

# Promoting Sustainability at the SDG Summit

## A Guidance Note

- Integrating sustainable development in all aspects of the work of the United Nations and promoting efforts to reduce the UN's carbon footprint with the ambitious goal to make the United Nations a climate neutral organization is a priority of the Secretary-General.
- The UN is taking concrete steps to minimize its environmental impact and actively promotes sustainability measures.
- All participants in the SDG Summit and the events of the GA high-level week are encouraged to contribute to those sustainability efforts.
- Environmental impact will arise in the form of GHG emissions, water usage and waste from participants travel, materials consumption and transportation and resource use.
- This note seeks to outline the UN's commitment to sustainability measures and help participants in the SDG Summit and the events of the GA high-level week to contribute towards sustainability and the conservation of resources.
- More information is available at: <http://greeningtheblue.org/unhq>
- Further questions regarding sustainability measures can be directed to [Greeningunhq@un.org](mailto:Greeningunhq@un.org).

### Waste Management



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

### Food and Beverage



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

## Paper Consumption



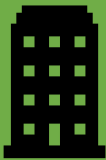
- Participants are urged to use portable devices as the main way to access documentation, including the daily *Journal of the United Nations*, to limit demand for printed materials and reduce paper consumption.
- A limited number of hard copies of documents will be available at the documents distribution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

## Transportation



- Transportation generally has the highest carbon footprint for conferences.
- Participants are urged to identify and minimize GHG emissions relating to their travel and participation in meeting activities.
  - This could be done by limiting delegation size to necessary participants, taking the most direct travel route to New York, minimizing layovers, opting for economy-class and trying to pack lightly to reduce your emissions.
- If long-distance travel is unavoidable, participants could consider offsetting greenhouse gas emissions through reduction measures elsewhere: <https://offset.climateutralnow.org/> This allows acceleration of global GHG emission reductions and sustainable development.
- In New York City, public transportation is one of the best ways to get around.

## Accommodation



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

### GREENING THE BLUE

The UNEP/Sustainable United Nations (Sustainable UN) facility and the Greening the Blue campaign were established in 2008 with the aim to coordinate and monitor United Nations' system internal environmental performance towards achieving climate neutrality and environmental sustainability. Areas of work relate to corporate reporting, environmental management systems, waste management, sustainable facilities, supply chain, communications and also sustainable events. With the help of ICAO for the calculations of air travel emissions and UNFCCC for the offsets, UNEP assists UN organizations in greening their events, calculating their footprint and offsetting unavoidable emissions. For more information on sustainable events:

<http://www.greeningtheblue.org/resources/meetings>