

ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS

Report prepared by the ECE secretariat

1. Since the last meeting of the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities, the work on environment statistics done under the work programme of the Conference of European Statisticians focused on

- the finalization of the ECE Standard Statistical Classification of Ambient Air Quality;
- the development of a draft ECE Standard Statistical Classification of Ecological Freshwater Quality;
- the development of a draft ECE Structure of Statistics on Economic Aspects of Environmental Protection;
- the consideration of methodological issues in the fields of environment statistics of human settlements, linkage of environment statistics with social and demographic statistics and through land information, and quality control and assessment of environment statistics;
- the preparation of the 1991 Compendium of ECE Environment Statistics (with time series and environmental indicators in Part I, and a study of environmental impacts of agriculture in Part II); and
- further co-ordination, at the practical level, of international environmental data between relevant international institutions.

2. With regard to this last item, a Consultation was held in Geneva on 19 March 1990. As a result of the Consultation, the United Nations Statistical Office was asked to act as an initial convenor of an Intersecretariat Working Group on Environmental Data (IWG.ENV). The purpose of IWG.ENV would be to provide for

- maintenance of mutual information and contact between those responsible for the conceptual, technical and organizational development of international environmental databases;
- development of improved co-operation between international environmental database managers in their daily work; and
- exchange of information on all conceptual and methodological work done in the different fora of international co-operation over environmental data.

3. At the same Consultation, the following four databases were tentatively identified as being lead databases in their fields:

- EMEP and BAPMoN for background air pollution in Europe;
- GEMS/WATER for water quality of freshwater in the ECE region;
- ECE data on forest damage attributed to air pollution;
- FAO/ECE statistics on forest fires.

The ECE secretariat is in the process of determining the possibility of designating these databases tentatively as lead databases with the database managers concerned.

4. Future work by the Conference of European Statisticians during the period prior to the twenty-fifth session of the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities will concentrate on the preparation of the 1991 Compendium, the further development of the ECE environmental database, and the expansion of the International Environmental Data Service (IEDS). Furthermore, methodological discussions will be organized on statistics on the marine environment, on water use and quality statistics, on fauna and flora statistics (all three in Stockholm, June 1990), on presentation, dissemination and storage of environment statistics, on linkage of environment and economic statistics, and on air quality statistics (all three in Ottawa, 1991).

5. Finally, it should be mentioned that the Conference of European Statisticians, when fundamentally reviewing its work programme in the light of the recent social changes in Europe, designated environment statistics as one of its two top priority concerns (the other being work on statistics needed in the transition from centrally planned to market economies).