



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 38TH SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 17: Environmental Protection

UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE NEUTRAL INITIATIVE

(Presented by the Council of ICAO)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2007, the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General launched the Climate Neutral UN (CNUN) initiative, with a view to minimizing the UN System's carbon footprint. This initiative was subsequently endorsed by the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB).

In June 2012, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, referred to as the Rio+20 Conference) also urged UN organizations to undertake further action to promote both sustainability and cost efficiency in the management of facilities and operations, and to strengthen the efforts underway both at the individual organization and UN system levels.

ICAO has made progress towards the implementation of the CNUN initiative and sustainability management, and has provided significant support to the UN interagency groups coordinating these initiatives.

The ICAO Carbon Emissions Calculator, endorsed as the CNUN official calculation tool, continued to be used to estimate the air travel portion of the UN greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory. The ICAO Secretariat estimated its carbon footprint and annually updated its inventory. In order to prepare a strategy to reduce GHG emissions, a Task Force on Carbon Neutrality, comprised of representatives from different ICAO Secretariat offices, was established to develop the Emission Reduction Plan (ERP) for the Organization. The ERP builds upon the best practices in place in order to accelerate these efforts and improve the environmental management of ICAO in areas such as paper consumption, recycling, utilization of office space and related energy resources, official staff travel procedures, information technology platform tools, and sustainable procurement.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) request Council to continue to cooperate with the UN interagency groups dealing with sustainability management and to maintain its leadership by developing methods and updating tools for quantifying aviation's GHG emissions with respect to the CNUN initiative; and
- b) request Council to further develop and implement the strategy for reducing GHG emissions and enhancing sustainability management practices within the Organization, in a manner consistent with the overall policy of the UN System.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objective C – Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development of Air Transport.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	The greenhouse gas emissions reduction plan of the Organization will determine the level of additional resources required.
<i>References:</i>	

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The goal of moving the United Nations (UN) towards climate neutrality¹ was first made public in June 2007 by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Later that year, the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) approved the Climate Neutral UN (CNUN) initiative. The CNUN initiative commits heads of UN organizations to estimate the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of their organizations, undertake efforts to reduce GHG emissions to the greatest extent possible, analyze cost implications and explore budgetary modalities of purchasing carbon offsets in order to achieve carbon neutrality.

1.2 Since 2007, the work of implementing the CNUN strategy has been undertaken by the Issue Management Group (IMG) on environmental sustainability management of the UN system, which is composed of focal points of UN organizations and supported by the Sustainable United Nations (SUN) facility of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The IMG reports to the UN Environmental Management Group (EMG)

1.3 In June 2012, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, also referred to as Rio+20 Conference)² commended UN agencies for their work to date, and urged them to undertake further action to promote both sustainability and cost efficiency in the management of facilities and operations, and to strengthen the efforts underway both at the individual organization and UN system levels.

2. ICAO SUPPORT TO THE CNUN INITIATIVE

2.1 The third annual GHG inventory report for the UN system, “*Moving towards a climate neutral UN –The UN system’s footprint and efforts to reduce it*” was published in 2012. The report included the inventories and GHG emissions reduction efforts of 54 UN organizations. The ICAO Carbon Emissions Calculator continued to be used as the official tool to estimate the air travel portion of the UN GHG emissions inventory. The computed data shows that the footprint of the UN system in 2010 was 1.7 million tons CO₂ eq. and that air travel accounts for half of the UN system’s total emissions.

2.2 The ICAO Carbon Emissions Calculator Methodology applies the best publicly available data to account for various factors such as aircraft types, route specific data, passenger load factors and cargo carried. These factors have been updated on a yearly basis by ICAO and a new interface for the calculator was provided to the UN system organizations, together with specific training and technical assistance.

2.3 ICAO’s support to the UN system has been further extended through the development of the ICAO Green Meetings Calculator (IGMC)³, a tool designed to support decision-making in reducing the carbon emissions from air travel to attend meetings. The IGMC generates an optimal location for a meeting in terms of CO₂ emissions from air travel, taking into consideration the city of origin and the number of participants. While many factors may affect the decision on where a meeting should be held, the IGMC helps facilitate the planning process. The UN IMG on Sustainability has adopted this tool for planning its meetings. Furthermore, ICAO developed and launched the first applications for iOS (Apple) and Android devices of its Carbon Emissions Calculator and the IGMC.

¹ Climate neutrality is used to denote an entity or organization which gives a zero net contribution of GHG emissions.

² The Rio+20 outcome document - The Future We Want, paragraph 96: “We call on the UN system to improve the management of facilities and operations, by taking into account sustainable development practices, building on existing efforts and promoting cost effectiveness”.

³ Available to the UN organizations on the ICAO public website.

2.4 ICAO participated in the meetings of the EMG and IMG of the UN system, and continued to provide support to UN organizations in the development of tools for the preparation of aviation-related GHG emission inventories and guidelines⁴ on sustainability management. For example, ICAO cooperates with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) on the UNOPS GHG calculator for infrastructure projects that will be used to map the design-stage building projects related emissions. The UNOPS Calculator will account for, among other elements, emissions from air travel of project participants.

2.5 In addition, ICAO provided the IMG with articles on its activities on sustainability management that were published on the Greening the Blue website. This new common web-based platform was established for internal and external communications on climate neutrality and sustainability management in the UN and receives an average of 13 000 visits a month.

3. PROGRESS WITHIN ICAO

3.1 ICAO updated its carbon inventory by estimating the Secretariat's carbon footprint using the UNEP GHG emissions calculator and the ICAO Carbon Emissions Calculator. The total ICAO carbon footprint in 2012 was approximately 6 000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions, with staff air travel accounting for 40 per cent and energy accounting for 54 per cent⁵. The ICAO per capita GHG emissions were 8.5 tCO₂/staff, in line with the UN average of 8.2 tCO₂/staff.

3.2 Substantial work was also carried out in the preparation of an Emission Reduction Plan (ERP) in order to provide the Organization with an important tool to implement a strategy for reducing its GHG emissions and enhancing in-house sustainability management practices, both at Headquarters and Regional Offices.

3.3 As the preparation of the ERP involved various aspects of ICAO operations (infrastructural improvements, changes in ICAO policies, use of videoconferences, travelling, sustainable procurement, training of ICAO staff and communication), a Task Force on Climate Neutrality was established, comprised of representatives from ICAO's Administration Bureau, Environment Branch, Finance Branch, Evaluation and Internal Audit Office, Procurement Office, Regional Offices and Staff Association.

3.4 In parallel to the work of the Task Force on Climate Neutrality, ICAO has recently adopted a number of measures across the Organization that will generate financial savings, while contributing to efforts to lower the Organization's carbon emissions. These efforts include the adoption of measures to achieve a paperless environment, such as the implementation of an integrated print-on-demand (and reprint-on demand) system, which thus far has reduced the inventory of printed documents by 65 per cent, and the establishment of a "paperless" process to distribute documents to ICAO bodies, which has resulted in a 90 per cent reduction in the reproduction and distribution of documentation. In addition, office space has been reallocated to maximize efficiency, reduce energy consumption and improve access to natural light, and a policy to procure office furnishings made of recycled materials has also been implemented.

⁴ such as the SUN/UNEP reports "Sustainable Procurement Guidelines for Freight Forwarding" and "Sustainable Events Guide".

⁵ Vehicles, refrigerants and optional emissions account for the remaining 6 per cent.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The UN system is strongly committed to leading by example on sustainability management and ensuring that its operations are continuously monitored and improved through the CNUN initiative.

4.2 Following the acceptance of the ICAO Carbon Emissions Calculator by the EMG as the official tool for computing carbon dioxide emissions from air travel, ICAO has provided significant support to the CNUN initiative. As air travel is one of the largest sources of GHG emissions from the UN System, continued cooperation between ICAO and UN sister organizations is of critical importance to maintain ICAO's leadership role in the field of aviation and environmental protection.

4.3 ICAO has also continued to work to measure and reduce its own climate footprint and made progress towards the implementation of the CNUN initiative internally, at Headquarters and Regional Offices. Through formalized policies regarding its operations described in the ICAO ERP, the Organization will continue to work to further reduce its environmental impact and improve sustainability management.

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