



**Annual meeting of the Environment Management Group
Hosted by the World Health Organization at its Headquarters
Geneva, 8 October 2007
9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.**

Climate-neutral UN

Progress report by the EMG Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. Following the meetings in 2006 and 2007 of the UN Secretary-General's Policy Committee, requests were made to the Environment Management Group (EMG) to take a leading role in greening the UN and making the UN climate-neutral.
2. On 5 June 2007, the Secretary-General announced his commitment to lead by example on these issues. In letters dated 9 July 2007, the Secretary-General wrote to the executive heads of UN agencies, funds and programmes restating his pledge to make in-house practices more climate-friendly and environmentally sustainable and to develop an outstanding, climate-neutral approach for the Organization's premises and operations. He invited heads to join him and make common cause in this effort, affirming that a climate-neutral United Nations system will increase public awareness about the need for more sustainable patterns of consumption, and demonstrate that the United Nations is taking steps to practice what it preaches.

II. Action taken by the EMG

3. The EMG constituted an open-ended Issue-Management Group (IMG) on a climate-neutral UN, which met from 25-27 June 2007, in Washington, D.C. An IMG on sustainable procurement also met during this period. The former meeting requested the EMG to prepare a draft statement by the Secretary-General and the executive heads of the organizations of the UN system on a climate-neutral UN, as well as a background strategy paper to support the draft statement.
4. Document EMG/AM.07/05 contains draft text for a political commitment to be made by the executive heads of agencies in response to the initiative of the Secretary-General.



5. The strategy paper (document EMG/AM.07/06) provides analytical support for the above statement. It also develops a common approach for the UN system on climate neutrality. Adopting a common approach brings the advantages of consistent and comparable data, credibility through shared high environmental standards, lowered transaction costs, the pooling of expertise, as well as the use of agreed minimum coverage for the greenhouse gas inventory and agreed criteria to ensure that only high-quality offsets are purchased.
6. The text contained in these two documents has been prepared through six successive rounds of consultations with an open-ended group of interested UN organizations, and reflects consensus.
7. A draft version of the documents was also submitted to the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) and the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination at their meetings in New York, 20-21 September 2007, and the views expressed at those meetings were taken into account in preparing the final version. In particular, the concern expressed by the HLCM that no commitment on reaching climate neutrality can be made until each organization assesses the financial and budgetary implications resulted in substantial changes to the text.
8. In addition to these documents, initial, first-order estimates of greenhouse gas emissions' inventories have been prepared for those EMG member organizations that were in a position to provide their data, contained in document EMG/AM.07/07. These inventories provide an indication of the organizations' greenhouse gas footprints, and consequently the potential costs of offsetting these emissions and becoming climate-neutral.

III. Recommended action by the Environment Management Group

9. The Environment Management Group may wish to:
 - a) adopt the strategy on a climate-neutral UN in document EMG/AM.07/06, and forward it to relevant colleagues in each agency to serve as a basis for further work in moving towards a climate-neutral UN;
 - b) adopt the draft statement in document EMG/AM.07/05 and advise the heads of each agency to agree to its adoption at the October session of the CEB;
 - c) request the Chair of the EMG to transmit these documents to the CEB for consideration at its meeting on 26 October 2007, including adopting the draft statement contained in document EMG/AM.07/05.
