



envstats

News and Notes

Environment Statistics Section
United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)/DESA

FOCUS:

The emphasis is on consultation in the final stages of development of the FDES

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Activities supporting the drafting of the revised Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES) have intensified over recent months to bring this work to an advanced stage of completion. The latest major undertakings have centred on consultation, with the launching of a Pilot Test of the Core Set of Environment Statistics (Pilot) as well as a Global Consultation on the FDES (the Global Consultation). The next step forward has also come under consideration with the conduct of a meeting of the Expert Group on the Revision of the FDES (Expert Group) to discuss a Blueprint for Action for putting the FDES to work.

Pilot Test of the Core Set of Environment Statistics

A fundamental part of the FDES has been the development of the Core Set of Environment Statistics (Core Set). The Core Set consists of a limited number of environment statistics that are of high relevance and priority to the great majority of countries. To ensure that the Core Set that has been identified, is representative, and has broad applicability across regions and countries in various stages of development, it was decided that there should be a Pilot to assess its usefulness at national level. This Pilot would help to determine how relevant the Core Set was to national policy concerns, how well it addressed the environment statistics mandated for production at national level, how capable it was in prioritizing countries' environment statistics and to what extent it was able to identify gaps in countries' environment statistics. Some twenty-five countries volunteered or agreed to participate in the Pilot. It was conducted primarily through an on-line survey, which was supplemented by EXCEL and WORD file formats for countries that were unable to access the on-line version.

The results of the Pilot were overwhelmingly positive. There was unanimous support for the Core Set. Participating countries described it as comprehensive in nature as well as relevant to national policy concerns, with a structure that was helpful for the purpose of guiding the development of environment statistics programmes. They found the topics listed in the Core Set adequate for covering their information needs at national level as well as for reporting on conventions and treaties at international level. The Core Set was also considered practical and useful in identifying gaps in countries' environment statistics programmes. Nevertheless, a number of countries made concrete recommendations for improving the Core Set, by indicating detail or areas of concern that they would like to see added to the statistical topics and statistics that it already contained.

In maintaining the inclusive nature of the process of developing and putting the FDES into practice, the Pilot was followed by a more comprehensive Global Consultation on the entire FDES.

Global Consultation on the FDES

The Global Consultation was a worldwide consultation with member States as well as with concerned regional and international agencies to acquaint them with the draft of the FDES and to request detailed opinions and comments regarding that draft. It was carried out through an electronic survey which was sent to member States' national statistical offices that were recommended to consult Ministries of Environment or equivalent institutions in their response.

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Some seventy responses were received. Overall, the responses were very positive. The responses showed that the text of the draft FDES received support, with the vast proportion of respondents registering their approval of the contents and structure of the FDES. They also agreed with its appropriateness for addressing national environment policy concerns and for developing environment statistics programmes, especially for countries that are in early or developmental stages of constructing their national environment statistics programmes.

The multi-level organization of the FDES into six components with progressive detailed levels of sub-components, statistical topics and statistics was welcomed and the constituent statistics found to be well allocated across the domain of environment statistics. Additionally, the contents at each level were well supported and endorsed. As in the case of the Pilot, the relevance and usefulness of the Core Set was again well recognized. An important inclusion in the FDES was a chapter of presentations on a selection of cross-cutting environmental issues that demonstrate how the FDES can be applied to different user needs. These presentations, which included detailed compilations of the related statistical topics and individual statistics, were centred on “Water”, “Energy” and “Climate change”. Respondents to the Global Consultation characterized them as being very helpful.

Strategic Meeting on the Implementation Plan for the revised Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES)

Finally, the very latest of the three major activities relating to the FDES was a meeting of the Expert Group. It was held on 5-7 November 2012 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. This most recent meeting of the Expert Group was a Strategic Meeting on the Implementation Plan for the revised FDES. While this meeting contained modules that addressed the results of the Pilot and the Global Consultation and also discussed the use of the draft FDES in two countries (Bhutan and Qatar), it was convened to focus primarily on a proposal, “Putting the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics to work – a Blueprint for Action”

This Blueprint documents a way forward in making the FDES operational for countries that need guidance to start or further develop their environment statistics programmes. The proposal contained a strategic plan for the development of environment statistics using the FDES. This plan would be based on a foundation of: development and dissemination to countries of the methodological elements that facilitate implementation of the FDES; fostering partnerships between global, regional and national partners and stakeholders in the process; building technical capacity in countries, as needed, through targeted expert assistance; networking, using a variety of media, to share resources and know-how; and resource mobilization and advocacy activities for providing the necessary resources and advocating for an optimal coordination of the activities related to the development of an ongoing environment statistics programme. The detailed activities of the plan were organized into global, regional and national categories.

There was broad agreement with the elements of the Blueprint.

Future activities

Following on these activities, the detailed comments that have been received are being reviewed and the draft FDES is being revised to reflect the broad consensus that has emerged through the consultative processes mentioned above.

To take the process forward and underscore the consensual nature of these activities at the very highest global statistical level, the final version of the FDES including the Core Set of Environment Statistics, as well as the proposal, “Putting the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics to Work – a Blueprint for Action” will be presented to the Statistical Commission for endorsement at its upcoming session scheduled for 26 February – 1 March 2013. In addition, an analysis of the Pilot Test of the Core Set of Environment Statistics and an analysis of the responses to the Global Consultation on the FDES will be presented for information.

UNSD NEWS:

UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics

The collection of statistics on water and waste through the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics, planned for 2012, will be postponed to the first half of 2013 in order to ensure proper revisions, methodological harmonization and synchronized timing with the corresponding OECD/Eurostat Joint Questionnaire on the State of the Environment. The UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire is expected to be sent out to the countries in May 2013.

International Seminar "Towards Linking Ecosystems and Ecosystem Services to Economic and Human Activity" (New York, 27-29 November 2012)

The International Seminar, organized by UNSD/DESA in collaboration with UNDP, UNEP, the European Environmental Agency and the World Bank, discussed the growing policy demand for information on ecosystem management and ecosystem capital and the link to economic and other human activity. Representatives from national statistical offices, environment agencies, international agencies and scientists who participated in the meeting discussed the consultation draft of SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting which is the synthesis of the existing body of work carried out by the scientific and ecological economics communities on ecosystem accounting. The way forward in advancing the research agenda on ecosystem accounting and experimentation in countries in close cooperation with international agencies was also discussed during the seminar.

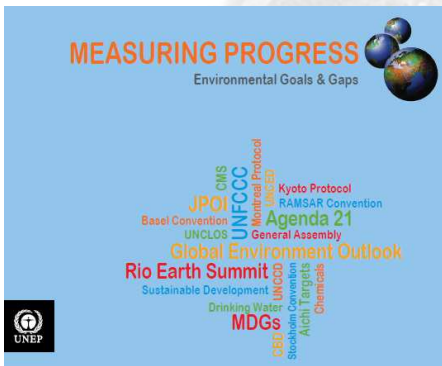
The draft revised Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES), including the Core Set of Environment Statistics, as well as the plans to put the FDES to work in countries were presented at the Seminar, with a focus on the relationship between the FDES and the SEEA.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Conference on Measuring The Future We Want (Geneva, 4-6 December 2012)

(Contributed by Jaap van Woerden, UNEP)

In response to the Rio+20 Conference and its outcomes on the Green Economy, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the overall post-2015 Development Agenda, UNEP organized an event on 'Measuring The Future We Want' in Geneva from 4 to 6 December 2012. This international 'measurement' conference brought together almost 200 representatives of international organizations, governments, research institutes, NGOs, businesses and other groups that are interested in using indicators to support the development of Green Economy / Green Growth policies and pro-actively prepare for tracking progress towards eventual SDGs.



In the last several years, major international organizations have launched green economy or green growth initiatives to integrate economic, environmental, and social imperatives. These initiatives helped place "green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication" on the Rio+20 agenda. The Rio+20 outcome document - "The Future We Want" - acknowledges green economy as an important tool to deliver sustainable development and calls for methodologies to evaluate green economy policies.

UNEP has a long record on activities on indicators ranging from its 'flagship' Global Environmental Outlook assessment, Key Indicators for tracking environmental sustainability and global environmental goals, and indicators of sustainable consumption and production, to the most recent effort to produce a guidance manual on using indicators in developing Green Economy policies.

The conference shared experiences and lessons from the work on green economy and sustainable development indicators at global, national, sub-national and corporate levels, forged a network of experts to provide advice on how to harmonize approaches and use indicators to guide policy development, and identified knowledge gaps and research priorities in the area of data and indicators.

In the run up to the conference, a report was launched on 'Measuring Progress towards an inclusive Green Economy', which details a raft of indicators to formulate, focus and track the impact of green economy policies at these three stages of policy development, including:

Indicators for environmental issues and targets

- Climate change - Carbon emissions and renewable energy share;
- Ecosystem management - Forestland and water stress;
- Resource efficiency - Energy, material and water productivity;
- Chemicals and waste management - Waste collection, recycling and reuse.

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Indicators for policy interventions

- Green investment - R&D investment;
- Green fiscal reform - Fossil fuel, water and fishery subsidies, and fossil fuel taxation;
- Pricing externalities and valuing ecosystem service - Carbon price, value of ecosystem services;
- Green procurement - Expenditure in sustainable procurement;



Indicators for policy impacts on well-being and equity

- Employment - Construction, operation and management, income generated;
- Total wealth - Value of natural resource stocks, literacy rate;
- Access to resources - Access to modern energy, water and sanitation;
- Health - Level of harmful chemicals in drinking water, number of people hospitalized due to air pollution.

These and related efforts of UNEP and partners are helping to shape the indicator agenda in the Rio+20 era that has just begun, focusing attention on the Green Economy, the SDGs and the overall post-2015 Development Agenda, and identify the data and metrics that are needed for tracking progress towards 'The Future We Want'.

Greenhouse gas emissions database

(Contributed by Mirella Salvatore and Francesco Tubiello, Climate, Energy and Tenure Division, FAO)

A new domain on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions has just been released on FAOSTAT, the FAO data dissemination platform. This is intended as the first in a range of services aimed at agri-environmental indicators, to help member countries enhance their capacity to identify, assess and report environmental statistics.

In 2011 at the 17th Conference of the Parties in Durban, countries agreed to report their greenhouse gas emissions at least biennially, starting end of 2014. It is in this context, and in relation to emissions from agriculture, forestry and other land uses, that the database can support the needs of FAO member countries.

The newly added Emissions database offers a complete time-series of emission statistics for all countries over the period 1990-2010. It provides countries with regularly updated information to help them consistently identify, assess and report GHG emissions from their agriculture, forestry and other land use sectors.

The emissions estimates are computed from FAOSTAT activity data following the methodology for GHG reporting developed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

After a robust technical peer review of the database from dozens of experts at FAO and around the world, the Emissions database is now open to the public. It is important to understand that the Emissions data are being disseminated to ensure that member countries have a chance to review the database, so that FAO, together with them, can continuously improve it and explore needs for new applications

REGIONAL NEWS

CARICOM continues to strengthen capacity in environment statistics

(Contributed by Philomen Harrison and team, CARICOM Secretariat)

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat continues to work with its member countries in strengthening capacity in Environment Statistics. After the conduct of a regional workshop last year, the Secretariat has followed up with countries relative to progress in maintaining inter-agency collaboration. Environment Statistics focal points were asked to report on their progress in Environment Statistics including Inter-Agency meetings held, progress of data collection, supply of data to CARICOM and with regards to the implementation strategy that was created at the workshop. Emails were sent to countries in June 2012 and reports were received from Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica and Bermuda indicating that these countries met with various agencies to discuss

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the data gaps. The CARICOM Secretariat also published Environment Statistics Metadata which is on its website www.caricomstats.org. With respect to the Third CARICOM Environment in Figures Report - 2005-2009, this report is now scheduled to be published in December 2012.

During the period 19-28 November 2012, the Caribbean Hub sub-component of the European Commission funded three capacity building technical missions in the area of Biodiversity by the CARICOM Secretariat to Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and Jamaica to strengthen the inter-agency coordination in order to enhance the capacity under this theme and also to fill existing data gaps for Biodiversity and other themes under Environment Statistics. It is envisioned that the data collected would in turn assist the countries visited in being able to effectively report on the progress of implementation of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) under the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) and monitor that country's progress towards reducing Biodiversity loss which is the overall objective of the CBD. Further the data are expected to assist the Regional Statistics unit in being able to finalize the publishing of its Third CARICOM Environment in Figures Report - 2005-2009.

The meetings brought together representatives from the National Statistics Offices (NSOs), the focal point responsible for MEA reporting, the environmental agencies, line ministries and other key stakeholders engaged in the production and use of environment statistics. Identified as the "*Environmental Hub*" for the compilation and exchange of data in Caribbean countries, the visits afforded the CARICOM Secretariat the opportunity to report both on the statistics, indicators and metadata compiled by the Secretariat for Biodiversity, Coastal and Marine Resources, Forest, and Land Use and Agriculture as well as to collect additional data from the NSOs that had not been received by the CARICOM Secretariat. The meetings also received reports and feedback from the NSOs and other agencies on the data that they collect and compile, the quality of the data and its limitations, the methodology used, and some of the challenges encountered and that are likely to be faced in the collection and compilation of some of the indicators. The CARICOM Secretariat was able to collect some data under Biodiversity and countries are expected to submit more data for inclusion in the regional report.

The interactions resulted in the following benefits:

- An awareness of the data collected by agencies outside of the NSO which can now facilitate the collection of additional core data and the identification of primary sources of data and the agency responsible for collecting the data.
- The importance and merits of collaboration using either the informal one-on-one approach (NSO and Agency); or the formal Inter-agency approach both of which have been employed in Dominica where four Inter-Agency meetings have been held since the establishing of its Inter-Agency Committee in September last year.
- Initial feedback as it relates to what agencies collect similar data allowing for data collection to be better streamlined leading to increased collaboration and the minimising of duplication.
- Metadata was shared including from the international agencies such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO); and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) from which the metadata was derived. It therefore facilitated a better understanding and clarification of the various categorizations and corresponding definitions used and adopted internationally.
- Current mechanisms, processes and systems were shared for the gathering of relevant data on biodiversity-related MEAs.
- Insights into some of the challenges faced by line ministries were highlighted in both responding to data requested by other local stakeholders and international agencies. It was noted that while the data do exist at the line ministry, the capacity to generate the data in the formats required is not always readily available.
- The benefits of interagency coordination and the role of the statistics unit in providing leadership and overseeing the overall process of data collection and setting standards for data quality were reinforced.
- The use and potential use of GIS technology was emphasised as a best practice in gathering and collecting vital information on the size of protected marine and terrestrial areas, understanding the biology of the area, the impact of determining the extent of forest cover, monitoring and tracking of the changes in the development and use of the land.
- The meeting recognized the need to reduce instances of estimations and further emphasized the need for a more scientific approach to data collection such as the conduct of surveys, the establishing of proper sampling frames and business registers to produce baseline data and the use of internationally accepted extrapolation models.
- The meeting noted the challenges of smaller territories in conforming to the metadata standards as it relates to the definition for Coastal areas and Forest.

Wrapping up the ECLAC-GIZ water statistics and accounts project

(Contributed by Kristina Taboulchanas, UN-ECLAC)

ECLAC's capacity building project on water statistics and accounts is coming to an end. The GIZ funded project has been carried out in close cooperation with UNSD. The two main countries benefiting from the project, Colombia and Ecuador, carried out studies to determine the availability and quality of water information and are currently developing national water collection strategies based

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on the International Recommendations for Water Statistics (IRWS). As part of the project a regional capacity building workshop was carried out in Lima, Peru from 27-29 November 2012 in collaboration with UNSD and Peru's National Statistics Office. Colombia and Ecuador participated to share their experiences and were joined by Chile and Costa Rica.

ECLAC's divisions of Statistics and Sustainable Development have joined forces to carry out a project in collaboration with Mexico's National Statistics Office on strengthening national capacities to measure environmental expenditures. As part of the Project, a Workshop on Environmental Accounts and Environmental Expenditure Statistics was organized from 10-14 December 2012 in Mexico City, Mexico. The three first days focused on environmental accounts with the last two centered on the methodology for measuring public environmental expenditures. Through the project a methodological guide will be developed to help countries interested in calculating public environmental expenditures. The guidelines will be piloted in 2 to 3 countries during 2013.

For more information on the above mentioned activities please contact Kristina Taboulchanas at ECLAC (Kristina.taboulchanas@cepal.org) or 56-2-210-2335.

ECOWAS Environment Statistics Programme

(Contributed by the Directorate of Research and Statistics, ECOWAS Commission)

In the ECOWAS region, water scarcity, water quality and land degradation are of primary concern, and air quality, waste management and biodiversity are also important issues. These environmental concerns cannot be measured without the availability of scientifically reliable information obtained on the basis of knowledge of what is happening both quantitatively and qualitatively. The work of the Directorate of Research and Statistics in ECOWAS Commission on environment statistics started as far back as 2005 initiated by a workshop on environment statistics that was organized by UNSD and UNEP. This work progressed with the council regulation C/REG.24/12/06 in 2006 adopting the Framework for Strengthening Capacity in the Development and Institutionalization of Environmental Statistics in the ECOWAS Region.

The ECOWAS Commission has worked with UNSD and Member States since then to produce an Agreed Core Set of Environmental Indicators and related methodology sheets through a series of regional workshops and meetings. The Commission sent out the methodology sheets and related data collection tables in 2011 to the 15 Member States. So far five countries have submitted data and the Commission is following up with the Member States that did not yet respond. The ECOWAS Commission and UNSD are currently validating the data and are preparing questions to send to countries for clarification. A workshop is planned for 2013 to review the data sent by Member States and to discuss the draft compendium which will be based on the results of the data collected. The Commission plans to publish a first regional environmental statistics compendium by the end of 2013.

During the recent ECOWAS Commission's meeting of the Commission on Trade, Customs, Taxation, Statistics, Money and Payments, comprising the Heads of National Statistics Offices, and which was held in Niamey, Niger from 16 to 19 October 2012, the ECOWAS Core Set of Environmental Indicators and related methodology sheets were adopted for onward transmission to the Council of Ministers.

Joint UNECE/EUROSTAT/OECD Task Force on Measuring Sustainable Development

(Contributed by Vania Etropolska, UN-ECE)

The UNECE work on measuring sustainable development began in 2006 with the Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Working Group on Statistics for Sustainable Development. The outcome of the first stage of the work was published in 2009. It contributed to reaching a common understanding of the principles of measuring sustainable development within the capital approach framework, and in particular of how to monitor the resources that the current generation passes on to the future generations in the form of economic, environmental, human and social capital.

A new Task Force for Measuring Sustainable Development was set up in 2009 to develop the framework further. Progress has been made in several main directions. The framework was extended to include the measurement of human well-being of the current generations and its distributional aspects. Furthermore, the framework took into account the relationships between countries and in particular how a country in its pursuit for well-being of its citizens may affect the well-being of the citizens of other countries. The Task Force also identified commonalities in different indicator sets and carried out a thorough analysis on data availability in national and international databases.

REGIONAL NEWS

UNECE Activities on Production of Environmental Data and Indicators to Further Strengthen Environmental Reporting

(Contributed by Vania Etropolska, UN-ECE)

Close attention to environmental issues has increased the demand for high quality statistics to strengthen environmental monitoring in the UNECE region. The UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy and the Conference of European Statisticians launched in 2009 a Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators. The main task is to review the UNECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, with the purpose to improve environmental data production and promote comparability of environmental statistics in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe. The work brings together environmental experts and statisticians, a cooperation that is crucial to ensure improved methodologies and better time series data. The work is carried out with strong support from the European Environment Agency (EEA) and in close cooperation with other international organizations such as the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), International Energy Agency (IEA), Eurostat, etc.

Over the period 2009-2012, the Joint Task Force discussed in-depth 35 out of the 36 indicators recommended by the Guidelines. In 2013, the Joint Task Force will continue to review indicators from the Guidelines and discuss additional indicators in the area of agri-environment, biodiversity, environmental protection, water and energy. The Guidelines will be updated to take account of the amendments made by the Joint Task Force and to include proposed additional indicators. The updated Guidelines are expected to be finalized by the end of 2013.

The UNECE is currently implementing a UN Development Account project on environmental sustainability in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe. Two workshops took place under the project in 2012. The first workshop, organized jointly with Eurostat and the EEA, focused on waste statistics, and in particular on practical challenges and problems in producing statistics on waste generation and waste management, including recovery and disposal of waste. The second workshop discussed measuring sustainable development and the implications of Rio+20 Conference. The next workshop under the project will be on agri-environmental statistics and is planned for April 2013.

The main achievement is a framework, which links the policy-oriented and conceptual approaches, and shows how the same indicators can be used in a flexible way to measure different aspects of sustainable development. The Task Force took into consideration the work undertaken by other institutions.

The final report will be consulted with the member countries of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in the beginning of 2013 and is planned to be submitted for endorsement by the CES plenary session in June 2013. The report will be a valuable input to the development of the sustainable development goals, defining targets and their measurement.

UNECE Task Force on Climate Change Related Statistics

(Contributed by Vania Etropolska, UN-ECE)

The Rio+20 Summit emphasized that climate change represents an immediate and urgent global priority. As a response to the increasing need for new information for climate change analysis, the CES Bureau established a Task Force on climate change related statistics in 2011. The aim of the Task Force is to define the scope of climate change related statistics and assess the gap between user needs and available statistics. A survey of national statistical offices was carried out in 2011 to take stock of the current state of work on climate change related statistics in the national statistical offices and to identify issues of common concern for further work at international level. The results showed that many statistical offices are involved in the work related to greenhouse gas emission inventories, and several offices produce other statistics related to climate change. The survey was undertaken with support by the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting and UNSD.

The Task Force organized an expert meeting on Climate Change Related Statistics for Producers and Users on 19-20 November 2012, in Geneva. The objective was to explore the user demand and take stock of what statistical offices are doing in climate change related statistics. The meeting brought together over 50 producers and users of climate change related statistics, such as greenhouse gas inventory compilers, environment agencies and ministries as well as statistical offices. Several international organizations, including UNFCCC, EEA, European Commission Directorate-General on Climate Action (DG CLIMA), Eurostat, ILO, UNIDO, World Bank, WMO and WHO took part. The meeting was organised around four sessions: defining the scope of climate change related statistics; user needs and data gaps; good practices of statistical offices; and key directions for future.

The discussions at the meeting provided a valuable input to the report to be prepared by the Task Force. The participants identified some key recommendations for national statistical offices on how to better use the wide range of existing environmental, social and

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economic statistics for climate analyses and emission inventories. A second meeting to discuss the preliminary recommendations is planned for autumn 2013. The final report of the Task Force will be consulted with UNECE member countries and beyond before presenting it to the Conference of European Statisticians in 2014.

More information about the UNECE workshops and meetings is available at: www.unece.org/statshome/meetings-and-events.html.

Second Working Group on Environment and Sustainable Development Indicators (ESDIs) for the Arab region

(Contributed by Wafa Aboul Hosn, UN-ESCWA)

ESCWA organized the 2nd Working Group on Environment and Sustainable Development Indicators (ESDIs) for the Arab region, in cooperation with UNEP, LAS, AGEDI and ISESCO, from 11 to 13 November 2012 in the League of Arab States premises in Cairo, Egypt. The purpose of the Working Group was to assess the progress of Arab countries in preparing the ESDI set and to present the final English and Arabic methodologies. The agenda of the meeting focused on the progress made by countries, the outcomes of GEO5 and Rio+20 and the Eye on Earth Summit, as well as focusing on a smaller set of social, economic and environmental indicators for data collection and report to the LAS since only 13 percent of Arab countries replied on the full list of 83 indicators.

The Working Group agreed on the following recommendations: a) adopting a smaller set of 44 priority indicators for environment, social and economic themes to be implemented within the next two years; b) the necessity to build national capacities in environment and sustainable development in Arab countries; c) request Arab countries to appoint an expert from each national statistical office and ministry of environment to serve as focal points for the working group; d) request countries to reply to the questionnaire of assessing the status of the infrastructure of environment and sustainable development indicators of priority by 15 January 2013; e) the re-confirmation of the necessity to coordinate internally within a country between the data users and producers and appointing the responsible agency to provide the LAS with needed data; and f) encouraging countries to produce a template report for the status of the environment on the national level. For more information, please visit the Working Group website on: <http://www.escwa.un.org/information/meetingdetails.asp?referenceNum=1960E>.

OECD – Working Party on Environmental Information (WPEI)

The 2nd Meeting of the WPEI took place in Paris from 13 to 15 November 2012. Participants discussed the OECD indicators for monitoring progress towards green growth, including the headline indicators, the draft 2013 report and country applications. They endorsed the proposed headline indicators as a basis for further work, subject to written comments from the WPEI. They reviewed the proposed revised OECD Core Set of Indicators, and agreed on priorities for further work (demand based measures of material flows, nitrogen flows, human exposure to PM_{2.5}, land use and land cover, and biodiversity response indicators). The revised sections on inland waters and waste of the State of the Environment Questionnaire were presented at the meeting. Participants welcomed the initiative to develop a set of core tables in support of the SEEA Central Framework. They endorsed the draft report on the implementation of the 2008 recommendation on resource productivity and agreed that a proposed small set of material flow and resource productivity indicators be included in the core set of environmental indicators.

Eurostat – Directors' Meeting on Environmental Statistics and Accounts (DIMESA)

The DIMESA took place in Luxembourg on 20 November 2012. The Meeting discussed progress of the proposed regulation on the new modules of environmental-economic accounts and reviewed the state of the SEEA *Experimental Ecosystem Accounting and Applications and Extensions* that will be presented to the UN Statistical Commission in February 2013. They reviewed progress made towards a first scoreboard of resource efficiency indicators. The Meeting also discussed developments in sectoral environment statistics, including the outcome of the 2012 data collection on waste; the possibility to develop a joint data collection tool for Eurostat water statistics and accounts; transport statistics; energy statistics (with special emphasis on security of supply, environmental impacts and competitiveness of energy markets).

COUNTRY NEWS:

Application of the revised Framework for Development of Environment Statistics (FDES) in Bhutan

(Contributed by Ole Gravgård and Thomas Olsen, Statistics Denmark)

Statistics Denmark applied the draft revised FDES as well as the draft Core Set of Environment Statistics in order to organise information on environment statistics in Bhutan. The mission was based in the Bhutanese capital of Thimphu. The work was carried out within the Danish International Development Agency's (DANIDA), Transition Support Program to Bhutan during a two week mission and in close cooperation with the National Statistics Bureau (NSB) of Bhutan.

The overall objective of the mission was to further develop environment statistics in Bhutan. Key to this objective was ensuring development of environment statistics, and initiating environmental accounts. The mission involved several activities. First of all, after an overview of the NSB publications and plans, a comprehensive assessment of the situation regarding environment statistics was carried out. The assessment was based on two full days of meetings with key persons in several of Bhutan's institutions such as and among others, the National Environment Commission Secretariat and the Department of Planning and Policy of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests.

After the meetings, the findings were organised in the structure of components, subcomponents and statistical topics of the draft revised FDES. For each statistic in the Core Set, it was, as far as possible, indicated whether basic data were available, whether or not the statistics already existed (and in that case, where they were located), what the precise relevance was for Bhutan, and who the primary stakeholders or primary data sources were. The template, developed by UNSD for the Pilot Testing of the Core Set, was used as a starting point with a few adjustments to make it more suited to the specific purpose of the mission and to the situation in Bhutan.

The revised FDES and its application to Bhutan's environment statistics were presented at a workshop, where all stakeholders and staff from the NSB participated. In addition to the presentation of the findings, the workshop also included presentations, which gave an introduction to environment statistics, environmental-economic accounts and environmental indicators. The Core Set with assessment was presented and discussed with stakeholders, upon which, based on discussions, a few adjustments to the set were made to be more specific toward Bhutan's needs. For each of these a preliminary prioritization was made: either short-term, medium-term or long-term development. An indication of already existing statistics was added.

A very important part of the mission was training sessions with the NSB staff. The training sessions were aimed at giving an introduction to the revised FDES and the System of Environmental and Economic Accounting (SEEA), as well as to give more practical guidance on how to actually compile energy accounts as well as air emissions accounts.

The NSB is currently following up on the mission. A questionnaire based on the Core Set was sent to stakeholders to obtain further information on data availability and views on relevance. Another workshop has been arranged with stakeholders for further discussion and to seek conclusions on the Core Set of Environment Statistics.

It was very useful to use the FDES for the organization of the information collected during the mission. The structure of the FDES (components, sub-components, topics and statistics) seemed logical and it was easy to understand and explain to NSB staff and other stakeholders. The Core Set proved useful in this mission, and seems suitable for similar missions starting from scratch.

All in all, it was found that using the revised FDES in Bhutan was a success, and that the FDES was well received by NSB and other stakeholders. Based on this, it was suggested that the NSB should use the FDES to organise the future work on environment statistics.

Upcoming Events:

Statistical Commission (26 February - 1 March 2013)

Side Event on the FDES (25 February 2013)

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