

The Third United Nations Environment Sustainability Report Executive Summary

On the occasion of the Third United Nations Environment Assembly, whose overarching theme was “Towards a Pollution-Free Planet”, the UN Environment Programme decided to lead by example and show how environmental sustainability can be integrated into large events and become standard practices for future meetings. Therefore, the UN Environment Programme expressed its commitment to continue to make the Third United Nations Environment Assembly a sustainable, climate neutral, paper smart, and plastic less event, as it was previously done for the Second United Nations Environment Assembly in 2016. The event hosted 3,889 participants from all around the world took place at UN Environment Programme’s Headquarters in Nairobi in December 2017.

In order to decrease and minimise the environmental impacts of the Third United Nations Environment Assembly, the event was organized accounting for six main environmental goals: measuring the environmental footprint, reducing Greenhouse Gases (GHG) emissions, offsetting emissions, minimizing paper use, reducing waste and raising awareness on environmental sustainability.

○ Reducing GHG emissions

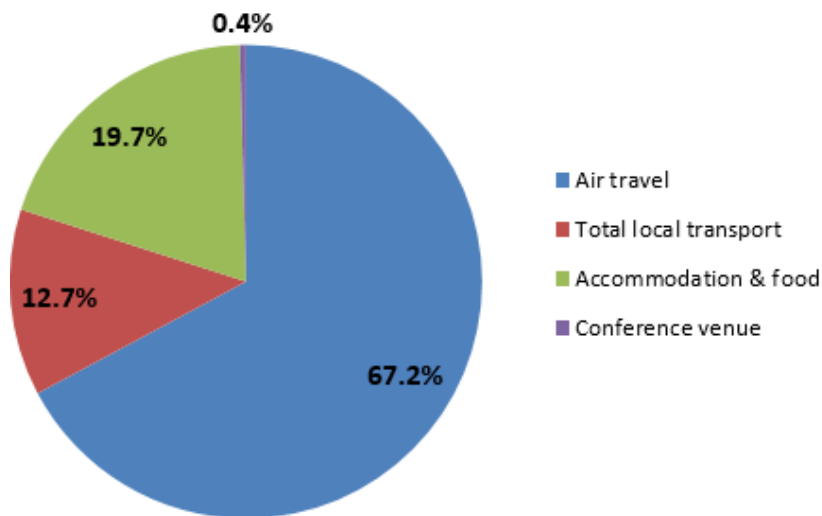


Figure 1: The Third United Nations Environment Assembly GHG emissions by source

The total emissions of the Third United Nations Environment Assembly were 2,741 tons of CO₂e of which 67.2% (1841 tons of CO₂e) were associated with air travel, 12.7% (349 tons of CO₂e) with local transport, 19.7% (538 tons of CO₂e) with accommodation and food and 0.4% (11.3 tons of CO₂e) with conference venue. These represent activities beyond the boundary of control of UN Environment Programme. They were included so as to provide a complete accounting of climate emissions associated to the Assembly.

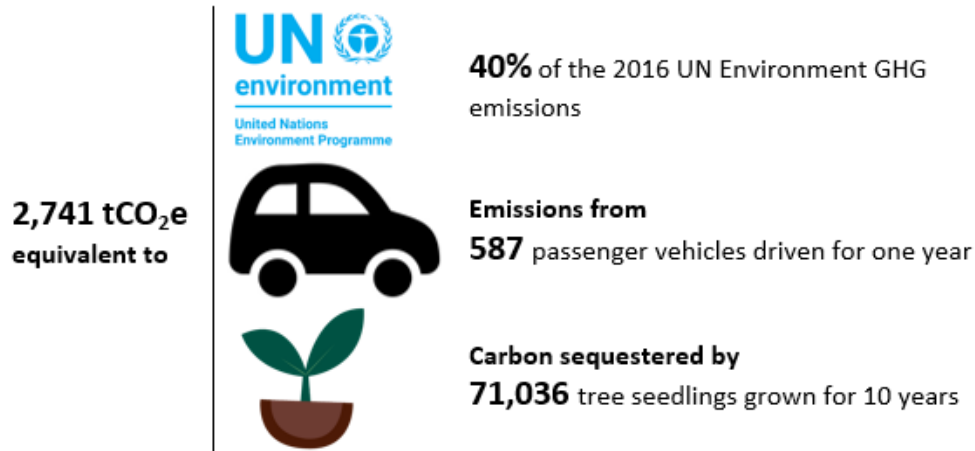


Figure 2: Carbon emissions comparison

- **GHG offsetting**

The Third United Nations Environment Assembly was a climate neutral event, as all emissions related to the event were offset using Certified Emission Reductions (CERs) bought from the UN Climate Change.

- **Minimizing paper use**

Hard copies were avoided when possible, if not, double-side printing was adopted. Moreover, the initiative was facilitated by sharing all event's related information, e.g. agenda, through projection screens and the Assembly's mobile application. Indicatively, the use of around 2.5 million prints/copies was prevented, which avoided around 14.5 tons of CO₂e and saved about USD 9,600.

- **Reducing waste**

Waste reduction aimed at targeting plastics cups and bottles, the event's decoration material and paper use. In fact, no plastic cups or bottles were provided during the event. Thus, delegates either had their own reusable bottle or were given reusable glass ones. Indicatively, about 54,450 plastic bottles and 81,670 plastic cups were saved, which prevented 6.9 tons of CO₂e. Concerning the decoration, PVC banners were avoided when possible using more environmentally friendly set ups, e.g. green backgrounds. Also, all papers used were collected and recycled (6.7 tons), preventing the indicative emission of 29 tons of CO₂e.

- **Raising awareness on environmental sustainability**

The "Greening the Third United Nations Environment Assembly" communication strategy included actions before, during and after the event. They were implemented not only through UN Environment Programme's social media accounts and official website and tools, but also through internal bottom - down communication to staff.

Substantive improvement in sustainable operations has been made with the Third United Nations Environment Assembly. UN Environment Programme is looking forward to the next United Nations Environment Assembly to continue its green event initiative, where even more actions and achievements could be considered and lessons learned from the past Assemblies could be applied.