



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 37TH SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 17: Environmental protection

UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE NEUTRAL INITIATIVE

(Presented by the Council of ICAO)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 5 June 2007 the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General launched the Climate Neutral UN (CNUN) initiative, aiming to minimize the UN System's carbon footprint and ultimately make it climate neutral. This initiative was endorsed by the UN System Chief Executive Board (CEB) through a Statement shown in Appendix. The full range of UN System institutions, including the UN Secretariat, regional economic commissions, specialized agencies, funds and programmes, are taking action towards monitoring, reducing and ultimately offsetting their respective greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

ICAO has made some progress towards the implementation of the CNUN initiative, both at its Headquarters and at Regional Offices and has provided significant support to the CNUN initiative. For instance, the UN GHG inventory uses a common methodology developed by ICAO for calculating GHG emissions from air travel on official missions. As air travel is the largest source of GHG emissions from the UN System (roughly half of the emissions produced), cooperation between ICAO and the other UN organizations involved in the CNUN initiative is of fundamental importance.

Each UN organization is requested to produce an Emission Reduction Plan (ERP) for 2011-2013. A summary report of all ERPs will be presented at COP16 in December 2010. The preparation and adoption of an ERP this year is therefore of critical importance to ICAO as it will provide the Organization with an important tool to implement a strategy for reducing its GHG emissions and enhancing in-house sustainability management practices. Although the CNUN initiative may be partly funded by costs saving from energy efficiency and other mitigation measures, as ICAO's ERP is still under development, ICAO has not made any allocation in its next 2011-2013 triennial budget to the implementation of the CNUN initiative.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) request Council to continue to cooperate with the CNUN initiative and to remain at the forefront of developing methods and 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 in-house sustainability management practices, including the ERP for 2011-2013 in line with the overall policy of the UN.

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| <i>Strategic Objectives:</i> | This working paper relates to Strategic Objective C, <i>Environmental Protection - Minimize the adverse effect of global civil aviation on the environment.</i> |
| <i>Financial implications:</i> | Additional work related to the UN Climate Neutral Initiative will be accommodated by the Regular Programme budget or through voluntary contributions. |
| <i>References:</i> | A37-WP/27, <i>Developments in Other United Nations Bodies</i> ICAO Environmental Report, <i>Chapter 8</i> |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 “Climate neutrality” is a term that is used to denote that an entity (organization) has a zero net contribution of GHG to the atmosphere. This involves activities directly controlled by the organization, such as travel, purchasing of goods and services, and the daily activity of staff. An assessment of climate neutrality considers the full set of GHG included in the Kyoto protocol (CO₂, CH₄, SF₆, N₂O, HFCs and PFCs). Climate neutrality can be achieved by improving the way in which an organization operates (e.g. through modified procurement considerations), by improving the efficiency of functions (e.g. communications and meetings), and by operating equipment efficiently (e.g. vehicle fleets and buildings). Climate neutrality also recognizes offsetting as an option of last resort to achieve a zero net GHG contribution.

1.2 On 5 June 2007, World Environment Day, the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) announced his plans to make the UN offices climate neutral and environmentally sustainable, demonstrating that the UN System can “lead by example” in addressing a global challenge such as climate change.

1.3 In October 2007, the CEB endorsed a Statement (Appendix) on moving towards a climate neutral UN, in which it was agreed that the heads of UN agencies funds and programmes would estimate their GHG emissions, undertake efforts to reduce their GHG footprint to the extent possible, and analyze the cost implications and budgetary modalities of purchasing carbon offsets, with the aim of eventually reaching climate neutrality.

2. PROGRESS WITHIN THE UN

2.1 Following the CEB Statement, the UNSG requested the Environmental Management Group (EMG), a UN system-wide coordination body, to take a leading role in “greening” the UN. In response, the EMG, chaired by the Executive Director of UNEP, constituted the Issue Management Group (IMG) on the CNUN initiative and reconvened the IMG on Sustainable Procurement (SP) that was established in 2004.

2.2 Reporting on the progress of the CNUN initiative, the EMG published and distributed its first report, “Moving Towards a Climate Neutral UN: The UN System’s Footprint and Efforts to Reduce It”¹ at COP15. The document reports that the majority of UN System organizations have designated Climate Neutral Focal Points (CNFPs) and established internal Task Forces to address climate neutrality within their organizations. Several UN System organizations are committed to substantial emissions reductions and are implementing measures to reduce emissions from their facilities and travel. Some agencies are updating their Enterprise Resource Management (ERM) systems in order to include features that facilitate the collection of GHG data. In 2009, five² UN System organizations declared themselves climate-neutral or carbon-neutral. An additional six³ organizations have made specific high-profile events climate neutral. Some organizations have established budget lines to implement the CNUN Strategy⁴.

2.3 The report “Environmental Profile of the United Nations System Organizations”⁵ from the UN Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) recommends to the Executive Heads of the UN System organizations the adoption of management practices typical of an Environmental Management System (EMS). It also contains specific recommendations to the UN General Assembly and to the UNSG on reporting progress

¹ The full report is available through the ICAO website at: http://www.icao.int/icao/en/env/CNUN_report_09.pdf

² GEF; SBC; SCBD; UNEP; IFC; World Bank Group.

³ FAO; ILO; UNDP; UNECE; UN/ISDR; UN Secretariat.

⁴ The CNUN Strategy can be found through the ICAO website at: <http://www.icao.int/icao/en/env/UNClimateNeutralStrategy.pdf>

⁵ JIU/REP/2010/1 can be found on the ICAO website at: <http://www.icao.int/icao/en/env/UN-JointInspectionUnit-Rep2010-1.pdf>

on the CNUN initiative. Before drafting their report, JIU inspectors visited various UN organizations, including ICAO Headquarters on 6 November, 2009.

3. PROGRESS WITHIN ICAO

3.1 ICAO has made some progress toward climate neutrality and has provided significant support to the entire UN System. This work has been carried out by the Environment (ENV) Branch. Key accomplishments since the last Assembly include:

- a) appointing a Climate Neutral Focal Point (CNFP) for the Organization;
- b) participating in meetings organized by UN EMG and IMG;
- c) updating the Council on the progress of the CNUN initiative;
- d) developing the impartial and peer-reviewed ICAO Carbon Emissions Calculator and customizing its interface for use UN-wide;
- e) estimating Secretariat GHG emissions consistent with IMG recommendations and accepted international standards (ISO 14064 and Greenhouse Gas Protocol); and
- f) undertaking communication activities on climate change and environmental sustainability.

3.2 For almost every UN body, the emissions from air travel represent the single largest portion of their emissions inventory, which underscores the need to estimate them accurately. The ICAO Carbon Emissions Calculator estimates the carbon dioxide emissions (CO₂) from air travel for use in offset programmes. The methodology used by the calculator applies the best publicly available industry data to account for various factors such as aircraft types, route specific data, passenger load factors and cargo carried. Training was provided by ICAO to 40 UN agencies on the use of the tailored interface to the calculator.

3.3 In April 2009, the EMG endorsed the ICAO Carbon Emissions Calculator as the official tool to compute CO₂ emissions from air travel. This endorsement was of critical importance to ICAO and to the UN as a whole, as it reaffirmed ICAO's leadership as the specialized agency for civil aviation, while for the UN system, it provides a means of generating emissions inventories from air travel in a consistent manner.

3.4 As UN organizations continue to plan for their future emissions inventories and are seeking the best technical solutions to facilitate the yearly report of their GHG emissions, the IMG on climate neutrality is suggesting to Member organizations that the ICAO Carbon Emissions Calculator be integrated directly into their travel reservation systems and some UN organizations have already taken important steps in this direction. This integration will allow those organizations to record the carbon footprint at the time of booking their travel, thus improving the data collection and reporting process.

3.5 The IPCC special report *Aviation and the Global Atmosphere* and the *Fourth Assessment Report* noted that there are climate effects from aviation through emissions other than CO₂. Given the lack of scientific consensus on such climate change effects and the lack of policy on the timescale or metric to be used when accounting for those emissions, the EMG has provisionally decided to take into account only CO₂ emissions from aviation. The EMG is encouraging ICAO and UNEP to convene a

meeting of experts as a priority, to consider an appropriate metric to account for all greenhouse gas effects from aviation. Whenever determined, this will have to be taken into consideration in further development of the ICAO Carbon Emissions Calculator.

4. NEAR-TERM NEXT STEPS

4.1 Following the CEB Statement, the IMG on Climate Neutrality agreed that each UN organization prepare a publicly available Emission Reduction Plan (ERP) for 2011-2013, a summary report on all of which will be presented at COP16 in December 2010.

4.2 As the preparation of the ERP involves various aspects of ICAO operations (such as infrastructural improvements, staff policies, travel and use of videoconferences, sustainable procurement, training of staff and communications), a Task Force on Carbon Neutrality has been established within ICAO, which comprises representatives from different ICAO offices. Members of this Task Force will contribute, in coordination with the ENV Branch, to the preparation of the ICAO ERP.

4.3 ICAO is committed to the continuous improvement of its Carbon Emissions Calculator. The Secretariat will work closely with members of the EMG to understand their needs and to ensure that accurate and complete inventories of CO₂ emissions from aviation are generated throughout the UN System. Furthermore, ICAO will continue to improve the fidelity of the Calculator through a transition to more detailed sources of modelled aircraft performance data and ultimately to the integration of measured fuel consumption information.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 ICAO's ERP is still under development, and no estimates or allocations in its next 2011-2013 triennial budget have been made towards the reduction or offsetting of its in-house CO₂ emissions. It is expected that cost savings from energy efficiency and other mitigation measures may generate part of the financial resources needed to implement the CNUN initiative within ICAO. The funding of remaining costs will need to be further discussed by the Council.

5.2 ICAO will benefit from reducing its carbon footprint and improving its operational sustainability through: reduced exposure to increases in energy costs and to future carbon prices and regulations, improved management, control and performance of operations, and a reduced environmental impact. In addition, the achievements reached by ICAO "greening" its activities can be used to demonstrate that the Organization can "lead by example" and to strengthen its negotiating position on environmental issues.

APPENDIX

CEB/2007/2 - ANNEX II

Statement of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB)

Moving towards a climate-neutral UN

Having taken note of the report “Strategy for a climate-neutral UN” prepared by the Environment Management Group;

Conscious of the need for our broader engagement to integrate the principles of sustainable development into our daily work routines and activities;

Recognizing that “leading by example” will contribute to the UN's ability to better support developing countries – those most vulnerable to climate change;

Commending efforts by those who have already taken initiatives to offset their emissions before the adoption of this common approach; and

Noting that there can be significant cost savings to the UN from energy efficiency and other mitigation measures,

We, the Heads of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, hereby *commit* ourselves to moving our respective organizations towards climate neutrality in our headquarters and UN centres for our facility operations and travel.

In particular, by the end of 2009 we will:

- Estimate our greenhouse gas emissions consistent with accepted international standards;
- Undertake efforts to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions to the extent possible; and
- Analyze the cost implications and explore budgetary modalities- including consulting with governing bodies as needed - of purchasing carbon offsets to eventually reach climate neutrality.

We make this commitment with a view to achieving the goal of climate neutrality at a date to be set in the future, by reducing emissions first and then offsetting the remainder through the purchase of offsets from the CDM, that meet high international standards of additionality, transparency and verification and which promote sustainable development in developing countries.

We support the further development and implementation of a UN system-wide strategy reaching climate neutrality; for monitoring our collective efforts; and for reporting back on progress and difficulties encountered.

— END —

⁶ French translation was made available by the Chief Executive Board (CEB).