The Country Office also intends to intensify its efforts in getting involved in local and national environmental causes for the promotion of a green community.

The group will work closely with the representatives of the UN family and other tenants within the park. Members are Verity Nyagah, James Wakiaga, William Tsuma, Bertha Charowedza, Sammy Mwiti, Daisy Mukarakate, Mitchell Robitaille, Tina Sibanda, Tinashe Mariga and Winfreda Magava. It will be led by Daisy in her capacity as environmental specialist. However, kindly note that more colleagues are welcome to join. The door is open to volunteers from operations and programme units.

The team will develop a CO greening strategy based on the findings of the green audit, anticipated to be conducted next month (June).

In October 2007, the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) adopted a decision to move towards a climate neutral United Nations including the commitment to report UN Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions on an annual basis.

“Following the pledge of the United Nations Secretary-General on World Environment Day in 2007 and follow-on commitments by the UN Chief Executive Board, UNDP is joining the rest of the UN and ‘walking the talk’ on climate change. We are taking steps to conduct an institution-wide greenhouse gas inventory, and will pilot a carbon neutrality initiative in one of our bureaux with the aim of taking it across the organization,” said Helen Clark on World Environment Day 2009.

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Quick Wins for Office Greening

Instead of driving, fitness fanatic Lisa Orrenius rides a bicycle to work three times a week. At the office, Colleague Kennedy Chimso-ro avoids waste, especially paper. “I try to minimize my printing at all times,” he says.

Through their actions, the two UNDP staff members are working towards reducing carbon emissions that lead to pollution and other greenhouse gas emissions. Like Lisa and Kennedy, you can demonstrate your green engagement by posting a list of self-commitments, say experts. For instance, you can replace at least one face-to-face meeting with a web-based meeting, voluntarily fly economy class when entitled to business or use earned frequent flyer miles for non-travel.

Here’s a checklist of what actions we can do—individually and collectively—to support this cause

1. Have a meat-free day once a week
2. Avoid using disposable cups, plates and bottles
3. Avoid travel where possible and to use web- and phone-based communication systems instead
4. Default double-side printing setting
5. Setting default printing on recycled paper
6. E-publications and documentation production
7. E-operations procedures introduction
8. Explore the possibility of car pooling for staff when attending meetings away from Arundel Office Park
9. Remind colleagues to switch off lights, computers and other electronic equipment over night and on weekends, e.g. by posting reminders close to staircase/elevator, doors, copy machines etc.
10. Consider improving the convenience to switch off appliances, e.g. by providing multi-plug strips where several pieces of equipment can be switched off with one button.
11. Verify that air conditioning is reduced or switched off after office hours
12. Office should consider the installation of water-efficient, dual-flush toilets
13. If an office is remodeled or renovated ensure maximal use of natural daylight

Did You Know?

The Country Office uses an average of 3 boxes of paper every week*. That’s 15 reams, or 7500 sheets of paper.

That is the equivalent of chopping one tree every month!

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Unveiling our Green Agenda

The Global Staff Survey (GSS) 2012 results indicate that one of the weakest areas of the UNDP Zimbabwe Country Office mentioned by staff was on greening the workplace.
UNDP and Climate Neutrality

An organization is considered to be “climate neutral” if aggregated net GHG emissions associated with its operations are zero. The UN Climate Neutrality Initiative focuses on emission reductions as a first priority. Typically however it is not technically feasible or economically reasonable to reduce all GHG emissions resulting from organizations’ operations. In order to achieve climate neutrality, remaining emissions are offset by the purchase of carbon credits, which are generated by projects that reduce emissions in order to sell these credits.

UNDP, as a leading organization in the fight against climate change, is now committed to comprehensively compile its annual GHG inventory and to take action towards reducing (and ultimately, offsetting) its GHG emissions towards a target of institutional climate neutrality.

In April 2010 the UNDP Operations Group decided to make annual GHG reporting mandatory for all UNDP offices from 2009 onwards. A solid GHG reporting mechanism has been established subsequently and the recently completed third annual GHG inventory includes data from 59 UNDP offices, covering 55% of global UNDP staff.

According to UNDP greening specialists Andrew Hudson & Anne Fernqvist, in 2009 global UNDP operations resulted in 55,569 tonnes CO2-equivalent, with 16% generated at HQ. The majority of GHG emissions were travel-related (56%) with air travel accounting for 42% and vehicle fleet for 13%. Public transport contributed only 1% of total GHG emissions. GHG emissions resulting from facility operations accounted for 43% of emissions with electricity being the second largest single emission source (26%). “On-site fuel combustion made up for 10% of emissions and purchased heat/steam for 3%. Emissions from leakage from air conditioning systems were approximated at 4% of total emissions.”

Did You Know?
Standby power, also called vampire power, vampire draw, phantom load, or leaking electricity, refers to the electric power consumed by electronic and electrical appliances while they are switched off or in a standby mode.

“Because we don’t think about future generations, they will never forget us.”
― Henrik Tikkanen
Ahead of the World Environment Day that will be commemorated on 5 June, the CO is planning to invite all Arundel Office Park tenants for a joint celebration. This will be the first major task for the recently named Green Team. Consultations are already underway, with the first meeting involving nearly a dozen tenants (including from the private sector), held on 10 May, 2013.

The theme for this year’s World Environment Day celebrations is Think.Eat.Save. Think.Eat.Save is an anti-food waste and food loss campaign that encourages you to reduce your foodprint. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), every year 1.3 billion tonnes of food is wasted. This is equivalent to the same amount produced in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time, 1 in every 7 people in the world go to bed hungry and more than 20,000 children under the age of 5 die daily from hunger. According to UNEP, the global food production occupies 25% of all habitable land and is responsible for 70% of fresh water consumption, 80% of deforestation, and 30% of greenhouse gas emissions. It is the largest single driver of biodiversity loss and land-use change.

“Making informed decision therefore means, for example, that you purposefully select foods that have less of an environmental impact, such as organic foods that do not use chemicals in the production process. Choosing to buy locally can also mean that foods are not flown halfway across the world and therefore limit emissions.”

Arundel Office Park Green Alliance mooted

Plans are underway to rally the tenants of the Arundel Office Park behind the green cause. Through strategic partnership with the private sector, the green committee hopes to increase awareness about environmental issues such as climate change and pollution. Already discussions are underway for joint commemorations of the World Environment Day, with at least 5 companies expressing interest in the matter (see related story by Daisy).

There are six buildings or blocks within the Arundel Office Park, housing UN agencies, NGOs, private companies and consulting firms.

During a meeting held on 10 May, participants came up with suggestions that could be integrated as part of the overall greening efforts of the complex. These include the need to engage a specialist waste collection company capable of recycling waste. Experience in this regard can be gained from UNFPA and PWC who have such arrangements in place. In addition, there were calls for a reflection on how best to manage waste and especially ‘separation’ of the organic from the non-organic. As a philanthropic gesture, there was a suggestion to consider distributing warm clothing and blankets to the under-privileged in the city, given that WED falls within the thick of winter. Both individuals and corporates were encouraged to make these donations.