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Environmental-economic accounting

Background document
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Coordination of activities of groups working within the mandate of UNCEEA

Prepared by the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting
(UNCEEA)

Introduction

1. The Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEA) provides information on the progress of activities carried out by city groups, other technical expert groups and organizations working within the mandate of the Committee. The present note includes activities related to the work programme of the Committee undertaken and planned by the London Group on Environmental Accounting, the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics, Eurostat, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Bank and United Nations Regional Commissions such as the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

A. London Group on Environmental Accounting

2. The London Group on Environmental Accounting met in Ottawa, Canada from 2 to 4 October 2012. This was the first meeting since the adoption of the SEEA Central Framework as a statistical standard in February 2012. The purpose of the meeting was to present progress on the drafting of the *SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounts* and the *SEEA Extensions and Applications* manuals. There was broad overall endorsement of this work, with good discussions during the meeting and a request for more detailed comments to be forwarded to the editor by 15 October and 22 October, respectively. Several members of the *SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounts* editorial board were present at the meeting and contributed both presentations and to the subject matter discussions. This represents a broadening of the membership of the London Group beyond the traditional focus on national statistics offices, and will likely be a feature of the membership in the future as environmental accounting expands its subject matter domain. Other communications during the meeting were an update on *SEEA Energy*, an update on the *Guidelines for Water Statistics*, and a proposed path forward for *SEEA Agriculture*.

3. The Ottawa meeting was the last meeting of the London Group prior to the submission to the Statistical Commission of the *SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounts* and the *SEEA Extensions and Applications* volumes. Much of the work of the London Group over the past several years has been devoted to this revision of the SEEA. Future work related to the SEEA will likely include input on the implementation strategy and assistance with more specialized volumes in subject matter areas such as agriculture. There remains however, scope for the London Group to address other topics and to return somewhat to its original mandate of providing an avenue for countries to share experiences in environmental accounting and to provide advice and advance research into specific areas of country interest. To this end, the group was left with the task at the close of the meeting to consider and suggest future directions for the London Group. Some ideas that immediately came to the fore include training, building and extending the community of practice, and coordination with other international organizations doing similar work (e.g. World Bank, OECD). This direction will be discussed in future meetings and will move forward in consultation with the members of the UNCEEA.

4. The Ottawa meeting represented the end of the chairmanship of Mark de Haan of Statistics Netherlands, who guided the London Group through the SEEA revision process of the previous six years. Joe St. Lawrence of Statistics Canada was elected as chair of the group for the next 3 years. The 19th meeting of the London Group is currently planned for September or October of 2013, and will be hosted by the Office for National Statistics in London, United Kingdom.

B. Oslo Group on Energy Statistics

5. In the past year the Oslo Group on Energy statistics focused its activities on the preparation of the Energy Statistics Compilers Manual (ESCM). In particular, the Oslo Group has worked on the following activities: (a) the finalization of the country practice template in energy statistics; (b) the collection and dissemination of country practices; and (c) the preparation of the preliminary draft chapters for the 7th Oslo Group meeting.

6. The collection of country practices is coordinated with UNSD to build a knowledge based platform in energy statistics to share experience and provide input into the ESCM. More than 45 countries (covering more than 80 topics) have submitted their country practices which are available on the UNSD website <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/energy/template.htm>.

7. The 7th meeting of the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics, 23-26 October 2012, Helsinki, Finland, was dedicated to the review of draft chapters of the ESCM, the sharing of country experiences and the discussion of future steps for the preparation of the manual. The draft chapters were prepared by chapter coordinators within the Oslo Group and made available prior to the meeting.

8. The ESCM is expected to provide guidance for the implementation of the recommendations provided in the International Recommendations for Energy Statistics (IRES) and the forthcoming System of Environmental-Economic Accounts for Energy (SEEA-Energy). The ESCM will give guidance on how to collect energy data for official statistics based on a multi-purpose approach. The compilers manual will cover both energy balances and energy accounts. Energy statistics are crucial inputs for other fields in statistics, such as the national accounts and for calculations of air emissions. The ESCM will prioritize guidance for areas that have multiple uses of energy data.

9. The ESCM will be of great relevance for the accounts in the SEEA-Energy. The ESCM will be finalized based on consultations with the London Group.

10. The Energy Statistics Compilers Manual is planned to be finalized by 2013. A virtual meeting is planned for the 1st quarter of 2013 to discuss revised chapters and the 8th meeting of the Oslo Group in mid 2013 will be dedicated to the review of the final draft of the ESCM prior to its finalization. Throughout the preparation process, consultation with relevant groups (such as the London Group) will be ensured.

C. Eurostat

11. In 2012 Eurostat work focused on extension of the European Union Regulation (law) on environmental accounts to incorporate three new modules, contributing to the development of SEEA experimental ecosystems accounts and participating in a large number of initiatives of other organizations in the interest of coordination.

12. In 2011 the first European Union regulation on environmental accounts was adopted. This European Union law obliges all Member States to compile environmental accounts in a standard form and to a standard timetable. The first regulation included air emissions accounts broken down by ISIC 2-digit level, environmental taxes and material flow accounts. At that time the principal users in the European Parliament and the European Union Commission made it clear this was only the beginning of their need for environmental accounts. During 2012 Eurostat worked with member states to develop three additional modules: environmental protection expenditure, environmental goods and services sector and energy accounts. The technical aspects of these modules were agreed at the end of 2012 and the package will be forwarded into the European Union legislative process in the first half of 2013. Meanwhile data collection on these and other modules continues on a voluntary basis for many or most European Union countries. Eurostat provides financial support for that voluntary work in order to help developing the needed national infrastructures. Methodological work was advanced in several areas with the help of task forces. Environmental accounts training courses were also organized for European Union countries. This is part of the European Union work to implement environmental accounting and in particular the SEEA Central Framework.

13. Throughout 2012 Eurostat participated actively in expert groups and in the editorial board on the development of SEEA Experimental ecosystem accounts and SEEA Extensions and Applications.

14. Also in 2012 significant effort was devoted to participating in initiatives of other organizations in the interest of coordination, to avoid duplication and unnecessary divergences. These included:

- European Union Commission's initiative on Resource efficiency
- OECD Green growth indicators and Working Party on Environmental Information
- ILO definition of green jobs
- UNEP Indicators for Inclusive Green Economy/Green Growth Policies
- Framework for the development of environment statistics (FDES)
- London Group on Environmental Accounting.

D. Food and Agriculture Organization

15. FAO (Statistics Division) has initiated an internal development process for articulating a minimum set of SEEA Central Framework-based tables relating to the agricultural sector. A preliminary set of Central Framework-based SEEA-Agri Monetary

supply and use tables has been articulated and work is being initiated on the Physical supply and use tables. These will be discussed at the December 2013 African Commission on Agricultural Statistics (AFCAS). This work is being incorporated into the Research component of the Action Plan of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics (GS), which seeks to contribute to a significant improvement in the quality, reliability and cost-effectiveness of agricultural statistics in developing countries. *SEEA-CF* implementation will occur through key Global Strategy (GS) thematic domains, among these, “**Identifying appropriate indicators and collection methods for agri-environmental data**”. There are also strong synergies with several other GS thematic domains:

- **Improving the methodology for data analysis**, with its emphasis on developing or improving methods for data analysis “to inform policy decisions and monitor their impact on household incomes, rural development, and the environment”;
- **Improving the methodology for using administrative data**, with research centered on identifying “where, how, and under which conditions administrative data can be used for producing agricultural, rural, and agri-environmental statistics”;
- **Creating an appropriate reference framework**, where the provision of Guidelines on the development of Sector Strategic Plans for Agricultural and Rural Statistics for mainstreaming agriculture into the national statistical systems overlaps with *SEEA-CF* implementation and its recognition that the development of an accounting framework, the establishment of the relevant statistical infrastructures, and the organization of information are key tasks that cannot be completed within a single agency.

16. The FAO *SEEA-Agri* research program is aimed at facilitating the phased implementation of the *SEEA-CF* for the compilation of internationally comparable environmental-economic accounts for the agriculture sector. Work with pilot countries, through a flexible and modular approach, can help to address some of the key remaining measurement challenges in environmental-economic accounts and statistics relating to physical flow accounts, monetary accounts, and natural resource (asset) accounts. Over the next 12 months, the *SEEA-Agri* research agenda is further articulated below:

- Apply *SEEA-CF* based methodology in data-rich (by confronting and reconciling the basic component data) and data-poor (by identifying gaps and providing the structure for the imputation of missing data) statistical environments;
- Develop a measurement framework — information pyramid — comprised of basic statistics (economic/environmental), accounts (time-series of consistent, coherent, and comparable data), and indicators (linkages across domains) capturing agricultural activity along the value chain.

17. These activities reflect FAO Statistics Division’s commitment to incrementally establishing the technical capacity, given existing resource constraints, for the compilation and regular reporting—through the FAOSTAT platform—on a minimum set of environmental-economic accounts for agriculture with appropriate scope, detail and quality necessary to inform FAO and country specific policy work.

E. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

18. The work carried out by OECD relevant to the programme of work of the Committee covered the following areas: (a) work on indicators to monitor progress towards green growth; (b) work on material flows and resource productivity; (c) review of the OECD state of the environment questionnaire; and (d) review of the OECD Core Set of environmental indicators.

1. Monitoring progress towards green growth: the OECD set of Green Growth indicators

19. At the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting in Paris in May 2011, ministers welcomed the OECD green growth strategy and encouraged OECD to work further on indicators for green growth in line with the report *Towards Green Growth: Monitoring Progress — OECD Indicators*. The report expounds a conceptual framework for measuring green growth, a proposed set of 25 indicators and a measurement agenda to address key issues with an indicator set.

20. Green growth has been defined in several dimensions: (a) pursuing economic growth and development while minimizing pressures on the quality of the environment and on the use of natural resources; and (b) catalysing investment and innovation which will underpin sustained growth and give rise to new economic opportunities. The work on green growth indicators proceeds along five indicator groups: (a) the environmental and resource productivity of production and consumption; (b) the natural asset base of the economy; (c) the environmental dimension of the quality of life; (d) economic opportunities and policy responses; and (e) the socio-economic context and characteristics of growth.

21. Work to advance the green growth measurement agenda in the period 2013-2014 will focus on:

- The further development and specification of the small set of green growth headline indicators with emphasis on (a) natural assets and the calculation of a natural resource index, (b) material productivity including indirect flows embodied in trade, (c) multifactor productivity including environmental services, (d) land use and land cover changes;
- The further development of indicators on biodiversity (response indicators) and national nitrogen balances;
- Development of accounts on land (monetary valuation, volume measures).

22. By their very nature, green growth indicators have to combine economic and environmental information in a consistent way. While there is a substantive amount of economic and environmental data, it is often difficult to combine them due to differences in classifications, terminology or timeliness. A first and crucial ingredient of the measurement agenda is thus to develop and populate a consistent environment-economy accounting framework. Hence, the green growth measurement agenda includes explicit reference to the SEEA.

23. In the period 2013-2014, special efforts will be dedicated to the development of a small set of core tables derived from the SEEA Central Framework to help compile data on stocks and flows of natural resources and on environmental pressures by industry.

24. An updated report on green growth indicators will be published in April 2013; it will be accompanied with the further development of the OECD Green Growth Indicators database. International cooperation on green growth is ensured through the Green Growth Knowledge Platform (<http://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/>).

2. Material flows and resource productivity

25. The work on material flows and resource productivity supports the implementation of the recommendations of the OECD Council on material flows and resource productivity (April 2004 and March 2008). A report on “Material resources, productivity and the environment” will be published in Q1 2013.

26. In the period 2013-2014 emphasis will be given to:

- The further development of the information base on material flows and resource productivity in cooperation with Eurostat, the International Resource Panel (UNEP), and research institutes. The focus will be on unused and indirect material flows embodied in trade.
- The further development of material flow and resource productivity indicators.
- The preparation of a report on the implementation of the 2008 OECD Council recommendation (in 2013); it will be supported with an updated inventory of activities concerning the measurement of material flows and resource productivity.

3. OECD state of the environment questionnaire

27. A review of the OECD state of the environment questionnaire was launched in 2009 in close cooperation with Eurostat, the Statistics Division, UNEP and the Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics. Two draft updated sections have become available in 2012 (inland waters, waste). Other sections will follow.

4. Monitoring environmental progress and performance: the OECD Core Set of environmental indicators

28. A review of the OECD Core Set of environmental indicators was launched in 2011, twenty years after its elaboration. The review has been supported with a broad consultation process involving different OECD Committees and Working Groups, and takes into account developments in other international environmental indicator sets. The updated Core Set will be available in 2013.

F. World Bank

29. To promote sustainable development by mainstreaming Natural Capital Accounting in national accounting systems and development policy and to support

countries with the move to Natural Capital Accounting, the Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES) partnership was launched by the World Bank in 2010.

30. The WAVES Global Partnership is already supporting 7 countries in implementing Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) based on the *System of Environmental and Economic Accounting* (SEEA). Botswana, Colombia, Costa Rica, Madagascar, and the Philippines have embarked on work plans for NCA endorsed at the highest level of their governments, with extensive technical support from WAVES over the next 4 years. These countries have established national steering committees, carried out extensive stakeholder consultations, identified policy priorities and designed work plans for implementation. WAVES is also starting to provide technical support to work on natural capital accounting in Himachal Pradesh (India) and Vietnam. The countries' work plans include NCA for natural resources like timber, water and minerals, following the SEEA Central Framework, as well as experimental accounts for ecosystem services at landscape level, such as watersheds, coastal areas, and protected areas. Under the NCA initiative further steps have been taken to support other 25 countries. A diagnostic tool for the SEEA is being developed and tested, probably in Brazil, in a joint mission by the UN Statistics Division and the World Bank in April 2013. Developed countries including Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and France share technical expertise and experience to support implementing NCA.

31. The major components of the NCA Initiative and WAVES include:

- Implement natural capital accounting in 6-10 countries based on the methodology of the SEEA, which was adopted as a statistical standard by the UN Statistical Commission in 2012;
- Incorporate natural capital accounts into policy analysis and development planning;
- Develop and test out methodology for ecosystem accounting to expand the methodology for material natural resources in the SEEA;
- Demonstrate the policy advantages of NCA and promote the adoption of natural capital accounting beyond the pilot countries.

32. The WAVES partnership includes UN and international agencies, national governments, NGOs and academic institutions. By mobilizing key partners (UNEP, UNDP, UNDESA) the NCA Initiative will be aligned with major policy-based platforms for global outreach and implementation, notably TEEB, and Green Growth-Green Economy as well as the implementation plan for the SEEA by the UN Statistical Commission. The Policy and Technical Experts Committee of WAVES is helping to develop and test out methodology for ecosystem accounting. Working groups with members from academic, NGO, government and international agencies are planning to address methodological issues, carry out case studies, and develop a body of evidence to demonstrate the policy applications of NCA.

G. Economic Commission for Africa

1. Environmental statistics and accounting

33. Since 2011, a series of workshops and seminars was conducted by United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in collaboration with United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and its other partners in an effort to advocate the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA); build up the capacity of the Member States for the implementation of this new international statistical standard; provide forums for international and regional organizations and countries to exchange and share experiences in data collection, compilation, and dissemination for environmental statistics and accounts; and establish a network of environmental statisticians among the countries as recommended by the Action Plan of the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

34. These include the Workshop on Environment Statistics and Accounts in Addis Ababa in March 2011 for countries in Eastern and Southern African regions; Workshop for the Implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water (SEEA-Water) and the International Recommendations for Water Statistics (IRWS) in Pretoria, South Africa in June 2011 for selected countries in the Southern African region; Workshop on Environment Statistics in Yaoundé, Cameroon in December 2011 for the Central African region; Workshop on Water Accounts and Statistics in September 2012 in Rabat, Morocco for French speaking countries of North Africa; and most recently, the Workshop on Sustainable Development Indicators: Conceptual Framework, Data Collection, and Analysis in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in December 2012. Many international and regional organizations, including the African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Union Commission (AUC), the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Sub-regional Institute on Statistics and Applied Economics (ISSEA), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), have sent their representatives to participate and contribute to the above workshops and seminars.

2. Sustainable development indicators

35. The process has not only contributed to the development of statistics itself but also been integrated directly into the related policy discourse, research, and analysis in the African region as exemplified in the latest “Workshop on the Sustainable Development Indicators: Conceptual Framework, Data Collection, and Analysis,” which was also part of ECA’s efforts to strengthen capacities at regional, sub-regional, and national levels for assessing and monitoring progress towards sustainable development in Africa. It was conceived and organized as an integral part of the activities underway to produce the Fifth Issue of the Sustainable Development Report on Africa (SDRA-V), which is produced jointly with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Industrial Development

Organization (UNIDO), the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Development Bank (AfDB), under the theme of “Achieving Sustainable Development in Africa through inclusive Green Growth.”

36. For this purpose, ECA was working closely with its Member States and partners to develop a set of sustainable development indicators to be used for the assessment of the economic, social, and environmental performance at the regional, subregional, and national levels as well as for policy research and analysis. Based on the set of indicators, a questionnaire and glossary were prepared, in which the names and definitions of the indicators were standardized following the related international statistical standards, including the System of National Accounts, 2008 (2008 SNA) and the latest 2012 SEEA, particularly on the capital and asset accounts. Thereafter, the Questionnaire and accompanying Glossary were sent to 14 pilot countries, and later will be sent to all the African countries, for collecting data to be used in the SDRA. In addition to the questionnaire sent to the countries, ECA devised an online data compilation mechanism to be used by the pilot countries.

37. The workshop brought together about 40 experts from national statistical organizations (NSOs) and entities in charge of the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development from the 14 countries selected to pilot national-level data collection for sustainable development (i.e. Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Mauritius, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia and Uganda), as well as representatives of the AUC, FAO, and UNEP. In addition to the elaboration on how to apply the SNA and SEEA, among other international statistical standards, as the conceptual frameworks for compiling the sustainable development indicators, participants in the workshop also reviewed the proposed set of sustainable development indicators against data availability at the country level and proposed experiences and good practices in data collection.

3. Assessment, evaluation and monitoring

38. The Pan-African Institutions, namely the AfDB, AUC, and ECA, along with UNEP are currently working on a Questionnaire designed to assess and evaluate the status of the environmental statistics and accounting in African region. This is based on the observations and recognitions from the above workshops that, on one hand, the overall availability of environmental statistics and account is still very inadequate in Africa due to problems faced by countries, including a lack of data coordination and harmonization, inadequate adoption and application of international statistical standards, weak technical capacity, a lack of adequate human, technical, and financial resources. On the other hand, there is an increasing demand for the related environmental data to meet the needs for policy research and analysis. The environment and climate change constitute major development challenges in the 21st century. Development sustainability requires harmonious natural resource management. The challenge is how to conserve natural resources and ecosystems and combat climate change; at the same time, to address urgent issue of poverty alleviation and infrastructure problems compounded by population growth while economies heavily dependent on natural resources.

39. Topics in the Questionnaire cover major environmental issues and their place in development policy, production structures and their coordination, material resources available to production structures, environmental data sources, availability of environmental data, compliance with international and regional standards, compliance with the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA), implementation of the system of environmental-economic accounting, and major hurdles. The Questionnaire will be sent to the NSOs and the UNEP focal points to ascertain that the questionnaire is completed in time by all stakeholder structures and ensure initial control thereof before transmission. A report will be prepared after filled-out Questionnaires are received and related information processed; and a follow-up regional meeting will be held to review and discuss the report.

40. The information collected by the Questionnaire is expected to provide more broad and in-depth information and knowledge of national practices regarding environmental information systems, which will be very useful for the regional and international organizations to improve the design of their projects and programmes for mainstreaming environmental issues, promoting sustainable development integrating economic, social, and environmental dimensions; and assisting African countries to build human and institutional management capacity for providing more reliable and up-to-date environmental statistics production mechanisms to guide policy formulation and assist in decision-making in this area.

H. Economic Commission for Europe

1. Measuring sustainable development

41. 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 2009¹. 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.

42. 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.

¹ <http://www.unece.org/stats/archive/03.03f.e.htm>

43. 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.

44. 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.

2. Improving environmental data and production of indicators to further strengthen environmental reporting

45. 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 Environmental Programme (UNEP), International Energy Agency (IEA), Eurostat, etc.

46. 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.

47. 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.

3. Climate change related statistics

48. 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.

49. 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.

50. 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 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.

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

I. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

52. Ongoing activities in environmental-economic accounting and supporting statistics at ECLAC include finalizing the ECLAC - German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) Water Statistics and Accounts project. The project will end in February 2013. The main outputs will be water statistics collection strategies for Colombia and Ecuador based on the International Recommendations for Water Statistics (IRWS) and SEEA-Water.

53. Under a regional project on environmental expenditures, in collaboration with ECLAC's Sustainable Development Division and Mexico's INEGI, ECLAC's Statistics Division is carrying out a project to strengthen capacities in the generation of environmental expenditure statistics. The goal is to generate the basic statistics necessary to eventually be able to compile environmental expenditure accounts. The project is focused at the moment on developing guidelines to measure public sector environmental expenditures that will be piloted in 2-3 Latin American countries.

54. Regarding new activities, ECLAC is involved in a Regional Public Goods project (with the Inter-American Development Bank and INEGI Mexico). The title of the project is Development and Strengthening of Official Environmental Statistics through the Creation of a Regional Framework in Latin America and the Caribbean. The project consists of the elaboration of a regional strategy and action plan. Within this strategy and action plan the implementation of the SEEA will be considered.

J. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

55. During 2012, ESCAP took some initial and experimental steps towards integrating the SEEA into its statistical training programmes. Training sessions on SEEA were included in two courses organised by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP). A module on SEEA was added to an advanced course on the System of National Accounts (SNA) hosted by the Bank of Korea and as part of SIAP's annual four-month basic training course for junior statisticians held in Japan. ESCAP is now currently working to further develop the training materials for use as part of an expanded curriculum of online training.

56. In December 2012, ESCAP's Committee on Statistics held its 3rd session in Bangkok, Thailand. For the first time since its reconstitution in 2009, the Committee discussed specific proposals for regional activities to improve environment statistics, with a focus on the context of sustainable development and green economy policy. The Committee endorsed several new activities, including establishment of an online knowledge centre on environment statistics issues and of an informal regional network of experts. The agreed international standards, guidelines and terminologies for statistics, in particular those endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission, will be used to define the scope for these new regional initiatives.

K. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

1. Continuing training and capacity building on SEEA-Water at the ESCWA region

57. In the framework of the European Union (EU) funded project "Towards a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) in the European Neighbourhood" (ENPI-SEIS project) implemented by the European Environment Agency (EEA), and the follow up on the implementation of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) project on building capacities in environment statistics, indicators and accounts (2007-

2010), the EEA, UNSD and UN-ESCWA held a Workshop on Water Accounts and Statistics for Mediterranean Countries at the UN House in Beirut, Lebanon, on 20-22 March 2012. Four Mediterranean countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine) attended the meeting, with four participants from each country representing the National Statistical Offices and the Ministry of Environment and Water.

58. The goals of the workshop were to explain how water accounts and statistics can be used for fact based policy making; to provide guidance to the participants, through hands-on examples, on how to implement water accounts and statistics in their countries according to SEEA-Water and the International Recommendations for Water Statistics (IRWS), as well to establish and/or strengthen the coordination mechanisms for the implementation of water accounts and statistics in the countries; and to identify the key steps in the preparation of a statistical program to complete water accounts and statistics. At the end of the workshop, countries agreed on the importance of completing the water accounts in their countries due to its importance and have set a work plan with a schedule for each country aside, on how to complete the accounts. Additional information about the workshop is available on the [ENPI-SEIS Website](#) and on the [ESCWA website](#).

59. The UNSD regional advisor on environmental accounting provided technical assistance to Egypt preceding the meeting to develop hybrid and monetary accounts for Egypt. More requests have been received by ESCWA mainly by the Ministry of Water in Saudi Arabia to develop water accounts for the Kingdom.

2. Promotion and presentation of SEEA in the context of World Water Day, Green Economy and TEEB

60. The UNSD regional advisor on environmental accounting provided a statement on the benefits of using SEEA during the celebration for of the World Water Day, which was organized on 22 March at the UN House in Beirut by ESCWA, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the UN Information Centre in Beirut (UNIC) in the presence of the Ministers of Water and Energy and the Minister of Agriculture of the Lebanese Government.

61. The SEEA was presented in the context of green economy and the economics of the environment as input to the Capacity-building Workshop for North Africa and the Middle East on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) held from 21 to 23 February 2012 in Beirut, Lebanon, see website: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=WSCBTEEB-MENA-01>. The SEEA was also presented within the framework of green economy for the region at the meeting “Economic Policies Supporting the Transition to a Green Economy in the Arab Region” held at the United Nations House, Beirut, Lebanon, on 20 - 21 July 2011. In both meetings, there was great interest from the participants to develop SEEA in their own countries.