon emissions are recorded in a user-friendly way with an easy scale of measure used as a proxy, namely trees. An organization or duty station may set up campaigns and offer "trees" (points of carbon emission avoidance) to be redeemed for prizes, discounts and benefits.

The application also provides a social component. Users are able to follow or be followed by other users. Following will enable a user to see highlights of the followed user's activities, such as when the user posts a ride or requests a ride.

Good practice from the United Nations system: United Nations Environment Programme car-sharing mobile application

Drawing inspiration from the ESCAP RideShare application, UNEP is in the process of developing its own car-sharing mobile application with the objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from commuting in Nairobi. UNEP has developed the requirements and initiated discussions with the Bangkok branch of the Office of Information and Communications Technology on developing the application and benefiting from the Office's experience in software applications development and related security aspects as per the United Nations Secretariat standards. So far, the requirements of the product have been agreed; however, the cost and cost recovery remain a challenge, considering that the Bangkok branch of the Office of Information and Communications Technology has quoted $135,000

as a one-time development charge and $27,000 in annual maintenance costs. UNEP is currently fundraising and promoting the idea of the application to the United Nations entities based in Nairobi through the relevant forums, such as the Environment Management Group and the Greening the Blue initiative.

Good practice from the United Nations system: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime recycling programme in Myanmar

The Myanmar branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) demonstrated how it overcame the absence of public infrastructure for recycling. In line with its "Going Green" strategy, UNODC conducted initial research and connected with several local environmentalists, who brought to its attention a small-scale local waste management start-up named RecyGlo. Identifying this start-up was just the beginning of initiating recycling at UNODC, as several challenges arose. These included finding sustainable funding and meeting procurement requirements, such as administrative and accounting standards. The latter was solved by UNODC providing voluntary support. Another challenge was that of convincing staff to use the recycling bins, as many office staff either were not in the habit of recycling or did not have an understanding of how and why to sort different types of waste. This was solved by developing an internal advocacy campaign centred around posters, emails and reminders from the country manager. A sustainability club from a local high school gave a presentation highlighting the local context and why recycling was important for Myanmar, as well as explaining how recycling processes worked.

While challenges slowed the implementation of the UNODC Myanmar recycling programme, those were overcome through the presence of dedicated staff organized into an office environmental team, alongside high-level support from the country manager for finding funding, generating broader buy-in for the programme among office staff and ensuring there was awareness about how to properly sort waste. Together, the efforts of the environmental team and the country manager resulted in 162 kg of waste being recycled in the second half of 2019, and those figures have been increasing nearly every quarter since the programme began.

Good practice from a non-United Nations actor: the International Committee of the Red Cross approach to managing its environmental footprint in humanitarian contexts

ICRC adopted a step-by-step approach. The framework for sustainable development adopted in 2011 was the first official document to integrate the principles of sustainability, including environmental sustainability, into all ICRC activities. Environmental data on five key areas has been collected, voluntarily since 2012 and mandatorily since 2018, from all delegations (field offices), then pulled into a dashboard and, in turn, sent back to the delegations to show what their main environmental impacts are and how to reduce them. Based on this assessment, an action plan is developed by the delegations. A diverse team in the delegation is preferred, so as to bring a diversity of solutions and create a more comprehensive action plan. The environmental data is collected for the following five key areas: energy consumption (electricity, diesel, generator and heating energy); water consumption; direct carbon dioxide emissions (electricity and diesel consumption inside buildings and fleet vehicles); paper consumption; and waste management. Although ICRC is not able to measure the amount of waste it produces at this stage, it does assess how the waste is treated and provides a score for waste treatment.

To overcome the challenge of self-reporting and validate the data reported by delegations, ICRC takes the following measures:

• Cross-references key performance indicators and proxies, such as cases of reported energy reduction but no impact on electricity bills

• Gives responsibility to an accountant to enter the data in any system

• Uses internal control teams embedded in the functions of ICRC to look at environmental actions and data reported by the delegation

• Uses an audit team that has a mandate to look at environmental issues and that reports directly to the President.

ICRC identified the following lessons from its experience with mainstreaming environmental sustainability:

• Environmental sustainability is not solely about greenhouse gas emissions

• Audits of suppliers on environmental criteria are essential

• There is a need to be aware of biodiversity hotspots

• There is a need to carefully determine the governance structure to allow for cross-departmental work

• There is a need to engage staff in selecting priorities and submitting ideas for action.

Good practice from the United Nations system: United Nations Development Programme Smart Premises concept, energy efficiency and the Internet of Things

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Office of Information Management and Technology in Copenhagen is responsible for supporting UNDP country offices around the world with ICT and green energy solutions. Its vision is to build modern-age UNDP facilities around the globe that are fully aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, to protect the reputation of UNDP, to prevent financial loss and to maintain organizational productivity using technology. The office promotes the UNDP Smart Premises concept within the United Nations system but also in government institutions and local communities, soliciting feedback from customers and other interested parties in order to continually improve processes and services. It also monitors performance through performance metrics in order to evaluate progress, keeps UNDP management fully informed on issues and risks as they arise in country offices and the actions being taken to manage those risks, and uses the ISO 9001 quality management system for all unit processes everywhere, every time, without exception.

The Smart Premises or Smart United Nations Facility concept (see figure III below) is based on principles borrowed from the concepts of "smart cities" and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It creates a showcase in United Nations offices in the field to inspire a country-wide movement and build local capacity, leveraging technology as the engine of development and environmental sustainability.

Figure III
Smart United Nations Facility Concept Diagram
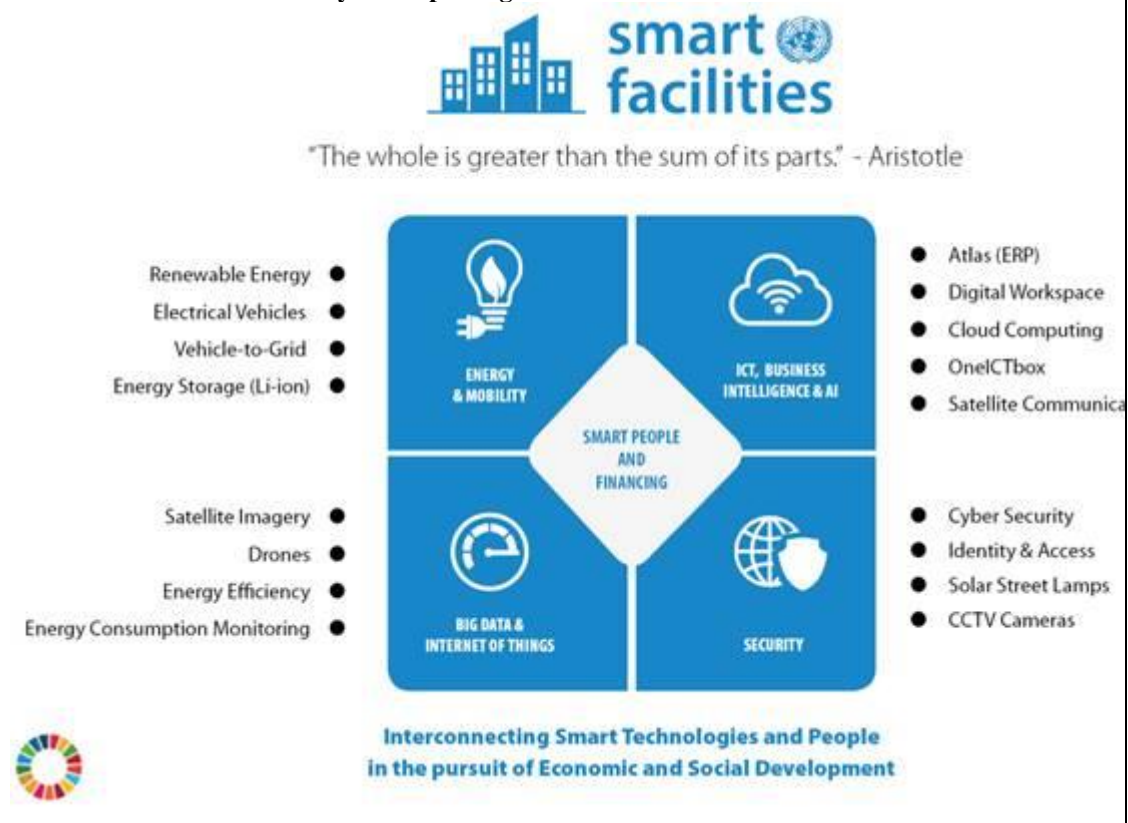
The concept uses a seven-step green energy solution process to address the needs of United Nations offices. This process has been adopted as a best practice by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (see figure IV below).

Figure IV
Seven-Step Green Energy Solution Process

Recognized best practice for UNDP Sustainable Energy implementation

UNDP collects data from around 1,300 sensors (power consumption measurement and monitoring) and develops business cases for the deployment of solar photovoltaic systems. The self-assessment and the power consumption measurement and monitoring are critical for properly sizing the system, writing the business case and compiling the request for a proposal for secondary bidding in step 3. In that step, which is the one related to procurement, UNDP uses long-term agreements with 10 vendors to which it sends a request for a quotation, and they compete for the project in the secondary bidding process. This ensures the best value for money and use of the latest technology and market price. Among other key prerequisites, the international vendor is required to have a local representative who installs the solar panels and to provide second tier support of the system after the handover. This serves to build local capacity and ensure the availability of skills in-country.

Good practice from the United Nations system: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Bangkok Green Academies

The UNESCO Bangkok office set an example by adapting its building, premises, vehicles, missions, meetings and staff behaviour to become eco-friendly and environmentally sustainable, through regular meetings of the UNESCO Bangkok Sustainability Team since 2019 and the development of an environmental action plan. This plan sets out no-cost, low-cost and high-cost priorities and contains suggestions such as harvesting rainwater for environmentally sustainable irrigation, installing solar energy panels, separating waste (plastic, food, batteries, e-waste, urban agriculture and composting), keeping a botanical garden and using electric cars. As part of the efforts to become environmentally sustainable, the UNESCO Bangkok office is being converted into a UNESCO "green academy". Green academies fill the gap between classroom teaching and real-life, hands-on experiences to make the necessary changes, catalysing real climate change resilience in communities, and continuously improving the environmental footprint of all buildings.[122] This is different from eco-schools that only teach theory. This initiative has already been joined by UN-Habitat, and other United Nations agencies are encouraged to explore the concept, which could be renamed "United Nations Green Academies".

Good practice from the United Nations system: approach of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization office in Doha to environmentally sustainable facilities activities

The UNESCO office in Doha conducted a number of highly interesting environmental activities and innovative practices to improve its own footprint. Wastepaper and cardboard were collected from the Al-Sulaithi Paper Factory (at no cost and no profit) and converted into packing paper; condensed water from air-conditioning units was collected and used to irrigate plants in flower pots, considering the Arab

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[122] UNESCO, "UNESCO Green Academies: guidelines for climate-resilient schools", available at https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000372158.

Gulf precipitation rates of 50–80 litres of water/m^2/year; and aluminium foil and cans were collected, crushed and brought to scrap recycling centres in the industrial area known as "Sanaiya" and sold for 4 Qatari riyals per kg (about $1.10).

Events and conference management

Good practice from the United Nations system: International Trade Centre paperless meetings

Printed event programmes were replaced by online programmes and apps

Programmes, especially for large events, used to be regularly updated and reprinted, as speakers or other details tended to change at the last minute. Just a few years ago, when participants still demanded printed programmes, ITC moved to printing single-sheet, recto-verso programmes with key information only, leaving changeable details for the online versions, where they could be updated as needed. Reducing paper even further, ITC stopped printing programmes altogether at their flagship event, for example, displaying the programme structure on one board only. Today, participants are used to getting their information online and through apps, so the need for printed programmes has diminished or even disappeared. Paper signage and announcements outside and in event rooms are now replaced by on-screen, electronic information.

Printed promotional materials at events were replaced by weblinks, QR Codes and Universal Serial Bus (USB) keys

Disseminating brochures and flyers, including for upcoming events, publications and initiatives, used to be commonplace at events, especially in the context of corporate booths. The amount of such materials has been cut back, and in many cases, they have been replaced by display copies with links to further information on the web or by links featured on banners. The use of QR Codes has become more accepted over the years. The smartphone scanning of QR Codes linked to websites is the easiest and quickest way to disseminate information to a large number of participants and visitors. QR Codes on booth infrastructure, display materials and business cards proved to be extremely successful at the ITC corporate booth at the China International Import Expo in Shanghai, China.

In line with the focus on on-demand printing at ITC, on-site printing on demand in developing countries is routinely included as an expense item when preparing for events. That way, the most important information is printed without shipping, in small quantities, and is up to date. Promotional paper materials from partners and sponsors are no longer encouraged. Instead, in addition to their logo being on display, they also obtain visibility through hosted activities, and their reach is amplified by coordinated social media campaigns.

Any information for dissemination can also be handed out on branded USB keys. However, ITC is also already reducing the use of USB keys for purely promotional purposes.

Printed post-event reports were replaced by web editions, social media and video reporting

The traditional post-event reports that used to be printed and sent to partners have long since been replaced by web versions of the reports. The links to the reports are shared via email. Going a step further, ITC tried out replacing traditional written reports altogether with well-designed video recap interviews at its 2017 flagship event and with collective social media reporting at the 2018 edition of the event.

Printed editions of publications were replaced by online portable document format (PDF) and ePub files

As ITC events serve to bring stakeholders together, create business opportunities, share best practice examples and provide access to expertise and latest research findings, publications play an important role in these events. Often, new publications are launched at events. They anchor discussions or allow participants to dive deeper into the topic following the event. Traditionally, participants have looked forward to leaving events with printed copies of the latest ITC publications. In order to reduce the use of paper, the number of printed copies disseminated at events has decreased substantially in recent years. Only a few copies are still printed for heads of delegations, speakers and some participants who have problems with connectivity and prefer to have a printed copy. Others can access the online editions free of charge. At booths, a limited number of display copies allow visitors to browse the publications on-site before they access the online version. ITC has initiated the process of publishing key publications

as ePub files, making the publications more interactive and attractive and thereby further reducing the need for printed versions in the future. Branded USB keys continue to play an important role for those participants who have problems with connectivity and cannot easily download the publications.

Good practice from the United Nations system: World Food Programme "greening the Executive Board" initiative

The WFP "greening the Executive Board" initiative has eliminated more than 1 million sheets of printed paper per year, and since 2016 all correspondence has been digitally transmitted. The Executive Board Secretariat also phased out single use plastics from high-level meetings in 2016. Together, these actions have saved more than $70,000 per year in meeting running costs.

Finance and budget: investment and banking management

Good practice from the United Nations system: World Health Organization guidelines for investment

WHO has set out the following environmental, social and corporate governance criteria in the detailed guidelines contained in its investment mandates, which WHO fixed income managers follow for the management of WHO bespoke fixed income portfolios:

• There must be no purchases of any issuer on any WHO restricted issuer list, with such lists to be sent under separate cover.

• All else being equal, the portfolio is to be managed with a preference for environmental, social and governance factors at or above the benchmark as measured by the average Morgan Stanley Capital International environmental, social and governance rating of the rated corporate bonds.

• The maximum exposure to Morgan Stanley Capital International environmental, social and governance securities rated BB is not to constitute more than 25 per cent of the total portfolio. Note that, for WHO, the limit is 20 per cent.

The combined Morgan Stanley Capital International environmental, social and governance rated corporate bond exposures in the portfolio rated BB and lower must not exceed the equivalent benchmark index Morgan Stanley Capital International environmental, social and governance exposure by more than 5 per cent.

Risk management: risk assessment and mitigation

Good practice from the United Nations system: World Food Programme Office of Internal Audit

In its 2020 workplan, the WFP Office of Internal Audit had planned a thematic audit on environmental management that would look into WFP policies for considering and mitigating the environmental impact of its programme and facilities. The audit had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 crisis and its impact on risks and priorities of the assurance work of the Office of Internal Audit. The Office resumed discussions in the last quarter of 2020 with the WFP units in charge of environmental management and will continue observing the progress with regard to policy, standards and tools development. The possibility of reintroducing a thematic audit on environmental management will be discussed later in 2021.

In addition to the planned thematic audit, in its 2020 workplan the Office had foreseen adding environmental management and impact as a standard element to country office audits conducted in 2020. A dedicated audit workplan had been developed for this purpose and rolled out in two country office audits in the first quarter of 2020 (internal audits of WFP operations in Myanmar and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo). Due to the COVID-19 crisis, planned audits of other country offices could not be carried out.

When prioritizing topics for audit assignments, the Office of Internal Audit builds upon a range of qualitative and quantitative factors, including strategic relevance, financial impact and requests by

management. Environmental management is one standard element of the Office's audit universe and as such is assessed in every annual risk assessment exercise and in its mid-year review. While not ranking as high risk in the 2020 risk assessment exercise, it had been selected as an audit theme, as the Office of Internal Audit aims to cover high, medium and low risk auditable areas within certain cycles to the extent possible.

Good practice from the United Nations system: United Nations Secretariat
Office of Internal Oversight Services

As part of the process of developing the 2021 workplan, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) has identified environmental sustainability management as one of its priority areas. More broadly, OIOS is also in the process of identifying key enablers for ensuring that this area is substantially and consistently covered in all future work programmes. Some specific proposed initiatives in this area include:

(a)   Developing and maintaining a risk-based audit universe of clients' business operations with significant environmental sustainability risks. This would provide a solid basis for identifying areas of audit engagement related to environmental sustainability. For example, some potential topics could be auditing the impact of climate change risks on the displacement of persons of concern (UNHCR) or auditing the adequacy of programmatic activities that could prevent, abate or remedy damage to the environment (UNHCR or peacekeeping operation settings);

(b)   Ensuring staff have the appropriate skills and training to effectively audit these areas;

(c)   Developing tools for assessing risks and controls with suitable test procedures for environmental sustainability audits; and

(d)   Developing policy guidelines to help practitioners identify and assess environmental sustainability risks associated with clients' programmes and activities.

Annex V

Status of acceptance and implementation of the recommendations in the 2010 Joint Inspection Unit report and continued relevance of the recommendations for each participating organization

Figure I
Status of acceptance of recommendations in JIU/REP/2010/1
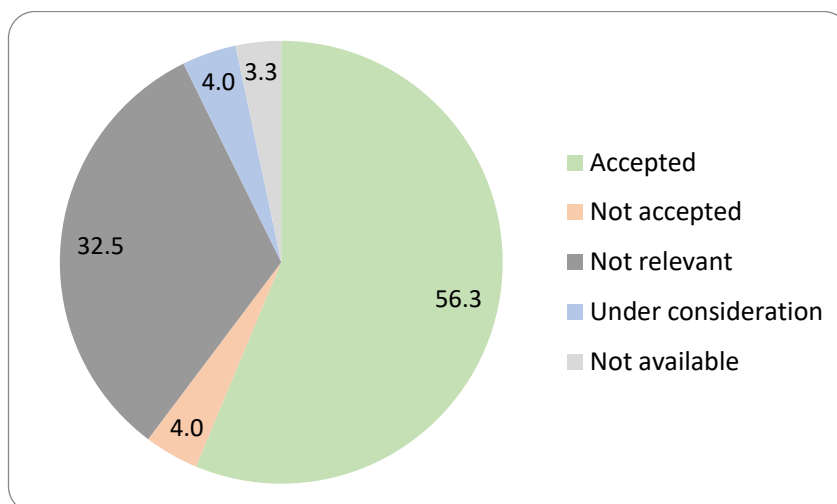(Percentage)

Figure II
Status of implementation of recommendations in JIU/REP/2010/1
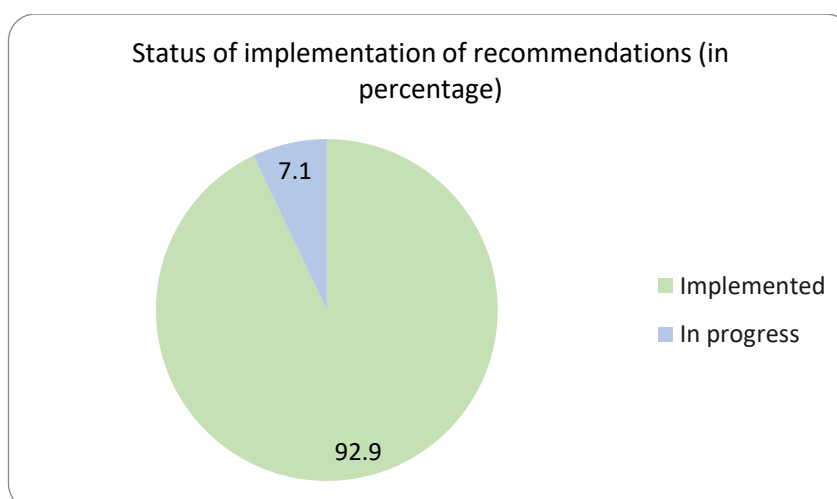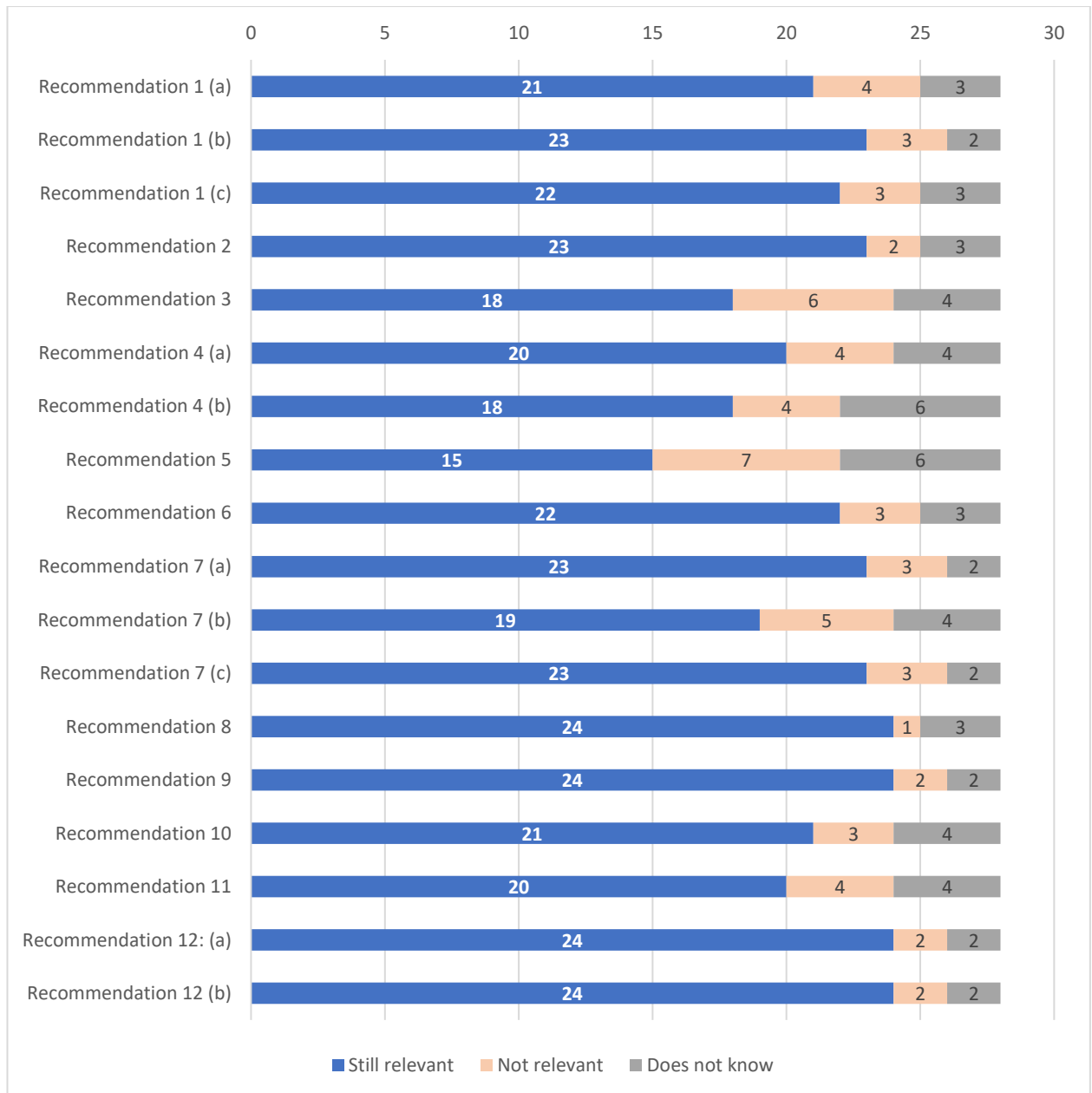(Percentage)

Figure III
Continued relevance of the recommendations, by number of Joint Inspection Unit participating organizations

Annex VI

Greenhouse gas emissions from the United Nations system (2012–2018)

Figure I
Air travel related greenhouse gas emissions from the United Nations system (2012–2018)

Air travel related emissions in ton of carbon dioxide equivalents

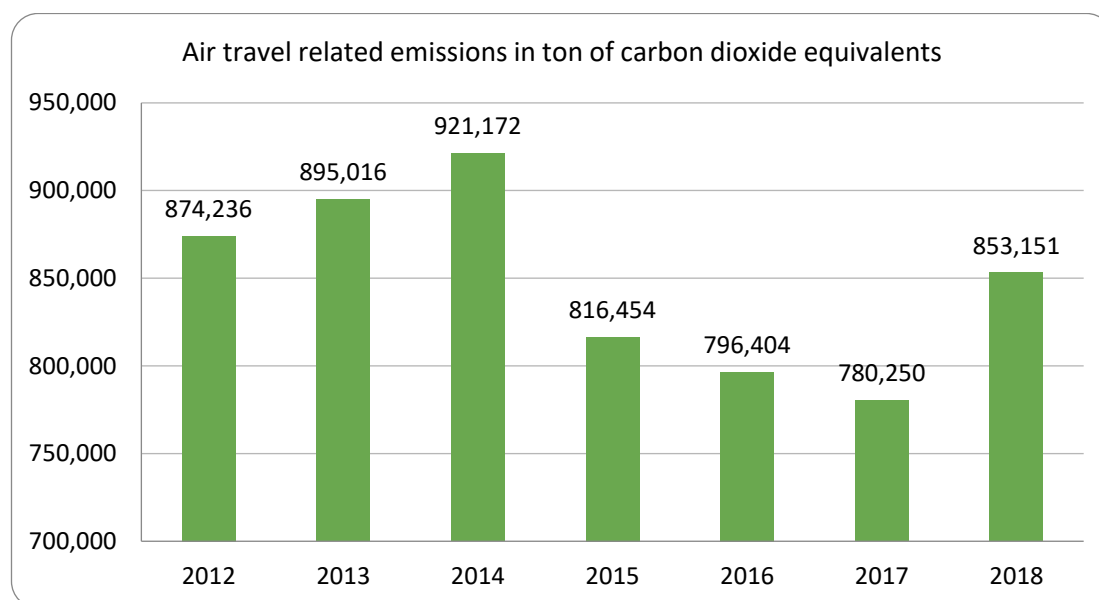| Year	Emissions
2012	874,236
2013	895,016
2014	921,172
2015	816,454
2016	796,404
2017	780,250
2018	853,151

Figure II
Other travel related greenhouse gas emissions from the United Nations system (2012–2018)

Other travel related emissions in ton of carbon dioxide equivalents

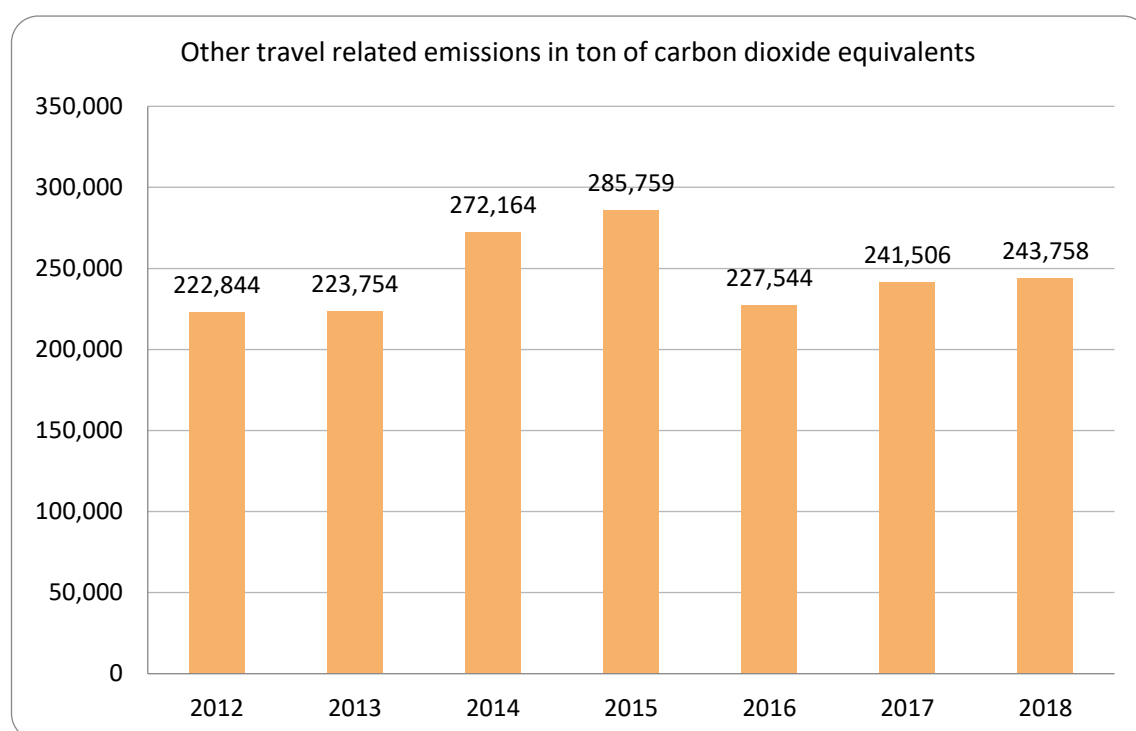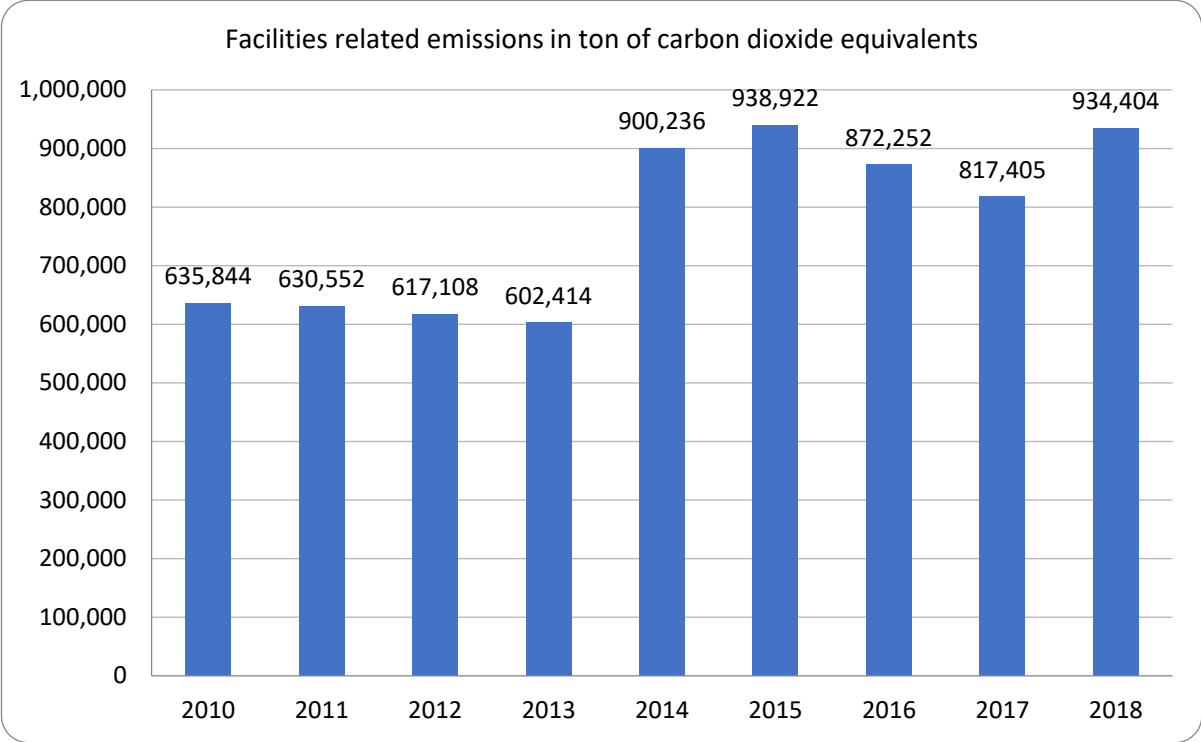| Year	Emissions
2012	222,844
2013	223,754
2014	272,164
2015	285,759
2016	227,544
2017	241,506
2018	243,758

Figure III
Facilities related greenhouse gas emissions from the United Nations system (2012–2018)

Annex VII

Suggested internal programmatic expertise to be leveraged for the benefit of the United Nations system in decreasing its own environmental impact and for the benefit of its partners

ITU	Using ICT for sustainable development and environmental protection
UNEP	System-wide coordination of environmental aspects
WMO	Policy support
UNIDO	Energy efficiency
UNODC	Biodiversity protection and criminalization of environmental harm
UNESCO	Biodiversity protection and science related to the environment. The Programme on Man and the Biosphere, an intergovernmental programme launched in 1971, seeks to establish a scientific basis for improving relationships between people and their environments.
UNFCCC	Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
ITC	Incorporating an environmental sustainability lens in trade development, in collaboration with WTO and UNCTAD
WIPO	WIPO GREEN – The Sustainable Technology Marketplace, which is an initiative for speeding up the development of environmentally sustainable innovations in developed and developing countries and increasing the pace at which environmentally sustainable technology is licensed and rolled out
UNWTO	Resilience and sustainability of the tourism sector
UPU	Supporting the private sector in adopting an environmentally sustainable and resource efficient logistics chain
ICAO	Making the aviation industry environmentally sustainable (with respect to lighting, electric vehicles, fleet, catering in airports and sustainable fuel) and supporting the United Nations system with credible carbon units through the global Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation

Annex VIII

Results of the questionnaire sent to Member States

1.   In all, the views of 70 Member States were solicited through the questionnaire, to which 11 responses were received, yielding a response rate of 15.71 per cent. Notwithstanding the relatively low response rate (which has unfortunately also been the case with similar undertakings by JIU in the recent past), the perspectives shared by the respondents added to the richness of the data collected and their analysis. The limitations imposed by the relatively low response rate need to be borne in mind when considering the findings from the responses.

2.   Member States seemed quite satisfied with the commitment of organizations of the United Nations system to reduce their environmental footprint. Five out of 11 respondents (45.45 per cent) were very satisfied, and 4 out of 11 (36.36 per cent) were partially satisfied. Only two Member States (or 18.18 per cent) did not seem satisfied. Most Member States (8 out of 11, or 72.73 per cent) accorded a high priority to actions taken by organizations to reduce their environmental footprint. They suggested that organizations could do more to communicate with Member States on their efforts in that respect.

3.   The responses on the adequacy of resources provided for the United Nations system to make itself environmentally sustainable and whether those were commensurate with the commitment to environmental sustainability were quite instructive. Most respondents suggested that, rather than looking at the quantity of resources, entities should demonstrate their commitment by according a high priority to mainstreaming environmental sustainability, making stronger efforts and putting in place effective results-based management measures. Additional financial resources are not necessarily the first, or the only, prerequisite for making the organizations environmentally sustainable. Currently, it is difficult to perceive organizations' commitment to environmental sustainability from their actions, as they relate to events, conferences, meetings, energy and water consumption, plastic, equipment and publicity.

4.   Member States identified the following five high priority areas for supporting the organizations' efforts to further reduce the United Nations system's environmental impact: plastic (8 out of 11, or 72.73 per cent); solar energy (8 out of 11, or 72.73 per cent); biodiversity (8 out of 11, or 72.73 per cent); renewable energy (7 out of 11, or 63.64 per cent), and waste (7 out of 11, or 63.64 per cent). Only 2 out of 11, or 18.18 per cent of respondents mentioned air travel, which seems at variance with the level of commitment expressed by Member States elsewhere. Similarly, only two Member States mentioned supporting the travel management function, while the other management functions selected by Member States were: facilities (7 out of 11), events (7 out of 11) and ICT (7 out of 11), equivalent to 63.64 per cent in each case.

5.   Member States identified sustainable procurement, the reduction of air travel emissions and the reduction of energy consumption as their highest priorities. Specifically, in the context of sustainable procurement, it was suggested that the United Nations system should scale up the purchasing of sustainable, low-carbon and fair-trade products in all its operations in order to reduce its negative socio-ecological impacts and drive markets towards sustainability. Eco-labelled products should be prioritized by the United Nations system, as they offer a guarantee of third-party-verified compliance with critical environmental or social requirements. The United Nations system should more thoroughly integrate the principles of circular economy into its public procurement actions and should enact mandatory procurement for a range of products, including energy-efficient ones. Likewise, the environmental footprint and the cost of travel were identified as key concerns. Another key concern was ensuring the highest attainable level of environmental sustainability for new construction projects. Other priorities, such as the banning of single-use plastic, were also mentioned among the high priorities. Member States expressed serious concern that organizations were not paying adequate attention to the need for sustainable consumption and production of materials. They considered that organizations produced too many printed

materials, books and pamphlets, which was unnecessary and unsustainable. They stressed the need for organizations to practise sustainable patterns of production and consumption.

6.   In the context of humanitarian and peacekeeping operations, from which a significant proportion of greenhouse gas emissions originates, many Member States called for adequate financing of environmental sustainability-related resources in order to achieve maximum efficiency in peacekeeping missions in the use of natural resources as well as allowing them to operate at minimum risk to people, societies and ecosystems. In the past three years, significant progress had been made in environmental mainstreaming through the application of the six-year environmental strategy. Nevertheless, the latest OIOS report had highlighted the need for missions to better oversee implementation of their mission-wide environmental action plans, including by further developing programmes to conserve and manage water resources and improve wastewater infrastructure and management. Improved guidance and support on environmental aspects when closing missions was also needed. Peacekeeping missions and humanitarian operations could consider the application and use of modern technologies in environmental mainstreaming more often. For longer-term sustainability purposes, and to ensure the best use of resources, it was essential for environmental sustainability efforts to be undertaken in humanitarian and peacekeeping operations as part of a wider approach to support the development of local capacity and systems for environmental management, in line with the nexus approach. Member States emphasized the importance of replacing diesel with renewable energy sources in United Nations field operations, namely peacekeeping, refugee camps and other humanitarian operations where renewables were almost invariably cheaper in a multi-year deployment. Similarly, they attached high importance to the management and disposal of waste in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

7.   As many Member States were concerned about costs, they were keen to frame environmentally sustainable and climate initiatives as cost-saving measures. Therefore, it would be good for the United Nations agencies to better articulate how they would save money in the long run through, inter alia, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources. The impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on United Nations operations and processes needs to be studied closely, with a view to determining how this could present an opportunity for the organizations to better mainstream environmental sustainability and inclusivity into their corporate management and workplans. Many Member States supported the ongoing efforts to manage and reduce the environmental footprint within the entire United Nations system, including through the strategies being implemented in this regard, as well as the development and roll-out of the global environmental management system. It is important to continue to closely monitor the related risk, performance and progress made in environmental management-related issues across the board and to submit detailed reports on the relevant aspects to the respective legislative organs and governing bodies for their consideration. Organizations should implement training programmes to encourage appropriate behavioural changes, raise awareness, cultivate pro-sustainability attitudes and encourage a willingness to engage in finding potential sustainable solutions.

Annex IX

Internal coordination structures

Type of internal coordination structure	Examples
A dedicated environmental unit is located in the office of the executive head	United Nations Secretariat
A dedicated environmental unit is split across several parts of the organization	The team in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (The Steering Group on Environmental Sustainability Management of the United Nations Secretariat)
	The Sustainability and Resilience Management Unit in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance is responsible for matters related to policy, strategy and compliance Secretariat-wide, while the Environment Section in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support is responsible for implementation at Headquarters and for guiding implementation of the environment strategy for peace operations by providing, inter alia, tools and support to the field missions. With the new management paradigm under the Secretary-General's management reform, each entity head is responsible for taking action related to environmental sustainability. All peace operations that manage their own facilities and infrastructure have dedicated environmental capacity, among which most peacekeeping missions have a dedicated environment unit.
	The WFP Environmental Policy is co-sponsored by the Environmental Sustainability Unit in the Management Services Division and the Climate and Disaster Risk Reduction Unit in the Programme Division.
	The ICAO environmental coordination structure is spread among the Air Transport Bureau, the Bureau of Administration and Services and the Technical Cooperation Bureau.
	In UNOPS headquarters, responsibility for internal environmental sustainability lies with the health, safety, social and environmental management team that coordinates the environmental management system and environmental initiatives for the whole organization.
	The WHO Department of Environment and Climate Health, with the support of the staff association and the Green Group, takes the lead in implementing environmental sustainability within WHO.
All departments are responsible for implementing an internal environmental sustainability policy	ILO
One or several focal points or sub-focal points are located in substantive or administrative units	UN-Women Administrative and Facilities Unit
	UNFPA Facilities and Administrative Services Branch
	ICAO Bureau of Administration and Services
	UNESCO Executive Office of the Sector for Administration and Management
There are complex internal systems composed of steering groups and management committees	The Steering Group on Environmental Sustainability Management of the United Nations Secretariat
	UNFPA Steering Committee

	ITU Environmental Management System Steering Committee
Authority over in-house environmental management is delegated to the field level	With the new management paradigm under the Secretary-General's management reform, the head of each entity and field office is responsible for taking action related to environmental sustainability and to the United Nations Secretariat Climate Action Plan. In practice, however, their responsibility varies depending on whether or not they are in charge of facilities. For example, departments and offices at headquarters do not control their facilities, which are managed centrally by the Department of Operational Support.
The sustainability programme and management are together under one bureau	UNDP
A coordination structure is under revision for the implementation of internal environmental policies	UN-Habitat and UNHCR Department of Operational Support and peace operations
A coordination structure is under discussion for the implementation of internal environmental policies	ITU
There is no official coordination structure for the implementation of internal environmental policies	UNCTAD, UNRWA, FAO and WMO

Annex X

Classification of soft recommendations

Relevant area of action	Soft recommendations
Organizational mandates	1. To this end, deliberations should be undertaken through relevant inter-agency platforms such as the CEB High-level Committee on Management to arrive at a common, system-wide conceptualization of environmental sustainability.
Strategy for sustainability management in the United Nations system 2020–2030	2. Data quality assurance processes and reporting mechanisms should be established or clarified to enhance organizational accountability; the data should be verified, validated and quality-checked before reporting, so as to ensure an accurate and reliable measurement of the system's environmental footprint against objectives of the respective environmental policies and of the Strategy.
	3. Entities should prioritize aspects (in the absence of a policy or strategy) for a whole-organization approach.
Role of other inter-agency mechanisms	4. The Environment Management Group should: adopt a co-chairing arrangement between UNEP and another agency (on a rotating basis) to allow for enhanced ownership; review the process of selection of its topics; include in its agenda for the regular meetings a standing item on system-wide coordination of environmental sustainability management; and continue the series of nexus dialogues to determine how organizations' mandates can be complementary so as to achieve system-wide environmental sustainability, especially on the humanitarian-environment nexus. These efforts should be aimed at determining realistic targets and establishing a common "language" between development and humanitarian agencies.
Strengthening the sharing of good practices within and among entities	5. The executive heads of United Nations system entities should instruct their representatives participating in inter-agency and intra-agency coordination mechanisms to: establish clear terms of reference for all such mechanisms addressing environmental sustainability management; periodically review and update the existing terms of reference for continued relevance; ensure that individuals nominated to serve on them are technically competent and familiar with the substantive and operational aspects; and ensure that meetings are held periodically and that summary records are prepared and circulated in a timely manner, identifying the entities responsible for implementing all action points in a timely manner and reporting back to the mechanism.
United Nations management and development system reform and the 2030 Agenda	6. As with the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women model, the executive director of UNEP should address communications annually to executive heads of other United Nations system organizations, to link responsibility for implementation of the Strategy to the leadership of the entity, inviting a response from the entity's executive head to address the challenges raised, and encourage the leadership to share the letter and its response with the respective legislative organs and governing bodies.
	7. The Strategy should be used to revise the template of the Greening the Blue report, aligning it with the Strategy and transparently publishing the individual and collective results achieved in relation to each performance indicator compared with performance from the previous years, using 2020 as a baseline.

	8. The report should be expanded by 2022 to indicate progress achieved by individual reporting entities on the implementation of the Strategy, using a standardized and comparable narrative, and by identifying the drivers of success and the challenges faced in making their operations environmentally sustainable.
Commitment of the leadership	9. The "tone at the top" from the executive heads and senior management should express, promote and demonstrate to staff and Members States their commitment to internal environmental sustainability, while taking responsibility for the implementation of the Strategy within their respective organizations.
Environmental management systems	10. Organizations of the United Nations system should adopt and implement environmental management systems internally at the facilities and operations level, while seeking system-wide coordination and guidance in doing so for greater progress towards environmental sustainability. To provide an accurate picture of investments made by the United Nations system in environmental performance and to avoid inflating the number of environmental management systems, adopting a strict definition of an environmental management system in Greening the Blue reports, starting in 2022, would be desirable.
Varied internal coordination models	11. Business process owners should be given enough authority to enable efficient internal coordination of management functions meant to contribute to reducing the environmental footprint of the organization. For this purpose, internal environmental coordination structures should be reviewed with a view to enhancing organization-wide accountability and coordination of results under the respective environmental policies and the Strategy.
Channelling the efforts of informal structures	12. Members of senior management should provide the necessary support and encourage "environmental sustainability groups" to continue coming up with suggestions and innovations to enhance environmental sustainability and should establish appropriate channels through which to consider these efforts and proposals.
Leveraging environmental conventions for the benefit of the entire United Nations system	13. The secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements and conventions should contribute to the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability in the United Nations organizations. Equally, the existing inter-agency mechanisms should enlist those secretariats to participate in and contribute to the collective efforts. With their expertise, they could help to study and assess the "real environmental impacts" of measures with potential negative impacts (such as a ban on plastics, the introduction of e-vehicles, a product to replace plastic bags, the environmental costs associated with batteries for e-vehicles, and energy sources for recharging e-vehicles) before their implementation.
The challenge of resource prioritization	14. A refined cost-benefit approach should be adopted for determining immediate investment needs for returns on investments with a longer time-horizon, not necessarily in the same budget cycle, including better costing of dealing with harm done to the environment as a moral obligation to future generations.
Thematic environmental impacts: biodiversity and climate neutrality	15. The second phase of the Strategy for sustainability management in the United Nations system (hereinafter "the Strategy") should use and follow up on the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services developed by the related inter-governmental panel in 2019 to integrate the concept of biodiversity more robustly into the Strategy.
	16. The United Nations system should follow the CEB advice to use certified emission reductions and the United Nations Platform for Voluntary Cancellation of Certified Emission Reduction Units,

	especially agencies with low annual greenhouse gas emissions and costs of certified emission reductions within the low-value procurement scope, and should mitigate budgeting challenges by using a central source of funding or cost-recovery measures.
	17. If the United Nations is to meet its climate targets and reduce its impact on climate change, it needs a significant and concerted transition in its energy sources.
Risk management: risk assessment and mitigation	18. The independent oversight offices of the United Nations system should review whether measures adopted by the offices of executive heads to manage risks relating to environmental sustainability management are in place and are adequate and effective, and should develop tools for analysing environmental harm.
Procurement	19. Several interviewees suggested: modifying the procurement rules and procedures by adding criteria in the tenders and requests for proposals to recognize environmentally sustainable manufacturing practices (such as using lower quantities of plastic, having systems of recycling in place and using recycled cardboard) with a higher number of points in the technical assessment; shifting the short-term cost focus to a long-term one, using sustainable procurement options as the baseline from which to select the least expensive option; prioritizing sustainable options in clearly articulated and straightforward ways; and moving away from "old habits" (such as the use of diesel-only generators, fossil fuels and old aircrafts in emergency contexts) and conservative approaches by undertaking market intelligence on sustainable procurement, providing better access to such vendors and adopting innovative practices.
	20. The United Nations system should re-examine the existing procurement processes in terms of sustainability and cost-benefit. The concept of mutual recognition should be used to benefit from contracts of other entities, should these prove to be more "sustainable", particularly in the field. The United States system should also include environmentally sustainable standards for specific operations and goods (such as supplies brought by military contingents of troop-contributing countries for peacekeeping operations) and document any objection to these standards so as to track progress towards sustainable procurement.
	21. The security and environmental benefits should be demonstrated to make the case for sustainable procurement.
	22. A cost-efficiency analysis of the total life cycle of specific goods should be conducted. For example, solar panels have become cheaper, and, despite the initial maintenance being costly, the additional costs will balance out over time. The United Nations system should more thoroughly integrate the principles of circular economy in its public procurement actions and should enact mandatory procurement for a range of products, including energy-efficient ones.
	23. Spot checks of potential suppliers should be carried out. Eco-labelled products should be prioritized by the United Nations system, as they offer guarantees of third-party-verified compliance with critical environmental requirements.
	24. The responsibilities and accountability lines between requisitioners and procurement functions should be clarified in the procurement manuals, so as to mainstream environmental sustainability criteria in procurement actions.
	25. The procurement divisions of the United Nations entities should adopt a proactive stance and, in particular, implement the Sustainable Procurement Guidelines for United Nations Cafeterias, Food and

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	Kitchen Equipment developed by the Sustainable United Nations facility to promote sustainable catering services and meal options.
Human resources and learning	26. The values and competencies frameworks should be elaborated to pay greater attention to environmental sustainability, allow for training in and testing of environmental sustainability awareness, and enable a preference for those with such awareness, all other competencies and technical skills being equal. The human resources functions should report on the indicators contained in the Strategy, including on recruitment statistics on the capacity of staff to understand and implement environmental management. Under the High-level Committee on Management's "new way of working", sustainability issues should be incorporated and competency frameworks adjusted to reflect the skill sets and competencies required for United Nations staff to operate in ways consistent with the 2030 Agenda.
	27. The organizations of the United Nations system should include environmental sustainability in senior managers' performance systems (developing environmental sustainability goals for their functions) or "compacts". The human resources functions should review the performance management systems to consider the human element of performance and indicators for measuring staff's sensitivity to environmental sustainability.
	28. Environmental sustainability as a core value should be part of the United Nations system's common culture. Entities should equip their staff with minimum mandatory knowledge and relevant technical skill sets (such as environmental auditing and sustainable procurement). The Greening the Blue tutorial could be adapted to fit specific contexts (such as the humanitarian and peacekeeping contexts) and to enable reporting on the indicators contained in the Strategy. The human resources functions should collectively tap into the ILO efforts on the "Future of Work" to support a sustainable future.
	29. All human resources functions should fully embrace modern technologies to ensure paper-smart and sustainable processes, using e-signatures, online platforms and videoconferencing, and should abandon the outdated practices of using paper signatures and of requiring candidates to travel for interviews, among others.
	30. The human resources offices should develop and implement a common, system-wide, mandatory specialized training module on incorporating environmental sustainability considerations into their internal management functional areas, targeting, but not limited to, staff that deal on a regular basis with procurement, human resources, facilities and infrastructure, events and conferences, ICT services, travel, budget and finance, public information and communication, training and organizational learning.
Facilities management	31. The organizations should consider replicating in their endeavours the good practices identified involving the construction of new buildings or the renting of new premises, with the aim of being more environmentally sustainable. In particular, investments should be made in passive design strategies (involving orientation, glazing, material selection, thermal mass, shading, the stack effect, insulation and landscaping for shading).
	32. The organizations of the United Nations system should review, individually and through the relevant inter-agency mechanisms, and consider expanding the calculation of greenhouse gas emissions to include scope 3 emissions, while taking necessary precautions to avoid double counting, and with the inclusion of staff members' personal

	vehicles in greenhouse gas emissions calculations. The executive heads of the organizations should turn the inventory of greenhouse gas emissions into a useful database with accountability lines for emissions reduction, and organizations of the United Nations system should utilize greenhouse gas emissions data from facilities for effecting policy changes.
	33. With the help of the Sustainable United Nations facility, a mechanism should be developed for replicating and scaling up existing good practices in the field (e.g., by using the Internet of Things for energy monitoring) and templates for environmentally sustainable leases advanced by the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office.
	34. Similarly, support from the host country governments, building owners, facilities private contractors and commercial service providers to whom services have been outsourced should be sought and enlisted to facilitate environmentally sustainable solutions, where feasible.
	35. These good practices relating to environmental sustainability should be embedded in standard operating procedures wherever common premises are similarly in operation.
	36. The planning and design stages of common premises should prioritize environmental sustainability. In addition, United Nations country teams may need more central guidance on how to consider environmental sustainability facets of common premises projects.
	37. The assessment of and transparent reporting on compliance for peacekeeping missions could be strengthened further. In addition, bridges should be built between peacekeeping and development contexts.
	38. There is a gap in the understanding of environmental sustainability in humanitarian contexts. An understanding of the implications of "causing no environmental harm", a methodology to determine whether entities are causing any harm, and an operating model (covering, for example, ways in which goods and people are flown in) are all to be advocated.
	39. The humanitarian operations of the United Nations system should move away from fuel generators, using the experience of entities that have already done so (for example, the ICRC Energy Challenge programme is intended to reduce dependence on fossil fuels).
	40. Organizations of the United Nations system should draw inspiration from the approach of ICRC to managing its environmental footprint.
	41. In the context of shrinking office spaces, the increase in health-based risks caused by hot-desking and open spaces, and the need to reduce the United Nations system's environmental footprint, the facilities and infrastructure management function should work with the human resources function to offer greater flexibility with regard to staff members' physical presence in offices, while ensuring that, in the process, emissions are not transferred from office spaces to private homes.
Travel management	42. The recommendations contained in the JIU review of air travel policies in the United Nations system, in particular recommendations 1 and 2 on official and business travel, are reiterated, whereby executive heads of organizations of the United Nations system should implement measures such as enforcing annual travel-capping by management function and

	encouraging a levy on travel as a funding mechanism to finance environmentally sustainable activities.
	43. The domain of travel funded by United Nations entities should be reviewed, with the objective of developing and putting in place a policy that accords primacy to its implications for the environmental footprint, and the health and well-being of staff.
Events and conference management	44. The Inspector encourages other organizations of the United Nations system to follow the remarkable example set by WIPO in going completely "paperless" and to set their own targets and timelines for implementing this change.
	45. The conference management services should make all meetings environmentally sustainable regardless of the number of participants.
	46. The agreement concluded with an entity for organizing the event should contain unambiguous provisions on environmental sustainability and accountability, and the conference management services should engage with the procurement services to provide support locally with environmentally sustainable options.
	47. The conference management services should implement the "green meeting guide" and invest in new technologies such as mobile applications and remote conferencing to make events and conferences environmentally sustainable.
ICT management	48. Other entities of the system should also incorporate environmental sustainability considerations into their ICT strategies and promote and use ICT services as instruments for environmental protection and the sustainable use of natural resources.
	49. Donation practices should be revisited to ensure that the United Nations organizations are not seen as withdrawing from their responsibility to handle e-waste, that the system-wide guidance on e-waste is implemented, and that the effectiveness and credibility of take-back and e-waste management schemes handled by third parties are monitored on a regular basis.
	50. The relevant inter-agency mechanism should task the United Nations Group on the Information Society, chaired by UNCTAD, with contributions from other relevant agencies including WMO and UNEP as facilitators of the World Summit on the Information Society action line on e-environment, with submitting, by the end of 2022, a report on measures to monitor the United Nations system's digitalization and specific, actionable recommendations for further improvements, using relevant outcomes from the Group's Dialogue on the Role of Digitalization in the Decade of Action.
Finance and budget: investment and banking management	51. Systems that can track allocations and expenditures for environmental sustainability should be adopted to enable the United Nations entities to report, when called upon to do so, on funds devoted to and spent on promoting environmental sustainability.
	52. The United Nations system should lead by example, while considering cost-benefit analysis templates for the preparation of business cases spanning several budgetary cycles as needed, in order to estimate the expected long-term returns compared to initial environmentally sustainable investments. Finance and budget services should advise on and provide support for setting up adequate monitoring, reporting and enterprise resource planning systems to demonstrate that projected savings from incorporating environmental sustainability considerations into internal management functions and processes are realized.

	53. United Nations entities should develop investment policies that call for divesting from financial instruments that are not environmentally sustainable.
Public information and communication	54. Staff members should individually reflect on their footprint and ways of reducing it. The public information and communication services messaging should support and promote environmentally sustainable behaviours inside and outside the office premises.
Partnership	55. System-wide efforts, including through the relevant inter-agency coordination mechanisms, to enhance consistent implementation of due diligence processes regarding potential environmental harm caused by United Nations entities should continue. United Nations entities should reflect specific partnerships in their action plans; for example, UNHCR is able to mobilize both expertise and funds for taking action on the sustainability agenda.

Annex XI

Perceived usefulness of other inter-agency mechanisms (number of organizations)
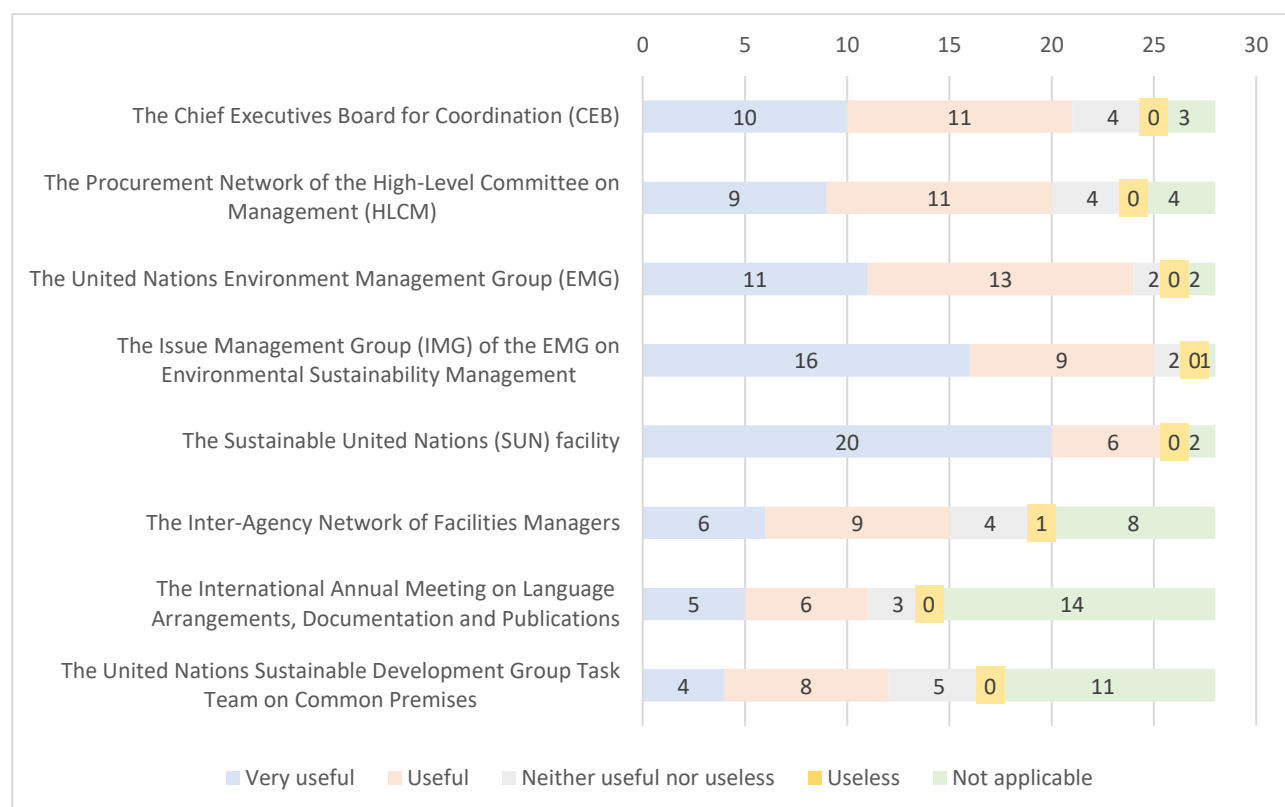
Note: As no one responded "very useless" to any of the questions, this category is not represented in the figure, so as to avoid confusion.

Annex XII

Overview of actions to be taken by participating organizations on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit

Report	Intended impact	CEB	United Nations	UNAIDS	UNCTAD	ITC	UNDP	UNEP	UNFPA	UN-Habitat	UNHCR	UNICEF	UNODC	UNOPS	UNRWA	UN-Women	WFP	FAO	IAEA	ICAO	ILO	IMO	ITU	UNESCO	UNIDO	UNWTO	UPU	WHO	WIPO	WMO
For action		☐	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒
For information		☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Recommendation 1	f	▨		E	▨	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Recommendation 2	f	▨	L	L	▨	L	L	L	L	L	▨	L	▨	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
Recommendation 3	a	▨	E	E	▨	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Recommendation 4	a	▨	E	E	▨	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Recommendation 5	c	▨	E	E	▨	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Recommendation 6	h	▨	E	E	▨	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Recommendation 7	d	▨	E	E	E	E	▨	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Recommendation 8	f	▨	E	E	E	E		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Recommendation 9	h	▨	E	E	▨	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Recommendation 10	f	▨	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E

Legend:

L: Recommendation for decision by legislative organ

E: Recommendation for action by executive head

▨ **:** Recommendation does not require action by this organization

Intended impact: a: enhanced transparency and accountability **b:** dissemination of good/best practices **c:** enhanced coordination and cooperation **d:** strengthened coherence and harmonization **e:** enhanced control and compliance **f:** enhanced effectiveness **g:** significant financial savings **h:** enhanced efficiency **i:** other.