



General Assembly Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 March 2019

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-fourth session
Item 19 (a) of the preliminary list*
**Sustainable development: implementation of Agenda 21,
the Programme for the Further Implementation of
Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on
Sustainable Development and of the United Nations
Conference on Sustainable Development**

Economic and Social Council
2019 session
26 July 2018–24 July 2019
Agenda item 11
**Implementation of and follow-up to major
United Nations conferences and summits**

Mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In his previous report on the subject ([A/73/81-E/2018/59](#)), the Secretary-General noted that the United Nations system organizations were responding to the challenge of mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development by aligning their work programmes and priorities with the Sustainable Development Goals, initiating organizational change and linking results-based management with the delivery of the Goals. In its resolution [73/227](#), the General Assembly took note with appreciation of those actions and initiatives. Efforts in this regard are continuing during the current reporting cycle, as reflected in the updated information available in the Sustainable Development Goals Action Database.

The present report contains an update on those actions and initiatives, using new information made available in the Database, as well as specific inputs provided by several organizations for the report. It is encouraging to note that the positive trends in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development remain robust, with renewed efforts to transform institutions and align budgetary resources with the Goals. In that context, it is also worth highlighting that an increasing number of entities are operationalizing the principle of leaving no one behind. The report also provides an update on the implementation of the action plan for integrating sustainable development practices into Secretariat-wide operations and facilities management, submitted by the Secretary-General pursuant to resolutions [70/205](#) and [71/228](#) ([A/72/82](#)).

* [A/74/50](#).



I. Introduction

1. In General Assembly resolution 73/227, Member States took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system (A/73/81-E/2018/59) and took note with appreciation of the actions and initiatives implemented by United Nations system entities in order to mainstream the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout their work. They encouraged the United Nations system to continue to exchange experiences and lessons learned and to increase efforts to ensure effective support to Member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

2. Member States also called upon organizations of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates and resources, to ensure that no country and no one is left behind with respect to sustainable development. They invited the Secretary-General to continue to report to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, on progress made on the further mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development, including for the consideration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

3. In response to that request, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs invited United Nations system entities to update the information available in the Sustainable Development Goals Action Database¹ and to provide specific inputs for inclusion in the present report. A total of 41 organizations have provided information for the database; in addition, a number of organizations have provided specific inputs to the present report. It is encouraging to note that the positive trends in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda remain robust, with renewed efforts to transform institutions and align budgetary resources with the Goals. An increasing number of entities are also operationalizing the principle of leaving no one behind.

4. The present report, which provides selected examples of actions and is non-exhaustive, should be read in conjunction with the information, updated on a rolling basis, in the above-mentioned Database.

II. Transforming institutions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

5. Experiences related to national implementation of the 2030 Agenda and support from United Nations system entities, as reflected in voluntary national reviews and the Database, demonstrate that transforming institutions in line with the new demands of the 2030 Agenda is an essential condition for achieving the 17 Goals. United Nations entities, increasingly aware of that imperative, have followed up on the strategic decisions of their respective intergovernmental bodies by putting in place a new institutional structure dedicated to the 2030 Agenda, and some have initiated institutional reforms to adapt to the changing demands of Member States.

6. For example, the creation by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) of an interdivisional working group on the 2030 Agenda has enhanced the Commission's work on multidisciplinary issues. Thanks to the efforts of that working group, ECLAC divisions have produced joint outputs on achieving the Goals. ECLAC also has set up an interdivisional working group on Goal indicators.

¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/unsurvey/index.html>.

7. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has adapted the work programmes of its substantive divisions to the 2030 Agenda and the Goals. Concurrently, ESCWA, at the request of Member States, has set up a dedicated unit on the 2030 Agenda which is tasked with working with the senior management team and all ESCWA substantive divisions to: (a) enhance communication, coordination and coherence; (b) carry out innovative research and analysis, including through the preparation of regional reports; (c) spearhead capacity-building efforts, technical assistance and advocacy on the 2030 Agenda; (d) promote regional dialogue and peer learning platforms and forums; (e) support the design and implementation of follow-up and review frameworks and mechanisms at the regional level; and (f) liaise with United Nations and regional intergovernmental organizations for enhanced collaboration and complementarity.

8. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) has aligned its programme activities with the Goals in order to increase the impact of its activities, particularly through new cross-sectoral activities that reflect the links between different Goals and targets. In that regard, the ECE secretariat is creating cross-divisional teams as flexible arrangements to strengthen synergies and complementarities among its sub-programmes and to identify possible new activities in the following high-impact areas: the sustainable use of natural resources; sustainable and smart cities; sustainable mobility and smart connectivity; and measuring and monitoring the Goals. Those flexible arrangements operate within existing mandates and do not imply changes in sub-programmes or intergovernmental structures.

9. In order to more effectively collaborate on the Goals, the World Bank Group has strived to better leverage capabilities, improve coordination and find efficiencies with its partners. Among other initiatives, the agreement between the World Bank Group and the United Nations, the United Nations-World Bank Group Strategic Partnership Framework for the 2030 Agenda, served to consolidate the joint commitment of the two institutions to helping Member States implement the 2030 Agenda. The agreement deepens their partnership by focusing efforts on jointly selected priorities and by utilizing the complementary strengths of the two institutions to broaden the impact of their partnership. The initiative focuses on four key areas of cooperation: (a) finance and implementation support to help countries reach the Goals; (b) decisive global action on climate change; (c) joint work in post-crisis and humanitarian settings; and (d) harnessing data to improve development outcomes.

10. The system-wide framework of strategies on the environment, prepared by the Environment Management Group and launched in 2016 at the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, is aimed at enhancing cooperation and collaboration on the environment across the United Nations system in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and strengthening the United Nations system's capacity and synergies to enhance integration of the environment dimension of the 2030 Agenda. The first edition of the synthesis report entitled *System-wide Collaboration on the Environment: Synthesis Report on United Nations system-wide Contributions to the Implementation of the Environmental Dimension in the Sustainable Development Goals* provides examples of how individual agencies are aligning their organizational strategies with the environmental dimensions of the Goals and identifies opportunities for scaling up and strengthening coordination in existing or new environment-related aspects of the Goals. In 2019, a thematic report on the biodiversity-related Goals will be prepared, while a second edition of the synthesis report will provide updates on the information presented in the first edition with a view to highlighting potential contributions to the implementation of the environmental dimension of the Goals.

III. Changing the programme budget in line with the 2030 Agenda

11. As voluntary national reviews indicate, an increasing number of Member States are reallocating budgetary resources in accordance with the 2030 Agenda, not only to accelerate the implementation of the Goals but also to maximize their potential nexus impacts. That gradual reallocation is also seen across the United Nations system entities.

12. As an organization that focuses on learning and training, often through a cross-cutting and multidisciplinary lens, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research has realigned its strategic objectives and multiple programmatic activities with the Goals. More than 50 per cent of the 75 result areas of its programme budget are aligned with Goals 12 (Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns), 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts) and 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels). The Institute also contributes to the achievement of Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15 and 17.

13. In November 2018, document 38 C/7,² which provided a discussion of the role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, was presented to the thirty-eighth General Conference of UNESCO. The General Conference, in a resolution adopted at the thirty-ninth session of the Conference, stressed the importance of the contribution of UNESCO to the implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda at appropriate levels and provided timely guidance for the preparation of the programme and budget of UNESCO in that regard.

14. The UNESCO programme and budget for the 2018–2019 period, as set out in document 39 C/5,³ is fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda and reflects UNESCO support for Member States in the implementation of the Agenda. The expected results and performance indicators contained in the document are aligned with the Goals through a dedicated mapping exercise that cuts across all UNESCO fields of competence. It provides specific information on how UNESCO is embedding the principles of the 2030 Agenda into its programmes by providing demand-driven, evidence-based normative instruments and policy advice in its areas of competence; by developing benchmarking and reporting instruments; and by delivering capacity-building programmes, including with respect to data collection and analysis.

15. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) operationalizes its strategy through the Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework. The structure of the 2016–2021 Framework is based on the five Goals (3, 10, 5, 16 and 17) that are most relevant to the AIDS response. Bringing together the efforts of 12 organizations, the Framework serves to respond to the need for issue-based coalitions, joint programming, joint teams and partnering for collective results, pursuant to the 2030 Agenda.

16. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has also aligned its biennial budget and its management framework with the Goals. In order to ensure that it is fit-for-purpose for delivering the 2030 Agenda, UNOPS continues to seek efficiency, simplification and empowerment while enhancing risk management and the ability to serve other United Nations entities. By the end of 2017, UNOPS had revised its internal governance and organizational structure by separating policy and

² Available at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000235214/PDF/235214eng.pdf.multi>.

³ Available at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000261648>.

control functions from operations management across all aspects of the organization. That effort was in line with the objectives for governance, risk and compliance established in its strategic plan, 2018–2021, as well as with the Secretary-General’s vision for the organizational structure of the Secretariat.

17. The strategic plan of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for the 2020–2023 period was approved at its Plenipotentiary Conference held in the United Arab Emirates in 2018. It is the first strategic plan fully linked with the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda, and has clear links to the Goals as well as a plan for how to achieve them.

18. ITU activities in support of the Goals are closely monitored, tracked and reported through its Sustainable Development Goal mapping tool, which provides a comprehensive view of how ITU activities contribute to the Goals by showing the links between the Goals, the ITU strategic plan, Connect 2030 Agenda and the World Summit on the Information Society action lines. The tool aims to address and simplify reporting requirements with respect to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

19. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) has integrated the 2030 Agenda into its strategic goals and programmes. Out of a total of 31 programmes included in its report entitled “Programme and budget for the 2018/19-biennium”, 20 are linked to the Goals. The development cooperation, technical assistance and capacity building activities of WIPO are strategically placed to deliver support to its member States as they integrate the Goals into their national sustainable development plans.

20. The Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development prepares the annual *Financing for Sustainable Development Report*, which assesses progress made in the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. The 2019 edition of the publication is focused on integrated national financing frameworks, which Governments have committed to put in place in order to align their domestic and international resource flows, policies and international agreements with their national sustainable development priorities.

IV. Leaving no one behind

21. The clarion call of the 2030 Agenda, to leave no one behind, has reverberated across the world. Member States, businesses and civil society stakeholders have responded by using the call as a yardstick to measure the inclusiveness, interconnectedness and integration of their policies, programmes and initiatives aimed at the achievement of the Goals.

22. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has launched several initiatives to enhance its support for its member States as they pursue implementation of the Goals, including expanded financial support for low-income developing countries.⁴ IMF also prioritizes inclusion since high levels of income inequality are associated with lower and less durable economic growth and greater financial instability. Similarly, evidence shows that reducing gender gaps boosts economic productivity, growth and resilience. Both inequality and gender equity are now reflected in IMF policy advice whenever and wherever they are deemed important for economic stability and inclusive growth. IMF has also been exploring ways of deploying fiscal policy to reduce inequality, through spending on health, education and social protection and by ensuring the progressivity of tax systems. With respect to gender, IMF is focusing on

⁴ www.imf.org/en/About/Factsheets/Sheets/2016/08/01/16/46/Sustainable-Development-Goals.

efforts to boost women's economic participation, especially through the design of tax and spending policies, a practice known as gender budgeting.

23. ESCWA supports the commitment to leave no one behind through the production and analysis of disaggregated data, especially with respect to persons with disabilities and persons affected by conflict. Because the impact of conflict is not felt equally, identifying those who are suffering from deprivation requires detailed data across multiple dimensions. By providing baseline indicators using microdata at the sub-national level, ESCWA is helping to fill gaps and to support countries in the region, as well as donors and other international organizations, in working towards sustainable development for all.

24. In the area of disability, ESCWA has started a project to support disability-related policymaking and reporting, setting up the first regional data set that complies with the statistical standards and approach recommended by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics. Brought together by ESCWA, statisticians and policymakers in the region have started developing an Arab disability indicator framework to guide data collection efforts and support policymakers, civil society and academia in collaborating to generate reliable and comparable disability data and to design more inclusive, effective and evidence-based policies.

25. To ensure that national statistical systems are able to meet the data demands related to the objective of leaving no one behind, the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs accords priority attention to vulnerable groups in places where statistical production needs to be further developed. Such groups include women, people living with disabilities and migrants. For example, the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project, a joint initiative of the Statistics Division and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), is aimed at improving the integration of gender issues into the regular production of official statistics for better, evidence-based policies.

26. In addition, the Statistics Division will revise the *Guidelines and Principles for the Development of Disability Statistics*, which will include a review of methodological instruments and guidance for the disaggregation of data by disability status. As the secretariat of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, the Division will provide technical support for its workstream in order to identify the disaggregation dimensions of the indicators.

27. The activities of the World Health Organization (WHO) in the Americas, carried out by its Regional Office for the Americas, have included several initiatives designed to prioritize equity, the principle of leaving no one behind and integrated policy approaches. The Regional Office produced the innovative "Road map for the plan of action on health in all policies", an equity-focused initiative designed to support multisectoral approaches to the Goals. The Regional Office is also the convening institution for the Pan American Health Organization Commission on Equity and Health Inequalities in the Americas, a two-year initiative aimed at reviewing data and trends in health inequalities with a view to developing recommendations for action by Member States. Several other initiatives, including regional strategies for health promotion, highlight opportunities for action that target population groups at risk of being left behind.

28. Given that the 2030 Agenda is unequivocally anchored in human rights, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has been working to ensure that the Goals are implemented in a manner consistent with international human rights standards. That entails advocating and building capacity for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at all levels in a manner that (a) is aligned with international human rights standards; (b) contributes to reducing inequalities and fighting discrimination;

(c) is premised on an inclusive accountability framework; and (d) integrates human rights standards in all aspects of international cooperation.

29. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States is mandated with advocating for and supporting the implementation of the programmes of action for countries in special situations while ensuring coherence with the 2030 Agenda. The Office has placed special focus on climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and sustainable energy and has enhanced its cooperation with relevant partner organizations. The special theme of its 2018 report⁵ on the state of the least developed countries is, in fact, “Reducing vulnerabilities and strengthening resilience in the least developed countries”.

30. In its resolution 73/9, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) endorsed the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. The road map served to identify opportunities for regional collaboration with respect to leaving no one behind, including in the following areas:

(a) Promoting analytical studies and policy advocacy to address inequalities, reduce poverty and enhance social protection, including for persons with disabilities, in order to build socioeconomic resilience;

(b) Continuing regional and subregional dialogues to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment and to support multisectoral policies, strategies and programmes to implement the 2030 Agenda, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;

(c) Addressing unemployment and underemployment among youth, including by harmonizing the knowledge and skills of youth with labour market demands;

(d) Facilitating regional and subregional dialogue on policies to address population ageing;

(e) Implementing the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific;

(f) Strengthening the linkages between international migration and development, including through more effective management of migration.

31. The World Bank Group’s environmental and social safeguard policies support the principle of leaving no one behind, by, for example, addressing the needs of vulnerable groups such as indigenous communities. The indigenous peoples policy (operational policy 4.10) ensures that the development process fully respects the dignity, human rights, economies and cultures of indigenous peoples. For all projects proposed for World Bank financing that affect indigenous peoples, the Bank requires the borrower to engage in a process of free, prior and informed consultation. Bank-financed projects include measures to avoid potentially adverse effects on indigenous peoples’ communities, or, when such effects are unavoidable, to minimize, mitigate or compensate for them.

32. The focus of the Goals on leaving no one behind directly complements that of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) on equity and reaching every child. Its Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021, is aimed at promoting gender equality for girls and boys and supporting the well-being and empowerment of adolescent girls. UNICEF also focuses on children with disabilities as well as other children who might be marginalized or excluded owing to ethnicity, location, income or other factors. Its

⁵ Available at <http://unohrlls.org/state-of-ldcs-2018/>.

2017 report, entitled *Narrowing the Gaps: the Power of Investing in the Poorest Children*, articulates a case for the power of investing in the poorest and most marginalized children.

33. For the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), leaving no one behind and reaching those left furthest behind means focusing on the well-being of refugees, asylum seekers, the internally displaced, returnees, stateless persons, persons at risk of statelessness and persons in refugee-like situations.

34. UNHCR identifies and addresses the needs of the most vulnerable persons of concern who are facing heightened protection risks and have specific assistance needs. Its global strategic priorities for the 2016–2017 period highlight vulnerable groups among those deemed by UNHCR as persons of concern, such as survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, unaccompanied and separated children and religious and ethnic minorities.

35. UNESCO aims to enhance support for the principle of leaving no one behind by focusing its action on reaching the most disadvantaged and excluded groups, countries and segments of societies, as reflected in its medium-term strategy for 2014–2021 (document 37 C/4) and its programme and budget for the 2018–2019 period. UNESCO will continue to promote gender equality as a global priority and provide support in all its programmes for African countries while also mainstreaming specific interventions for youth and marginalized social and ethnic groups, including indigenous peoples. Its commitment to reaching those left furthest behind is also manifested in more specific strategies and action plans, such as the UNESCO policy on engaging with indigenous peoples and its dedicated Small Island Developing States Action Plan, adopted in 2016.

36. UN-Women has put in place impact and outcome indicators aligned with the 2030 Agenda, and, in line with the principle of leaving no one behind, it strives to provide data disaggregated by relevant categories. In order to enhance the availability of gender statistics, its flagship programme initiative, “Making every woman and girl count”, serves to respond to data gaps and challenges by aiming to improve the institutional environment to support effective monitoring of all gender-related Goals; increasing the production of gender-sensitive data; and ensuring that those data are used to inform policies and promote accountability.

37. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction supports the implementation, follow-up and review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (General Assembly resolution [69/283](#)). Since disasters can affect groups such as women, children and disabled persons differently, exacerbating underlying social inequality, the Framework contains a call for all-of-society engagement and partnership for effective disaster risk reduction.

38. In supporting the implementation of the Sendai Framework, the Office focuses on all three dimensions of sustainable development in order to reduce existing risk, prevent the creation of new risk and manage residual risk. The Office promotes coherence between disaster risk reduction strategies and climate action, including the national adaptation plans and nationally determined contributions. In addition, the Sendai Framework monitor measures progress and achievements in the reduction of disaster risk. The indicators used by the monitor highlight how disaster risk reduction intersects with all three dimensions of sustainable development and they include information on the number of injuries or illnesses attributed to disasters, disaggregated by sex, age and disability.

V. Integrating sustainable development into United Nations operations and facilities management

Internal sustainability within the United Nations system

39. Inter-agency efforts to strengthen mainstreaming of environmental and social sustainability in the internal work of the United Nations system have taken several significant steps forward. In 2018, the Environment Management Group released the draft model approach to environmental and social standards in United Nations programming, which offers a set of harmonized benchmarks and processes that can be used by entities when adopting or revising their individual sustainability policies or frameworks. Environmental and social standards and related accountability mechanisms, which are increasingly applied as best practice in United Nations programming, aim to ensure that development and humanitarian actors are held to the principles they proclaim and that interventions do not result in inadvertent harm to people and the environment. Based on relevant international instruments, the model approach will help to move the system towards greater alignment, transparency and accountability and will facilitate achievement of the Goals.

40. Since 2007, the United Nations has committed to and implemented efforts on internal sustainability management and climate neutrality. The latest “Greening the Blue” report, which outlines United Nations efforts to reduce its own environmental footprint, was released in December 2018. The report, now in its tenth edition, includes greenhouse gas emissions data from 66 entities across the United Nations system for 2017. It also includes data on waste, water and environmental management. A total of 43 United Nations entities were climate neutral for 2017, representing a total of 39 per cent of the system’s reported greenhouse gas emissions.

41. In an effort to reduce their emissions and overall environmental footprint, at least 26 United Nations entities have either implemented or are in the process of developing an environmental management system. Such systems are being deployed at both small and large offices. Sustainable building standard guidance is also being used to systematically improve the environmental performance of facilities.

42. By working to improve its overall environmental performance, the United Nations system is not only reducing its use of natural and financial resources, but is also showing leadership in integrating the sustainable development agenda in management planning and processes.

Internal sustainability within the Secretariat

Update on the implementation of the action plan for integrating sustainable development practices into Secretariat-wide operations and facilities management

43. In its resolution [72/219](#), the General Assembly endorsed the action plan for integrating sustainable development practices into Secretariat-wide operations and facilities management submitted by the Secretary-General pursuant to resolutions [70/205](#) and [71/228](#) ([A/72/82](#)). In addition, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to implement his relevant recommendations within existing resources. In his report, the Secretary-General summarized the scope and structure of the plan, the roles and responsibilities of its stakeholders and the sequence of actions and milestones necessary for its implementation. The plan involves implementing environmental management systems, supported by an overarching coordination

mechanism, with the goal of creating a Secretariat whose operations and facilities management would not have a negative impact on the climate by 2020, if practicable.

44. In line with the aim of integrating environmental sustainability management into existing systems, the Secretary-General proposed to inform the General Assembly on progress made in existing reporting mechanisms, including on the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system (*ibid.*, para. 37). The present update on the implementation of the action plan is provided pursuant to the request of the Assembly in paragraph 20 of resolution [73/232](#).

Implementation update

45. Since the presentation of the action plan, significant progress has been made on the development of a Secretariat-wide environmental sustainability management framework and the implementation of environmental management systems. A governance and coordination mechanism has been put in place and a senior-level steering group on environmental sustainability management has been established to lead the Secretariat's internal environmental sustainability efforts with the ultimate goal of mainstreaming environmental sustainability at all levels of the Secretariat so that the United Nations system does not have a negative impact on the climate and the environment in general. Local steering groups have also been established at United Nations Headquarters in New York, as well as in Geneva and Nairobi and at the regional commissions in Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Beirut and Santiago. The coordination mechanism has been fundamental to encouraging, globally and locally, a systematic approach to environmental sustainability management and to sharing good practices, including the leveraging of United Nations system guidance, tools and communication campaigns.

46. Other elements of the environmental sustainability management framework are being put in place to align the Secretariat's operations with the 2030 Agenda. Elements of an overarching environmental policy have been endorsed by the United Nations Secretariat steering group on environmental sustainability management, based on five guiding principles relating to stewardship of the environment, efficiency in resource use and operations, continuous improvement of environmental performance, stakeholder engagement at all levels and adaptation and resilience. A Secretary-General's bulletin on environmental policy will be prepared and considered in accordance with established practice. Environmental considerations have been integrated into the regular planning and budgeting process, starting with the preparation of the proposed programme budget for 2020, which now includes a cross-cutting requirement on environmental sustainability management. Progress has also been made in mainstreaming environmental sustainability into the performance management framework at the leadership level. An environmental management objective and performance indicator has been incorporated into the 2019 senior management compact as a critical step towards integrating environmental sustainability management into staff workplans, as appropriate.

47. Environmental management systems are being progressively established throughout the Secretariat, systematically managing local environmental impacts and related risks through a process of planning, coordination of sustainable actions, monitoring and reporting on results. Aside from field missions currently implementing an environmental management system under the environmental strategy for field missions, the initial focus has been on headquarters locations and regional commissions. While the management systems are still at various stages of implementation, they have been assessing the environmental impact and associated risks of headquarters locations and regional commissions so that defined targets and performance indicators may be incorporated into action plans. Although

environmental priorities are specific to each location, the main challenges across the Secretariat are to reduce and better manage waste and wastewater, increase energy efficiencies, improve the sustainability of meetings and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from commercial travel activities. In addressing those priorities, the Organization aims to continuously reduce the environmental impact of its operations and contribute positively to the environment and the Goals in the delivery of its mandates whenever possible.

48. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/82), field missions continue to implement the six-year environmental strategy launched in 2016, in response to the particular challenges faced by field missions and to earlier mandates from the General Assembly and the Security Council. It aims to ensure the deployment of responsible missions that achieve maximum efficiency in their use of natural resources and operate at minimum risk to people, societies and ecosystems and that have a positive impact wherever possible. The environmental strategy contains five pillars: energy, water and wastewater, solid waste, wider impact and the environmental management system. Progress has been made on each pillar in moving forward on agreed strategic approaches and in supporting implementation by missions. An environmental performance and risk management framework that increases visibility and accountability with respect to reducing each mission's environmental footprint has been established as a cross-cutting and strategic priority. A standardized template for mission-wide environmental action plans for implementing the strategy is used by missions, which is aimed at improving data collection and analysis that informs the planning and budgeting processes. All field missions covered by the strategy have an action plan in place as part of the environmental management system, which those missions will revise annually to reflect their evolving priorities, including priorities identified through an environmental scorecard. Peacekeeping missions now report on their respective scorecard results to the Assembly in the context of budget performance reports.

49. While greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced only gradually through continuous environmental management cycles and cannot be eliminated completely owing to the nature of Secretariat activities, progress has also been made on neutralizing unavoidable carbon emissions. The United Nations Headquarters reached climate neutrality in 2018, joining the United Nations Office at Geneva, the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in their commitment to compensate for the greenhouse gas emissions of their respective operations. Although these emissions represented a relatively modest portion of the Secretariat's reported climate footprint, it was an important milestone towards reaching the goal of a United Nations that does not have a negative impact on the climate.

50. Annual environmental inventory results on the indicators established by the United Nations System (greenhouse gas emissions, waste and water) continue to be communicated to all stakeholders through the system-wide "Greening the Blue" report published under the leadership of the United Nations Environment Programme. The Secretariat represents approximately 60 per cent of all United Nations system emissions, largely from field missions.

Challenges and next steps

51. As the development of interlocking environmental management systems across the Secretariat is still at an early stage, most locations under the initial implementation scope have not completed a full "plan-do-check-act" cycle. It has become evident that the locations able to dedicate coordination and project management capacity to their environmental management systems have progressed rapidly from the planning to the

implementation stage, building on earlier efforts and systematically addressing local environmental impacts. The locations that could not do so owing to financial constraints have progressed slowly. Ensuring that all main locations have a well-maintained environmental management system in place and expanding the scope of environmental sustainability management within existing resources beyond those locations to the entire Secretariat will be a multi-year endeavour.

52. Since the endorsement of the action plan submitted by the Secretary-General, coordination efforts have also uncovered gaps in the environmental inventory reporting by Secretariat entities to the Sustainable United Nations facility and the existence of different methodologies, which makes it difficult to measure the Secretariat's entire footprint. The voluntary nature of the Greening the Blue reporting initiative, coordinated by the United Nations system under the leadership of the United Nations Environment Programme in order to achieve climate neutrality, has resulted in disparities within the Secretariat which are now being addressed.

53. The reform agenda, particularly with respect to management reform, will further consolidate the global and systematic approach proposed by the Secretary-General in his report (A/72/82) to mainstream sustainable development practices, and, in particular, environmental sustainability management, into Secretariat operations. The creation in January 2019 of the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and the Department of Operational Support, which will support all Secretariat entities, will ensure that environmental sustainability is integrated into the delivery of United Nations mandates. The Secretariat coordination mechanism is being adapted accordingly. The Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance will chair and provide secretariat services to the steering group on environmental sustainability management, strengthen the environmental sustainability management policy framework and embed environmental considerations into the functional areas under its responsibility, including strategic planning, enterprise risk management, resilience management, results-based management, evaluation, monitoring and compliance. The Department of Operational Support will strengthen the mainstreaming and continuous improvement of environmental management into operational performance and risk mitigation frameworks, operational guidance and processes, and will provide technical assistance to clients at all locations, as needed, with a focus on high-risk areas, particularly in the field.

54. As a result, the Secretariat expects to complete the establishment of environmental management systems at all main duty stations and field missions and, based on lessons learned, to expand it in the future to field offices that are not within the current scope, including resident coordinator offices. The Organization will continue to develop a framework for environmental sustainability management at the Secretariat that is integrated into existing systems and that harmonizes the systematic assessment of environmental impacts and risks, planning and monitoring of environmental actions in order to achieve targets and to measure, evaluate and review results, enabling continuous improvement of its environmental performance. In doing so, the Secretariat will leverage enterprise systems and good practices and will build expertise in order to foster a sustainable culture in which everyday decisions are based on an environmental perspective.

55. Since its endorsement by the General Assembly, significant progress has been made on the implementation of the action plan submitted by the Secretary-General to integrate sustainable development practices into United Nations Secretariat operations. The Organization will build on that progress, making continuous improvements. The Secretary-General is committed to a United Nations whose operations and facilities management do not have a negative impact on the climate. To that end, he has called on the United Nations system, and the Secretariat in

particular, to accelerate internal climate action in light of the urgency of the global challenge.

56. The speed at which the Secretariat will be able to progress on its journey to minimize its environmental footprint and neutralize its remaining climate impact will depend in part on the availability of dedicated capacity for that effort, the level of investment in carbon reduction and environmental risk mitigation projects, the adoption of innovative technologies and the integration of climate and other externalities into financing mechanisms.

VI. Conclusion

57. It is worth reiterating that the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development – by Governments, the United Nations system and, indeed, all stakeholders – is essential to achieving the ambitious aspirations of the 2030 Agenda and the Goals. Recent experience, as reflected in voluntary national reviews and information provided by the United Nations system, suggests that, at the conceptual and operational levels, such mainstreaming is happening in countries and across the United Nations system. In his previous report ([A/73/81–E/2018/59](#)), the Secretary-General provided illustrative cases of United Nations system organizations aligning their work programmes and priorities with the Goals through organizational change and results-based management. The present report contains additional cases of institutional changes, programme budget realignment and leaving no one behind and provides an update on the implementation of the action plan submitted by the Secretary-General for integrating sustainable development practices into Secretariat-wide operations and facilities management.

58. The challenge ahead is to scale up efforts. United Nations system organizations should sustain the momentum by embedding the vision and principles of the 2030 Agenda and the Goals into every part of its programmes and budgets and by identifying a dedicated platform for exchanging knowledge, experiences and lessons learned on how to mainstream the three dimensions of sustainable development. Four years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations system should develop a coherent system-wide strategy for the coordinated and synergistic implementation strategy to support Member States in accelerating progress in achieving the Goals.
