

## Director-General's remarks for World Environment Day, 5 June 2018

- Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners,
  - UN colleagues,
  - Ladies and gentlemen
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- I am pleased to be with you to mark World Environment Day.
  - This UN duty station is joining many others around the world in celebrating this important Day. Each celebration makes a positive difference in raising awareness and encouraging action for the environment. The celebrations in India, the host to this year's World Environment Day, are particularly large and impactful.
  - But the commemoration of World Environment Day right here in Nairobi is also of special significance: Not only is Nairobi the headquarters of the world's leading environmental authority - UNEP –; Kenya is also becoming a global environmental leader in its own right, further solidifying Nairobi's place as the “environmental capital of the world”
  - As the only UN Headquarters in the global South, UNON is committed to playing its part to curb pollution and safeguard the environment. In this connection, we have embarked on a number of environment-friendly measures on this UN compound in recent years:
  - For example, since 2009, UNON has kept track of and reported our greenhouse gas emissions, as part of an ongoing commitment to sustainability on the complex. As a result of these efforts, UNON achieved climate neutrality for the first time in 2015.
  - UNON is now actively working to establish an Environmental Management System, aiming to achieve the relevant ISO certification by 2019. If successful, this would make us one of the first UN Headquarters to do so.
  - UNON's new waste management station aims to recycle, as far as possible, all waste generated and disposed of at the Complex. Until recently, 90% of office waste went directly to landfills, with only 11% recycled. UNON is now seeking to create a systematic recycling process, with the aim of recycling over 90% of waste generated at the complex.
  - In March, we launched a pilot project within key offices of UN Environment, WFP and UNON to separate waste at source, thus raising the possibility of reusing certain waste items. We replaced individual waste bins with communal bins in those pilot offices. This week, UN-Habitat volunteered to join our pilot project, bringing us closer to our goal of ultimately encompassing all agencies at the UN complex.

- You may have noticed the steady replacement of plastic straws with paper alternatives, as well as the replacement of non-recyclable plastic coffee cup lids with their recyclable counterparts. These changes were guided by our waste records, and represent examples of seemingly trivial changes we can make that nevertheless have a profound impact in the environmental sector.
- Plastic straws, for example, constitute a major source of marine pollution. Our next targets include the replacement of single use plastic lunch containers and utensils.
- Through these and other initiatives, we are making progress in beating pollution on this compound. But we still have a long way to go. It is important to remember that UNON is not acting alone.
- All staff members from every UN entity on this compound have a role to play.
- I hope we can all work together to build on the positive momentum, so that this UN compound becomes a true global example of environmental sustainability.
- Thank you for your kind attention.