



NEWS & NOTES

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UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-economic Accounting

The United Nations Statistics Division hosted the Preliminary Meeting of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental-economic Accounting in New York from 29-31 August 2005. Participants in the meeting agreed on a Terms of Reference for the Committee, formulated its long-term objectives; developed its programme of work and agreed on its governance. The meeting was organized in response to the request of the United Nations Statistical Commission, which at its 36th session endorsed the creation of the Committee and requested the Committee to prepare its terms of reference. The Terms of Reference of the UN Committee will be submitted to the Bureau of the Statistical Commission for its approval.

The objectives of the UN Committee are: (i) to mainstream environmental-economic accounting and related statistics; (ii) to elevate the *System of integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting (SEEA)* to an international statistical standard; and (iii) to advance the implementation of the SEEA in countries.

In order to achieve the above objectives, five components for the programme of work of the UN Committee have been identified.

- (a) *Coordination:* The UN Committee should foster coordination, integration and complementarity of programmes in environmental-economic accounting and related statistics among international agencies and countries. Leadership, a single focal point, and a coordinated vision among international agencies active in the field of environment are considered necessary to raise the profile of environmental-economic accounting and related statistics.
- (b) *Promotion of the accounts:* Environmental-economic accounting and related statistics are relatively new areas of statistics. The Statistical Commission has underscored the need for raising awareness of the uses of the accounts through the promotion of environmental-economic analysis and for formulating the international priorities based on users' needs. To this end, the UN Committee would promote compilation, harmonisation and dissemination practices for environmental-economic accounting and related statistics in order to meet users' needs. Among others, closer links should be fostered between the

accounts and indicators, including links with sustainable development indicators, millennium development goal indicators and indicators used in poverty reduction strategy papers.

User-producer dialogues would be organized on modules and aspects of the SEEA to advance the implementation and dissemination of the accounts and tables and their time series as part of national statistical programmes and their use in policy making.

- (c) *Implementation of the SEEA:* The Committee would advance the implementation of the SEEA 2003 in countries, starting from a set of simplified, standard tables and working towards more complex and data demanding tables. The UN Committee would foster exchanges of best practices in environmental-economic accounting among countries with experience in the area, focusing not only on the compilation of the accounts but also on their uses in policy making.

The Committee would maintain close communication and collaboration with the UN Regional Commissions and other regional organizations in order to further the implementation and promotion of the SEEA in the various regions.

- (d) *Methodological research:* The SEEA-2003 has been issued as a handbook of national accounting in a white cover format and will be published by the United Nations, the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the World Bank. It represents a major step forward in the harmonization of concepts and methods in environmental-economic accounting. Nevertheless, in order to elevate the SEEA to the level of a standard, the Committee endorsed the update of the SEEA-2003 by 2010. It stressed the importance of linking the release of the SEEA with the release of other international standards such as the updated 1993 SNA and the revised Balance of Payments Manual, which will be issued in 2008.

The Committee would develop a programme of research focusing on refining and clarifying those issues that will permit elevating it to the level of a statistical standard as well as a longer-term research agenda covering those issues that are considered important but will not be resolved before 2010.

(Continued on page 2)

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The UN Committee would prioritise the issues, identify working groups to resolve them (such as the London Group on Environmental Accounting, the upcoming City Group on Energy Statistics, the Intersecretariat Working Group Environment Statistics (IWG-Env), the IWG on Energy Statistics, electronic discussion groups and other expert groups), monitor progress of the working groups, review their recommendations and report to the UN Statistical Commission on the proposed solutions.

Elevating the SEEA to the level of an international statistical standard would imply an agreement on a framework of definitions, classifications, accounts and tables to be compiled at the global level. A quality assessment framework, based on quality frameworks for other statistical standards like the 1993 System of National Accounts and Balance of Payments Manual 5th Edition could be developed for the SEEA. Quality frameworks include the integrity and methodological soundness of the framework of accounts and tables, dissemination standards and documentation of data sources (metadata).

- (e) *Harmonisation of data collection activities and environmental-economic accounting concepts and definitions:* To date, environment statistics and accounting have developed in separate tracks. Methodological advancements as well as experience in implementation suggest the need for bringing environment statistics closer to the concepts, definitions and classifications of environmental-economic accounting. Harmonising environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting concepts, definitions and classifications would introduce statistical checks and balances in the data and produce consistent data systems from individual sets of environment statistics across time and countries. The consistency of the environmental and the economic information of the SNA add considerable value to both the environmental and economic information and improve the quality of both statistics.

The UN Committee would establish a programme of work that identifies differences and similarities between the environment statistics questionnaires and the accounting tables and devise a strategy to bring data collection in line with the accounting concepts and definitions. A minimum set of standard tables would be designed and applied to as many countries as possible. In addition, more detailed tables should be developed for countries in more advanced stages of development of environment statistics and accounting. Where the accounting concepts differ from environment statistics concepts, supplementary tables for data collection should be developed.

The Committee would develop a joint work programme with the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics and the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics to further the harmonization of data collection activities with environmental accounting concept and definitions.

The UN Committee will play a strategic umbrella function in providing vision, coordination and direction for the field of environmental-economic accounting and related statistics. To ensure its strategic role, members of the Committee comprise high level experts from national governments and international organizations with a broad range of experience in statistics and the use of the accounts.

Participants in the meeting elected as chair of the Committee Mr. Walter Radermacher by acclamation. UNSD is the permanent Secretariat of the Committee.
<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envAccounting/ceeameetings.htm>

Reflections on the International Work Session on Water Statistics

The recent Work Session on Water Statistics provided an excellent forum for discussions on developments and shortcomings of current water statistics both at national and international level.

While one of the main aims of the meeting was to examine how the international organisations involved in collecting water data can improve their activities so as to make it easier for countries to respond to the various data requests, some of the issues that came up again and again referred more to internal organisation of data collection within the countries themselves.

Water is a social, economic and environmental good, with competing uses; therefore, it is not surprising that different aspects of water are managed by a wide range of ministries, authorities, agencies, businesses, within countries, referred to here under the umbrella term 'water agencies'.

Data on water resources belong to the field of hydrology. Rainfall data is generally produced by meteorological services. River run-off is measured and modelled, outside the statistical system. Evapotranspiration can only be modelled or detected by remote sensing, not by statistical offices, though they may provide some of the physical data required to feed the model. The emission of pollutants into ambient waters or the quality of water bodies are monitored by environmental or public health agencies.

When it comes to abstraction and uses of water, data on wastewater treatment, or expenditures linked to water management, statistical services are the 'natural' source, i.e. where carrying out statistical surveys and applying statistical methods are the best way to compile the data. This is the case whether the surveys are carried out at the level of the supplier or the user. However, many countries still do not have units responsible for water or environment statistics, so that there is no one body whose role it is to bring all the existing data together from their diverse sources and ensure their consistency both for national purposes and for international reporting.

Several countries provided examples of data providers and other stakeholders forming integrated networks of experts, working together to collect the most needed data and to make optimum use of the data that is collected. The Work Session concluded that this is the best way forward for all countries.

(Continued on page 3)

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Of course, statisticians know that this is rarely as simple as it sounds. Different agencies collect data according to their own needs, which also govern the definitions they apply, the level of detail involved and the method used.

A generally agreed structure for the data is needed to provide coherence that allows a user to progress from the data on water resources, to the uses of water and the generation of wastewater, knowing that the data are part of a consistent framework that allows useful indicators to be compiled and meaningful conclusions to be drawn. A framework will help to streamline data collection, to identify where data is needed but not yet compiled, and where unnecessary duplication is happening.

Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting for Water (IEEAW) provides such a framework. It expands the 1993 System of National Accounts by linking the information on water resources to the economic information thus providing a description of the relationship between water resources and the economy. The meeting recognized that water accounting is a powerful tool for integrated water resources management that facilitates the design of economic

and water policies and the analysis of the impact of these policies.

The implementation of IEEAW requires coordination among the different stakeholders since it cuts across different areas of statistics which are often the competency of different ministries. Countries that have implemented water accounting have reported to the meeting that in their experience the accounting framework proved very useful for bringing together the different agencies collecting and using information on water since all stakeholders derive advantages in combining information from different sources in a coherent framework.

UNSD is leading the efforts of harmonizing data collection activities on water with the water accounts framework, which provides sound methodology, introduces checks and balances to water statistics and facilitates international comparisons. Countries should be encouraged to implement the water accounts in a stepwise manner also in consideration that environmental accounts, including water accounts, will become a standard by 2010.

The implementation of water accounting requires training and funding. To this end, UNSD will develop a promotion strategy of the water accounting framework.

UNSD NEWS

International Work Session on Water Statistics, Vienna, 20-22 June 2005

In June, representatives of 28 countries and a number of international organisations participated in an International Work Session on Water Statistics, organised by the Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics (IWG-ENV), together with the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the UNEP GEMS/Water programme. The meeting was held in Vienna, Austria, at the invitation of the Austrian Environment Agency (UBA). The objective of the Work Session was to examine ways to improve the quality and quantity of water data provided to international data users, for their reports and analyses, and to exchange information on country practices in water statistics.

The Work Session was divided into nine sessions, each focused on a different aspect of water statistics. The topics were discussed on the basis of 35 working papers. These and a summary of the conclusions of the sessions can be downloaded from the UN Statistics Division website.

The meeting concluded that:

- a) water statistics are a basic element of environmental information and should cover the fields of water resources, supply, use, treatment, quality and economic aspects. Currently the quality and accessibility of data does not meet the demand and this situation needs to be remedied;
- b) within countries, data providers and other stakeholders need to be brought together within integrated networks of experts, to work together to collect the most needed data and to make optimum use of the data currently collected;
- c) capacity building for the collection of basic water statistics is required in many countries, some of which do not have statistical units dedicated to water or environment statistics;

- d) water accounts provide a framework for diverse water data and are a powerful tool for water management. The implementation and use of such accounts should be promoted and supported both financially and technically;
- e) within countries there is often a lack of awareness of why international organizations collect water data, and feedback should be given to data providers on how data is used;
- f) regional and international organisations active in the area of water data collection need to work more closely with each other and with UN Water to improve harmonization and reduce duplication;
- g) there is a need to improve access to and interpretation of data by applying standardized metadata;
- h) there is also a need to provide standardized methodologies to be used to aggregate raw data to statistics and to indicators.

The meeting invited countries to:

- establish Environment Statistics units or similar structures to undertake the systematic collection of water statistics;
- create appropriate structures/networks to bring together water data providers and other stakeholders, to ensure that the most needed data is collected and that optimum use is made of the data currently collected.

The meeting recommended the IWG-ENV to:

- set up a subgroup to address the issues above, and to coordinate the work of international organisations on water statistics;
- provide appropriate manuals and methodologies to assist countries in the collection of water statistics. This should be co-ordinated also with UN regional offices;
- explore other possibilities to assist countries in the continuous improvement of data quality.

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/waterstatwkssess.htm>

Meeting of the Sub-group of the London Group on Water Accounting

The meeting took place in New York from 11-13 May 2005. It was hosted by UNSD, the moderator of the subgroup. Participants in the meeting included representatives from developed and developing countries and international organizations. They discussed the draft chapters of the handbook on *Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting for Water Resources*, identified outstanding issues and agreed on the modalities to address them as well as on the process to finalize the handbook.

The draft handbook was presented at the Preliminary Meeting of the UN Committee on Environmental-economic Accounting, which commended the work of the sub-group and urged them to complete the document and submit it to the Committee for its approval. The Committee agreed to approve the handbook in-between meetings.

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envAccounting/sgmeetings.htm>

UNEP Governing Council supports UNSD/UNEP questionnaire

In its 23rd session on February 21st to 25th 2005, the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, in connection with the UNEP Yearbook, discussed the need for better environmental data and invited the countries explicitly to respond to the UNSD/UNEP questionnaire on environment statistics. This strong message on Ministerial level should be an additional motivation for countries to establish or continue national data collections following the methodology of the questionnaire. §7 of decision 23/6 reads as follows:

7. (*The Governing Council*) notes the cooperation between the Executive Director and the United Nations Statistical Division on environment statistics and, in that connection:

(a) Expresses its appreciation for the contribution of environmental data by Governments and international organizations;

(b) Notes the need to continue to improve the quantity and quality of environmental data and statistics and calls upon Governments to undertake national networking for data collection and dissemination and to provide data of high quality and credibility for the *Yearbook* indicators, and to respond to the United Nations Statistical Division/United Nations Environment Programme questionnaire on environment statistics;

(c) Invites Governments and international organizations to support capacity-building for data collection and management in support of the *Yearbook* environmental indicators and also for the broader collaboration between the United Nations Statistical Division and the United Nations Environment Programme on environment statistics;

(<http://www.unep.org/GC/GC23/documents/GC23-Proceedings.doc>).

2004 UNSD/UNEP data collection results on the UNSD website

The first results from the 2004 UNSD/UNEP data collection on environment statistics are now available on the UNSD Web site (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/q2004indicators.htm>). The tables compiled by UNSD cover a range of issues related to Water, Air, Waste and Land. The data are official data supplied by national statistical offices and/or ministries of environment (or equivalent institutions) in countries in response to a biennial questionnaire, sent out most recently in March 2004. They are supplemented by data taken from UNFCCC for data on greenhouse gas emissions, and FAO for data on water resources.

Data from OECD countries and from most European countries are taken from OECD and from Eurostat. The tables you can find now on the UNSD website represent a subset of the data requested by the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire, selected on the basis of data availability and quality. Results show that environment statistics is still in an early stage of development in many countries, and data are often sparse, especially in the form of official country statistics. We invite all countries to verify their data and to send corrections to envstats@un.org. The next data collection is due in March 2006.

Glossary of Environment Statistics

UNSD is currently in the process of revising the Glossary of Environment Statistics that was first published in 1997. The revised Glossary will serve as a reference tool for terms and definitions relevant to environmental data production and use, designed to appeal to both data users and producers in environmental and related socio-economic fields. For the selection of terms, the focus is on the requirements of environmental statisticians, keeping in mind possible data uses in environmental management and policy analysis. It is hoped that the Glossary will be particularly useful to national statistical offices that are embarking on the establishment of national programmes of environment statistics.

Given the dynamic nature of environment statistics it was deemed important to update the earlier version of the Glossary and to promote the harmonization of the terms and definitions contained therein at the international level. A draft revised version will be circulated to experts in international organizations and countries for comments and inputs later this year and will also be presented at an Expert Group Meeting planned by UNSD in 2006. It is expected that the final version will be available on the UNSD website next year and subsequently printed in hard copy.

REGIONAL NEWS

Conference of European Statisticians (CES) Seminar on Sustainable Development

The CES at its 53rd Plenary Session held a full day seminar on statistics on sustainable development. The seminar, organized by Sweden in cooperation with Canada, Estonia, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, Eurostat, OECD, UNSD and UNECE, covered the following broad issues: 1) The role of official statistics in the work on indicators for sustainable development; 2) The need for frameworks and analytical tools; 3) Case studies on the measurement of sustainable development, and 4) Future needs and recommendations.

The participants agreed that national statistical offices are in a good position for the complex work on sustainable development statistics because of their expertise with developing indicators, the availability of much of the required social, economic and environmental data, and high attention to quality. A major challenge is the integration between the different, ecological, social and economic, dimensions of sustainable development. Conceptual frameworks and information systems are essential to ensure coherence and consistency. Statisticians have an important role in developing the underlying theory and frameworks, bearing in mind the practical problems to be solved in their implementation.

The Conference agreed that further work is needed in the area of measuring sustainable development, and asked the Bureau of the CES on how future work should be organized

based on the draft terms of reference to be developed by a group of countries.

<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2005.06.seminars.htm>.

The ECLAC-REDESA project: Regional Meeting on Environmental Statistics

As part of REDESA's working program, during May 5th and 6th, a Regional Meeting on Environmental Statistics was held on Santiago, Chile. The main objective was to present the progress and results achieved by REDESA.

In that opportunity REDESA's team presented BADEIMA, the first Regional Data Base of Environmental Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean, built with information mainly reported directly from the countries. BADEIMA is freely available on REDESA's website.

BADEIMA contains 70 variables covering 10 main areas and is the result of a permanent work between ECLAC and the countries of the region, through their national statistical offices and environmental ministries.

To date, BADEIMA have information for 13 countries: Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Dominican Republic. The available information is based on a set of selected key variables that can progressively grow in time to better describe the regional environmental situation.

BADEIMA and all the other products and results of this project are the outcome of a network of experts and institutions that have been collaborating with ECLAC since the genesis of REDESA. In particular, this last period has served not only to increase the size of this network, but also to boost the communication between all the participants. It's important to remark that this effort will still be part of ECLAC's working plan even when the project ends.

The meeting was also used to formally sign the framework convention between ECLAC and UNEP-ROLAC on collaboration in environmental statistics and accounts, which is mentioned in a separate article in this newsletter

For further information, please visit the web site at www.eclac.cl/redesa or contact the team at redesa@eclac.cl

ECLAC – UNEP-ROLAC agreement on environmental information and statistics

In a framework convention on the cooperation on environmental information and statistics between ECLAC and UNEP-ROLAC, both partners agreed to join forces in the development and use of national and regional environmental information and statistics in the region, with the aim of supporting national policies, integrated environmental assessments and the monitoring of the Millennium Indicators and the objectives of the Latin American and Caribbean initiative on sustainable development (ILAC).

Objectives include the strengthening of national capacities in environment statistics, the improvement of data quality, the reduction of response burden, and a more effective dissemination.

An essential part of the work plan is the harmonization of the ILAC indicators with the ECLAC/BADEIMA data collection, with the ultimate aim to propose a single international environmental data collection to the countries. In order to further develop this idea, a meeting took place in New York

between the UN Statistics Division, ECLAC, UNEP ROLAC, and UNEP Geneva. All partners showed a big interest in a close collaboration and shared the objective of a common data collection. The UNSD/UNEP questionnaire could be the basic vehicle of a common data collection, but needs to be adapted to the needs of all partners. Data validation could be better done by regional organizations, especially when it combined with capacity building. It was agreed to further develop these ideas in a more technical meeting between the partners.

ECOWAS Project

As part of the UNSD/ECOWAS project "Strengthening Statistical capacity-building in support of the Millennium Development Goals in the region of the Economic Community of West African States", a Workshop on Environment Statistics was held in Dakar, Senegal from 28 February to 4 March 2005. The Workshop was organized by UNSD, in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and ECOWAS.

Participants from national statistical offices and environmental ministries/agencies were trained on concepts and methods of environmental statistics and indicators, with a particular focus on the following topics: statistics on water resources, use, treatment and quality; statistics on air emissions and air quality; statistics on waste; and statistics on land use and land degradation. In addition, topics such as the institutionalization and the dissemination of environment statistics were also covered. The Workshop also provided a forum for exchange of information on the status of national environment statistics, as well as established a network of environmental statisticians in the region.

The Workshop was considered an important step for the improvement of environment statistics for the countries in the ECOWAS region. The participants noted that the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics was the appropriate tool to define the data needed and should be used to collect data available on the environment in the ECOWAS region. The Workshop suggested that a strategic framework be developed and approved by the ECOWAS countries, the aim of which is to establish a sustainable institutional framework and the necessary competence to ensure regular and reliable information on the environment. It was also noted that support from international organizations and donors is needed for further capacity building, pilot data collection and for technical equipment. International organizations were urged to agree on a full harmonization and coordination of the information requests to countries. The Workshop called for this initiative to be extended to other sub-regions in Africa with the support of the participating international and regional organizations.

As part of the follow-up to the Workshop UNSD is preparing a report on "The Situation of Environment Statistics in the ECOWAS Countries", which is expected to be available at the end of 2005. The report is based on the country papers prepared for the Workshop, and countries have also been contacted to provide supplementary information for the report.

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/ecowas.htm>

ECE Working Group (WG) on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment

The fifth session of the WG was held in Geneva on 2-3 June 2005. The agenda covered three broad issues: 1) Strengthening environmental information and observation capacity in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (electronic networking

and databases, enterprise environmental monitoring and reporting, environmental indicators, and the second TACIS monitoring project for EECCA countries); 2) Preparations for the fourth Pan European assessment report on the state of the environment, and 3) the WG's work plan for the next two years.

The WG agreed on the key indicators and the indicator description format for the development of a manual on the application of environmental indicators to improve environmental reporting in EECCA countries, to make national assessments comparable, and to facilitate data gathering for future reports. The manual will be finalized in 2006.

The WG discussed in detail the preparations for the next state of the environment ("Belgrade") report. The report will assess environmental developments from the viewpoint of the 6th Environmental Action Programme for the 25 EU member states as well as for those European countries that orient themselves towards EU environmental policies and targets, while the environmental performance of the EECCA countries will be assessed on the basis of the EECCA Environmental Strategy.

The Report is demanding in terms of data. It was agreed that data collection and analytical activities carried out by other organizations such as UNEP, OECD and UNSD will be taken into account to avoid duplication and overburdening countries.

Enhancing Environmental Statistics and Indicators in the CARICOM Region , by Philomen Harrison, Programme Manager, Statistics Programme, CARICOM Secretariat

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat is continuing efforts to facilitate the development of environment statistics in the region. As part of a wider Programme, CARICOM Programme on the Strengthening of Capacity in the Compilation of Social/Gender and Environmental Statistics in the CARICOM Region, emphasis in the first two years (2002-2003) of the programme was in the area of social/gender statistics leading to a report which is currently being prepared based on outputs submitted by Member States. From 2004, the focus on the environmental component was activated and featured prominently in the CARICOM Advisory Group Meetings that oversee programme development, monitoring and assessment. As a consequence of this focus, table formats to be completed by Member States were developed during 2004 and were submitted to Member States, including Associate States in May 2005. The CARICOM Secretariat has been following up the compilation of these statistics. Furthermore, during July the Secretariat organized in-country technical assistance with the objectives to:

- provide assistance in building capacity to generate environment statistics and indicators;
- focus on technical issues of measurement and conceptual issues relative to the compilation of environment indicators according to table formats submitted;
- encourage coordination and collaboration among the statistical department, the environment agency and other stakeholders;
- build capacity in a select group of countries with the intention to promote the exchange of expertise in the region through south-south cooperation and to then expand the group to include the remaining countries.

The Secretariat was able to co-opt the assistance of Mr. Edgar Ek an expert in environment statistics from Belize to visit Member States along with a Consultant attached to the Statistics

Sub-programme of the Secretariat and to undertake the process of building capacity of the Member States of Trinidad and Tobago, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Dominica to produce core environmental statistics and indicators. The main highlights and outcomes of the country-technical assistance visits include: revision of a draft publication being produced by a working group on environment statistics in Trinidad and Tobago; discussions on core statistics and indicators in the areas of population, tourism and agriculture also in the case of Trinidad and Tobago; a discussion of the main environmental issues facing St. Vincent and the Grenadines; encouraging of inter-agency collaboration/visits to these agencies in St. Vincent and the Grenadines; the basis for a further visit by the representative of Belize to enable the development of environment statistics in St. Vincent and the Grenadines; agreement on the development of a committee to treat environment statistics in Dominica and review of the draft publication. Dominica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines will benefit from further visits by representatives from the Member States of Jamaica and Belize respectively in the area of environment statistics later this year. This approach to capacity building highlights the usefulness of South-South cooperation in enabling the production of environment statistics.

In addition, the Secretariat organised a CARICOM Workshop to Review the Compilation of Social/Gender and Environment Statistics that was held in Nassau, The Bahamas, from 12 to 13 September 2005 (see also the article below). The workshop included sessions that brought together Member States to validate environmental statistics and indicators, discuss measurement and definitional issues, sources and uses of these statistics and indicators. The overall objective of the workshop was to strengthen capacity in the development of both social/gender and environment statistics to encourage learning from the interaction across Member States and to enable the finalisation of the statistics and indicators required for the two regional publications in these areas of statistics. The workshop was funded by the World Bank Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building and the United Nations Population Fund to which the region is greatly appreciative. Facilitators at the workshop were the staff of the Secretariat, representatives of Member States and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). All of the above have their origins in the UNSD/CARICOM Project for "Strengthening Capacity in the Compilation of Statistics and Indicators for Conference Follow-up in the CARICOM Region" implemented in 2000-2003 in the areas of social/gender and environment Statistics and which culminated in the production of two regional publications. A reflection that there has been significant progress in the strengthening of capacity in the area of environment statistics is illustrated in the fact that in the current programme 12 Member States and four Associate Member States were able to submit adequate environmental statistics and indicators. With the exception of Belize and Jamaica in the former Project, submissions by the remaining Member States were either relatively sparse or non-existent.

CARICOM Workshop to Review the Compilation of Social/Gender and Environment Statistics (Nassau, The Bahamas, 12-13 September 2005)

The Workshop discussed, inter alia, issues and problems in data compilation for the core statistics and indicators in the social/gender and environmental fields, including those used to measure the achievements of the MDGs. The Workshop was divided into parallel sessions, one on social/gender and the other on environment statistics. UNSD participated as a facilitator for

the Environment Statistics Workshop as well as present the four topics covered by the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics.

The Workshop provided an excellent opportunity for the CARICOM Member States to exchange country experiences in the development of environment statistics as well as to discuss measurement and definitional issues, sources and uses of these statistics and indicators.

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/caricom.htm>.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Meeting of the UNEP Global Environmental Outlook (GEO) Data Working Group (Geneva, 31 October - 1 November 2005).

Annual Directors Meeting on Environment Statistics and Accounting (Eurostat, Luxembourg, 7-8 November 2005).

Meeting of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics (Luxembourg, 9 November 2005).

OECD Latin America and the Caribbean Conference on

Environmental Information and Decision Making (Mexico, 28-29 November 2005).

Meeting of the OECD Working Group on Environmental Information and Outlooks (Mexico, 30 November - 1 December 2005).

Follow Up Meeting of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics (Mexico, 1 December 2005).

Expert Group Meeting on Indicators of Sustainable Development, UN DESA Division of Sustainable Development (New York, 13-15 December 2005).

Expert Group Meeting on Environment Statistics (New York, USA, first half of 2006).

Meeting of the London Group on Environmental Accounting (Pretoria, South Africa, first half 2006).

First Meeting of the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (New York, 2nd quarter 2006)

High level user-producer dialogue on water accounting (New York, 2nd half 2006).

The long time editor of ENVSTATS, Kathleen Suite, is retiring at the end of October 2005 after 11 years with environment statistics and 27 years with the United Nations. We wish her all the best in the coming years.

ENVSTATS

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