



# envstats

## News and Notes

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

## FOCUS:

### Some common themes, related to statistics and measurement, resonate through the Rio+20 compilation document

#### IN THIS ISSUE

##### Focus

##### UNSD News

##### International News

##### Regional News

##### Country News

##### Recent Events

##### Upcoming Events

#### CONTACT US

ENVSTATS  
DC2-1418  
2 United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017

Fax: 1-(212)963-0623  
E-mail: [envstats@un.org](mailto:envstats@un.org)

The second Preparatory Committee Meeting for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) invited all member States, United Nations system organizations and stakeholders to provide inputs and contributions to the compilation document that is to serve as a basis for the preparation of a zero-draft of the outcome document of the UNCSD.

This article examines the inputs which were submitted in English, with a view to identifying those issues relating to the statistical and measurement concerns of the stakeholders who contributed to the compilation document.

In an attempt to organize the comments, the article will look at the following areas:

#### Measurement issues of environmental sustainability

It is generally accepted that, in relation to environmental sustainability, there is a compelling need for appropriate and robust indicators for monitoring progress in meeting targets, goals or other commitments such as the Rio Conventions, and the Millennium Development Goals. Further, there should be a more balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions within sustainable development that allows for accurate portrayal in quantitative terms.

More specifically, the production of green economy indicators was an often-cited concern among the comments provided. Countries, as well as international agencies mentioned the need for development of indicators that would constitute evidence of progress towards a green economy as a common and pressing concern. Other themes were also mentioned as topics of critical national importance and vital global concern in measuring progress. These include: climate change, biodiversity, freshwater and the health impacts of environmental pollution. The dearth of relevant gender- and tourism-related environmental data that also take economic implications into account was well documented. Indicators on water and linking water use to agriculture were cited as essential. Additionally, for a significant number of the stakeholders, there was the recognition that existing valuation methods for “natural capital” may not be adequate (for example the concept of regeneration speed may not be taken into account sufficiently in the valuation) and therefore natural capital may not be appropriately reflected in environment statistics and accounts, and as a consequence is not correctly represented in policies or in the markets.

Yet other considerations that came to the forefront related to the quality of statistics that are needed for: ascertaining environmental trends, assessing progress in the domain of environmental sustainability and for evidence-based decision making. In particular, concerns were raised about the need to address methodological discrepancies, data gaps and lack of clear guidance in the production of environmental statistics and indicators. Other quality-related concerns centred on ensuring that statistical systems are capable of generating statistics that are timely and internationally comparable. One characteristic that was often-mentioned as being desirable was that any indicators that are developed should be versatile or flexible enough to respond to differing national, regional and international demands, and should be based on cumulative efforts and aggregated knowledge on the subject. They should also be capable of demonstrating the effectiveness of regulatory and non-regulatory actions.

*(Continued on page 2)*



## FOCUS:

(Continued from page 1)

### **Institutional arrangements that affect data collection, analysis and use**

At the institutional level, strengthening the capacity of national statistical offices to produce environmental statistics and indicators seemed almost a mantra. Some developing countries self-identified their deficits in the area of conducting technical assessments and developing data collections of relevant and appropriate environment statistics; or acknowledged slow rates of progress or limitations in the current data and statistics on the environment. Other countries expressed concern regarding ownership of the data and reservations about sharing data and the confidentiality issues that can arise in making data available more widely. A number of international agencies and some countries also registered concerns about coordination and harmonization. They mentioned the necessity for coordination beyond national and regional boundaries, especially with regard to: global earth observation, climate change projections, data integration and analysis and appropriate and harmonized systems for the management of data.

### **Solutions that have been suggested by respondents**

Many countries and international agencies posited solutions and ways forward. These included a recommendation for the exchange of best practices, including through regional mechanisms. Another view was expressed that collaboration should be encouraged among actors in the international community to ensure that the body of knowledge that has already been accumulated in the different domains of environmental sustainability is put to full and optimal use. A suggestion was made to revitalize the programme on indicators of sustainable development, currently being carried out by the United Nations Division for Sustainable Development, implementing it at national and regional levels and mainstreaming it through the work programme of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). A repeated wish was that a well-studied and common framework for measuring environmental sustainability would be developed and recommendations made for data collection within the realm of official statistics. UNSD recognized the applicability of the emerging revised Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES) as the general framework for guiding the process of prioritizing, collecting, structuring, describing and disseminating policy-relevant environment statistics and the System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting (SEEA) as a means of developing and broadening the production of statistical data series on the green economy by linking environmental and economic data in a common framework.

## UNSD NEWS:

### **Revision of the UN Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES)**

The Third Meeting of the Expert Group (EGM) on the revision of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES), organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), was held in New York from 2 to 4 November 2011.

The meeting was attended by experts from Australia, Austria, Belize, Canada, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Guinea, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, Philippines, the United States of America, the European Environment Agency, Eurostat, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the United Nations Development Policy and Analysis Division.

The discussions were based on the draft chapters of the revised FDES that had been circulated in the Expert Group before the meeting, and presentations or introductions made by UNSD. The objectives of the EGM were to make a realistic assessment of the current state of the draft, identify the remaining tasks and steps and set up the adequate mechanism to implement them.

The Expert Group acknowledged with appreciation the progress of the draft chapters of the FDES but at the same time recognized that there was still significant work left to be done to produce the final draft. It discussed the draft chapters, identified the gaps, and made detailed substantive and editorial recommendations to improve the document.

The experts agreed that the time left for finalizing the document and carrying out a wide consultation process before the 43<sup>rd</sup> session of the Statistical Commission was limited and considered important that neither the quality of the FDES, nor the legitimacy of the consultation process be compromised. The Group therefore recommended that work should focus on the development and finalization of the core chapters of the FDES, namely the conceptual foundation, structure and components of the FDES and the core set of environment statistics. These core chapters will be presented to the Statistical Commission together with the detailed description of the remaining process to conclude the revision, including global consultation and testing the FDES in pilot countries.

# UNSD NEWS:

## UNSD Environment Statistics - Data Collection and Dissemination

### UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire 2012 on Environment Statistics

The UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire 2012 on Environment Statistics will be the seventh round of UNSD's biennial environment statistics data collection mandated by the Statistical Commission. The UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire will be sent to more than 170 countries and territories, excluding OECD and European Union members (for which comparable data are collected as part of the OECD/Eurostat Joint Questionnaire on the State of the Environment). The Questionnaire will be sent to both National Statistical Offices and Ministries of Environment in participating countries. Participating countries are encouraged to nominate a single national focal point for the 2012 Questionnaire. In this regard, an announcement letter will be sent to the heads of the respondent organizations. Following from the prior three rounds, the 2012 Questionnaire will consist of two sections: waste and water. Each section of the Questionnaire will include a list of relevant definitions and comprehensive guidance to assist respondents with filling the tables. After validation of the responses, the results from the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaires will be disseminated on the UNSD website through the UNSD Environmental Indicators tables and maps (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/qindicators.htm>) and in Country Snapshots ([http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/Questionnaires/country\\_snapshots.htm](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/Questionnaires/country_snapshots.htm)), as well as on UNData (<http://data.un.org>). The published results from the 2012 round are expected to be available in early 2013. UNSD appreciates countries' continuing support on the improvement of timely and reliable global environment statistics.

If you have any questions or comments, please send them to: [envstats@un.org](mailto:envstats@un.org).

### UNSD Country Snapshots

The Country Snapshots, which include many of the indicators from the UNSD Environmental Indicators list, in addition to other economic and demographic background information, have also been updated. These Snapshots provide data about the environment and other related statistics at a point in time that will allow comparison between countries. Data come from a variety of sources including UNSD, as well as several other international organizations. The themes covered by the Snapshots are Air and climate; Biodiversity; Economy; Energy; Land and agriculture; Population; Waste; and Water and sanitation. The latest Country Snapshots can be found at: [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/ENVIRONMENT/Questionnaires/country\\_snapshots.htm](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/ENVIRONMENT/Questionnaires/country_snapshots.htm).

Selected water and waste statistics compiled from the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics, complemented by data on EU and OECD member and partner countries from OECD and Eurostat, are also now available through UNData (<http://data.un.org>).

## International Seminar on Green Economy and Official Statistics

(Seoul, Republic of Korea, 6 - 8 July 2011)

The Seminar was organised by the United Nations Statistics Division, in collaboration with Statistics Korea, the national statistics office of the Republic of Korea.

The concept of a green economy has become a centre of policy debates in recent years. The United Nations General Assembly has decided that one of its major themes for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, is "A green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication."

The following outcomes were envisaged for the Seminar:

- A recognition that official statistics will be required to inform on green economy issues and that national statistical systems will accordingly need to adapt;
- An emerging understanding of the key issues/indicators that official statistics will need to focus on;
- A sense of the work that international agencies and the United Nations Statistical Commission might best focus on, over and above what they are already doing, to support countries in this work.

A number of key themes emerged as conclusions of the Seminar.

The Seminar recognised that, at both the national and the international levels, the policy agendas have two dimensions: adapting existing economies to become more environmentally friendly ("the brown economy becoming green") and growing the economy through emerging opportunities arising in production of "green" goods and services. The policy agendas are driven by a number of key concerns built around energy issues, climate change/ greenhouse gas issues, water scarcity in some countries, the environmental implications of production and consumption activities and the need to identify catalysts for future economic and social development.

*(Continued on page 4)*



*(Continued from page 3)*

A diverse range of statistics is likely to be needed to inform on green economy issues and appropriate well-defined frameworks, methodologies and classifications will be needed to be able to link these data together. The Seminar emphasized the role of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounts (SEEA) in compiling statistics on the interaction between the economy and the environment.

Policy priorities of countries are likely to vary and hence the statistical priorities will also vary among countries. These priorities will, however, be shaped by the international perspective. The OECD has agreed on a set of indicators to support its green growth agenda. The seminar was informed that the United Nations Environment Programme and the Division of Sustainable Development are developing a list of indicators to support the green economy initiative. The International Energy Agency presentation described the range of statistics needed to inform on energy issues. Such already developed lists of indicators should be reviewed, complemented and harmonized to the degree possible to arrive at an internationally agreed standard set of indicators to inform on green economy issues.

Seminar participants felt that it would be helpful if the key conclusions from the Seminar could be conveyed to the 43<sup>rd</sup> session of the United Nations Statistical Commission in the context of the agenda items relating to the SEEA and the revised Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES).

UNSD is initiating a project to assist countries in the production of indicators that inform on the green economy/green growth. The project will be carried out in 2012-2015, covering all regions, focusing on assistance to developing countries.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS:

### **Monitoring and Assessment of GHG Emissions and Mitigation Potentials in Agriculture**

(Contributed by Robert Mayo and Francesco Tubiello, FAO)

Agriculture needs to play a more fundamental role in addressing climate change. The sector is both a major emitter of greenhouse gases (GHG) and vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Developing countries, especially least developed countries (LDCs), have tremendous opportunities for implementing climate change solutions in their agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors in ways that are consistent with their rural development priorities for increasing food security and enhancing ecosystem resilience. To help countries take advantage of these opportunities, agriculture should become an integral part of post-2012 climate policy agreements and funding mechanisms.

Currently, countries report their GHG emissions through National Communications to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). However, knowledge gaps and a lack of capacity prevent many countries from creating a coherent and comprehensive database on greenhouse gas emissions. This makes it difficult for them to identify their potential priorities for climate change mitigation and access climate funding effectively.

To fill this need, FAO's Mitigation of Climate Change in Agriculture (MICCA) Programme, with initial funding by the Norwegian and German Governments, has begun a three-year project to establish a GHG database. The database, developed in conjunction with the FAO Statistics Division, will become an integral part of a new set of agri-environmental indicators that will expand relevant environmental domains and accounting systems within FAOSTAT. These will include a set of 19 indicators described by 68 data series being developed in cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and EUROSTAT.

Through an on-line portal, the database and its underlying metadata, including a wealth of information related to life-cycle analyses of production systems, will provide knowledge, tools and guidelines to countries, especially LDCs, that need to identify national mitigation goals and strategies to access the Green Climate Fund via their Nationally Appropriate Mitigations Actions (NAMAs). This project will also directly contribute to the UN Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 5th assessment report.

A presentation describing the project 'Monitoring and Assessment of GHG Emissions and Mitigation Potentials in Agriculture' was recently presented at the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of The Wye City Group on Rural Statistics and Agricultural Household Income.

A pdf version of the paper is available at:

[http://4thwyeconferencerio.ibge.gov.br/images/Papers/4\\_Paper\\_56\\_Tubiello\\_Mayo\\_Salvatore.pdf](http://4thwyeconferencerio.ibge.gov.br/images/Papers/4_Paper_56_Tubiello_Mayo_Salvatore.pdf)

For more information about MICCA, visit: <http://www.fao.org/climatechange/micca/en/>

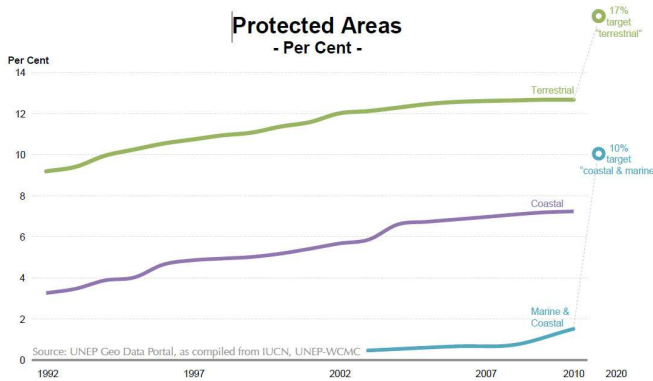
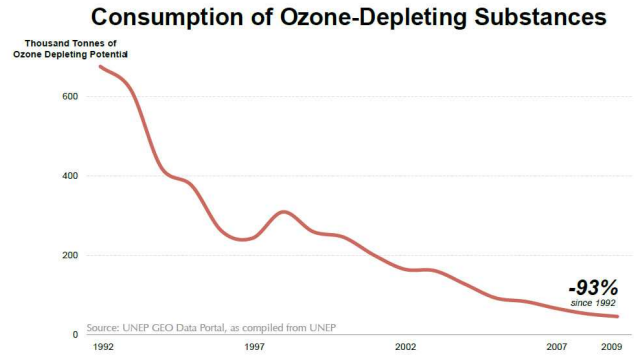
Robert Mayo: [Robert.Mayo@fao.org](mailto:Robert.Mayo@fao.org)

Francesco Tubiello: [Francesco.Tubiello@fao.org](mailto:Francesco.Tubiello@fao.org)

## UNEP - 'Keeping Track' on the Road to Rio+20

(Contributed by Jaap van Woerden, UNEP)

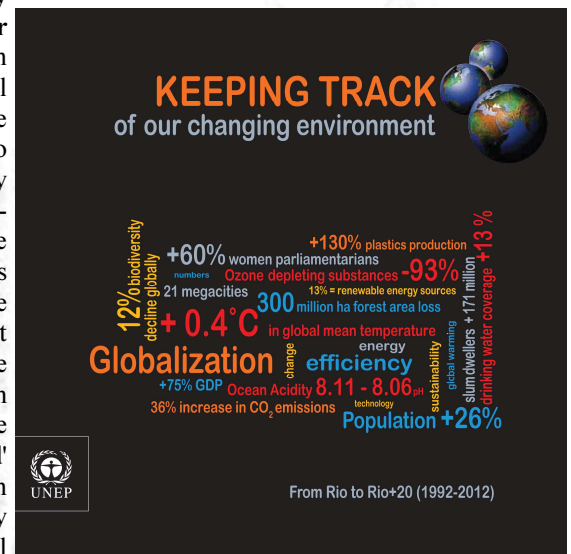
Environmental statistics lie at the heart of UNEP's 'indicators-based' assessment and reporting work, as exemplified by the new Green Economy Report (<http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/>), the various reports of the International Resource Panel ([www.unep.org/resourcepanel/](http://www.unep.org/resourcepanel/)), the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) (<http://www.unep.org/geo/>) or the annual Yearbook series (<http://www.unep.org/yearbook/>). Detailed environmental data form the scientific and empirical basis of these assessments and reports, and indicators are used throughout to summarize, present and communicate results to target groups. Where possible indicators show progress towards quantified goals and targets, although in the environmental realm there are not many of these. Environmental targets are still largely defined in qualitative terms, while the most successful conventions or protocols are those which have clear numerical goals set out, such as in the areas of protected areas or consumption of ozone-depleting substances.



The upcoming Rio+20 Conference presents a timely, global-level opportunity to address progress and gaps in implementing goals as part of an acceleration and scaling-up of transformative actions, programmes and policies. While moving towards the Rio+20 Conference in an ever-more globalised and integrated world, the need to chart progress towards a global Green Economy and more efficient and effective international environmental governance becomes vital. Together with key partners, UNEP is currently looking at how to define indicators that show progress towards a global Green Economy and analyze how to substantiate these with real statistical data, where possible connecting to standard accounting frameworks and statistical data collection efforts in regions and countries.

### Collaboration with UNSD

Focusing on the Rio+20 Conference in June 2012, and as part of the GEO-5 assessment process, UNEP has recently published a report that shows major changes since the first Rio Conference in 1992 by means of key indicators. This report, entitled **'Keeping Track of our Changing Environment: From Rio to Rio+20'** is entirely based on environmental data, and tracks 20 years of changes in the human and natural environment that have occurred up to the present. The highly illustrative publication, to which UNSD provided extensive substantive inputs, helps to tell the story of where the world was 20 years ago and where we collectively stand today, and to show the direction in which we need to move in a post-Rio+20 world. Clear graphics on environmental themes such as climate change, biodiversity, atmosphere, land and oceans, along with other themes such as environmental governance, energy and technological progress, are represented through trend lines or other graphics. The document shows that while some improvements in environment and human development have occurred, in most realms the environment continues to deteriorate or remain 'steady state' at best. This key document also highlights the need for more systematic data collection and monitoring, in order to support 'evidence-based' policy-making – in today's world, what is not measured cannot be managed. In particular we lack knowledge and data on topics related to freshwater quality and quantity, ground water depletion, ecosystem services, loss of natural habitat, land degradation, chemicals and waste—due to lack of regular monitoring, collection and compilation of data. Scientifically-credible data for environmental monitoring remains inadequate and the challenge of building in-country capacity to produce better policy-relevant data needs urgent attention.





## REGIONAL NEWS

### **CARICOM: European Union and the UNSD Support Environment Statistics in CARICOM**

(Contributed by Philomen Harrison, CARICOM Secretariat )

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat continued the thrust to develop Environment Statistics with the convening of the **CARICOM Workshop on Environment Statistics and Indicators on 12-16 September 2011 in Basseterre, St. Kitts and Nevis**. The workshop was funded by the European Union (EU) under the Ninth European Development Fund (9<sup>th</sup> EDF), Caribbean Integration Support Programme (CISP). The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) provided Technical Assistance to assist in the facilitation of the workshop. The workshop was attended by most of the Member States and Associate Members of CARICOM.

The main aim of the workshop was to facilitate information interchange and discussions that would serve to clarify issues and problems on the data compiled and submitted for the third CARICOM regional publication; identify gaps in the data compiled and mechanisms through which these gaps can be filled; validate the information and strengthen capacity in the bridging of the existing gaps. Participants were informed about the origins of this area of statistics in the Community which was the conduct of a UNSD/CARICOM Project, "Strengthening Capacity in the Compilation of Statistics and Indicators for Conference Follow-up in the CARICOM Region and the development of the CARICOM Programme in Environment and Social/Gender Statistics, post the Project, by an Advisory Group that included Directors of Statistics of member states to enable sustainability and to institutionalize these areas of statistics. The workshop was also informed about international developments in Environment Statistics including the revision of the UN Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES) and the development of the core set of environment statistics; and on the main conclusions of the Expert Group Meetings on the FDES.

The workshop considered the compilation of statistics in the following areas: Population and Households; Tourism; Environmental Health; Natural Disasters; Energy and Minerals; Coastal and Marine Resources; Land use and Agriculture; Forests; Biodiversity; Air; Water; and Waste. The workshop also focused on the activity to increase collaboration at the national level through establishing Inter-Agency Committees to enable increased compilation of Environment Statistics and Indicators. Three approaches were used by countries relative to national level collaboration: One-on-One approach; the formation of formal committees; and the convening of formal meetings within an established mechanism/existing group or committee operating in the area of the Environment. It was recommended that while Member countries should use the approach that best works for them, efforts should be made by countries to convene a formal inter-agency meeting at some point in time since these serve to promote the use of data across all agencies; to strengthen the National Statistical Systems; to engage stakeholders in improved understanding of the statistics to be compiled; to provide feedback on problems in the statistics that they provide; and to improve the quantity, harmonisation and reliability of statistics produced. The workshop also recognized some of the challenges faced by participants and recommended the need for countries to strengthen this area of statistics.

The workshop undertook a review of statistics, indicators and metadata submitted by member countries including the major data gaps, and provided clarifications across all the environmental themes with respect to concepts and definitions, methods of computation/ measurement, proxy measurements, etc. Group level deliberations occurred, in which recommendations to improve the production of data and metadata were derived for all themes relative to the filling of data gaps. The groups also deliberated on a Work Plan to enable the collection, compilation and dissemination of Environment Statistics for the period 2011/2012. The metadata documented during the workshop would be refined for dissemination in the CARICOM Region while the Work Plan is currently being refined and should impact the work to be put in place over the next year.

### **UN-ECLAC - National Training Workshop on the Construction of Environmental Statistics and Indicators in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**

(Contributed by ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean)

The ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean implemented a regional training workshop on the Construction of Core Environmental Indicators for the Caribbean, in Port-of-Spain on 6-10 December 2010, in collaboration with the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). The success of this workshop resulted in a request to implement a similar workshop at the national level from the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines through the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment. In response, ECLAC together with the UNSD, assisted in designing and delivering the substantive aspects of the workshop which took place on 19-21 September 2011 in Kingstown.

The workshop comprised 24 participants representing a wide cross-section of ministries and departments, statutory bodies, and agencies charged with the responsibility for the preparation of Millennium Development Goal 7 and/or environmental national reports.

*(Continued on page 7)*

## REGIONAL NEWS

*(Continued from page 6)*

Over the three day period participants shared and put into practice basic concepts of environmental statistics and indicators and developed a set of relevant and common environmental indicators based on the core set of environmental indicators for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) sub region along with Millennium Development Goal 7 indicators, and those pertaining to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification (45 in total). Participants also practiced working through a methodology for the description, calculation, and dissemination of environmental indicators which incorporated statistical and inter-institutional aspects according to international and regional recommendations and best practices.

A key outcome of the workshop was the compilation of a road map outlining action points and the way forward. This focused on the establishment of a formal sub-committee, led jointly by the National Statistical Office and the Environmental Unit, in the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment, whose main responsibility would be to coordinate the collection of environment statistics across various line ministries and departments in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. ECLAC will follow up on this workshop by conducting a post-training evaluation six months after the workshop to assess the transfer of knowledge and actual impact of the training in improving the collection of environmental statistics and constructing indicators.

For more details please see the workshop report available on-line at:

<http://www.eclac.cl/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/publicaciones/xml/8/45048/P45048.xml&xsl=/portofspain/tpl-i/p9f.xsl&base=/portofspain/tpl/top-bottom.xslt>

## UN-ECLAC - Recent and Ongoing Work

*(Contributed by Kristina Taboulchanas, UN-ECLAC)*

### **National Training Course on the Construction of Environmental Indicators (Quito, Ecuador)**

Ecuador's National Statistics Office, in collaboration with ECLAC and UNSD, organized a training workshop from 22-26 August 2011 on environmental indicators. The training was aimed at officials of the NSO, ministries, regional and local authorities and other organizations responsible for generating environmental information.

The primary objective of the training workshop was to develop and strengthen national technical capacities of public officials in the production, processing, systematization and dissemination of environmental indicators in Ecuador. This training workshop was based on a series of ECLAC courses on Statistical Methods for Building National Environmental Indicators.

More than **50** participants attended the 5-day workshop where a set of 12 national environmental indicators were constructed, debated and peer-reviewed, as well as revised by the senior trainers. These indicators will eventually form part of Ecuador's national set of environmental indicators.

### **Technical workshops on the elaboration of water statistics and accounts (Quito, Ecuador and Bogota, Colombia)**

In the context of the capacity building project funded by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, ECLAC in close collaboration with UNSD organized two training workshops for inter-institutional teams responsible for the development of national water statistics systems. The first was carried out in Quito, Ecuador from 20-23 September and the second in Bogota, Colombia from 26-29 September 2011. In total, 74 national officials representing NSOs, line Ministries and National and local water authorities received practical training on water statistics and accounts. In the Bogota workshop, country teams from Bolivia and Peru also participated with the financial support of the Andean Community. The main objective of the workshops was to apply the concepts and methodological framework proposed by the International Recommendations for Water Statistics (IRWS) and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounts for Water (SEEA-Water) to strengthen and develop national technical capabilities in the production of water information.

### **Study tour on environmental expenditure statistics (Madrid, Spain)**

ECLAC's Division of Sustainable Development in collaboration with the Statistics Division organized a three-day study tour to Madrid, Spain to exchange knowledge and experiences in measuring environmental expenditures. Spain's National Statistics Office hosted the event, which was attended by representatives from Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico and ECLAC. The main objective of the activity was to share the methodological framework within which environmental protection expenditures are measured in Spain and answer questions related to the definition of environmental expenditures, the classification of economic transactions, the sources of information used in Spain, etc. Moreover, the workshop aimed to provide a forum for the national teams from Latin America to share their experiences and progress in this field.

*(Continued on page 8)*



## REGIONAL NEWS

*(Continued from page 7)*

### **Methodological developments and operational challenges in environment statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean (Punta Cana, Dominican Republic)**

On 14-15 November 2011 the Regional Working Group on Environment Statistics of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, in collaboration with ECLAC, UNSD and with the financial support of the Knowledge Transfer Network (<http://www.ceacepal-rtc.org/>), held a regional seminar to discuss methodological developments and operational challenges in environment statistics. The objective of the workshop was to present methodological developments in the field of environment statistics and share global, regional and country progress in the development of statistics on emerging issues. The seminar focused on presenting advances in the revision process of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES) along with the Core Set of Environment Statistics, sharing progress on the development of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounts (SEEA) and debating the statistical needs and challenges faced by Latin American and Caribbean countries in emerging topics such as Climate Change and Green Growth.

### **High level seminar on Environment Statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean (Punta Cana, Dominican Republic)**

As part of the official program of the sixth statistical conference of the Americas that took place from **16-18 November** in the Dominican Republic, a high level seminar was held to share successful experiences and good practices in the field of environment statistics. The seminar consisted of a panel event co-organized by Mexico's National Statistical Office (NSO) which acts as the coordinator of the Regional Working Group on Environment Statistics, ECLAC and UNSD.

During the seminar, the President of the NSO of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Executive Director of Ecuador's NSO presented experiences of institutional strengthening and development through the creation of environment statistics divisions within their institutions. The Director of Environment Statistics of Mexico's NSO described his institution's experience in generating environment statistics with a particular emphasis on the use of administrative records and environmental modules integrated into their censuses and surveys. Additionally, a representative of the Central Bank of the Dominican Republic presented his country's experience in water accounting, and the Director of Colombia's NSO presented a successful example of the kind of inter-agency cooperation that led to the generation of a single geo-referenced record of persons affected by the floods in Colombia. Lastly, ECLAC, on behalf of the Working Group on Environment Statistics, presented the results and reflections from the seminar entitled "New methodological developments and operational challenges in the field of environment statistics" which was held on 14 and 15 November 2011 in the Dominican Republic. Following are some of the highlights:

- There is growing demand for official environment statistics for evidence-based policy and decision making;
- Emerging and crosscutting issues, such as climate change and green growth are presenting new demands and challenges for national statistical systems;
- The majority of national statistical systems in the region report difficulties in meeting the growing and complex demands for information;
- The Working Group on Environment Statistics recognizes that environment statistics, like economic, social and demographic statistics, should fall within the purview of national production of official statistics;
- Incorporating the production of environment statistics into national statistical plans would facilitate the provision of adequate human and financial resources;
- Inter-agency cooperation and partnerships with ministries of the environment, central banks and other relevant sectoral authorities are essential for the production of environment statistics.

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



## REGIONAL NEWS

### ECOWAS - Towards a Compendium of Environment Statistics

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

The ECOWAS Commission's objective to meet the demands of its results-based agenda has led to an effort to produce the first edition of a report on environment statistics in collaboration with UNSD.

This is coming up as a result of the adoption of the Framework for Strengthening and Improving Capacity for the Coordination, Production and Dissemination of Environment Statistics in the Member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region. The Commission has organized a series of workshops and meetings, during which period the ECOWAS core set of environmental indicators, together with methodology sheets, has been developed and agreed upon.

A questionnaire based on the methodology sheets was also developed and sent to Member States for data collection. It is expected that by the end of 2011 completed questionnaires would have been sent by all the Member States to the ECOWAS Commission for collection, analysis, compilation and dissemination. The Commission plans to publish a compendium on environment statistics by 2012 that will contain statistical tables, graphical information such as charts and maps, regional tables and country profiles to make it user friendly.

To facilitate the active participation and understanding of all the Member States, the ECOWAS Commission envisages translating all documentation on environment statistics into the official languages of the ECOWAS Member States before the end of 2012.

ECOWAS and the Member States are to develop more synergies with regional statistical training institutions and development partners for the development of training modules and capacity-building activities in the region on environment statistics.

The ECOWAS Commission assisted Sierra Leone to organize a national stakeholders workshop on environment statistics in August 2011 which is described in more detail in the article contributed by the Statistics Sierra Leone under Country News.

### UN-ESCAP - Report on Green Growth

(Contributed by Hitomi Rankine, Environment and Development Division, ESCAP)

While countries in the region are driving the global "green growth" agenda, policymakers are facing a new economic reality and heightened uncertainty. The challenge of eco-efficient economic growth and inclusive resource use is critical and growing in several countries.

A forthcoming report produced jointly by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) will focus attention on these challenges.

The report, titled "Green Growth, Resources and Resilience: Environmental sustainability in Asia and the Pacific" presents new [regional and country data](#) produced by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation of Australia (CSIRO) and UNEP and provides insights to key policy arenas for greening of growth.

The report is the sixth in a series of reports produced every five years by ESCAP for [the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development](#). It is also the third in the [ADB's Asian Environment Outlook series](#), and is also oriented to supporting preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

A preview has been published and is available at: <http://www.unescap.org/esd/environment/flagpubs/GGRAP/>

## REGIONAL NEWS

### UN-ESCWA - Compendium of Environment Statistics in the ESCWA Region, 2010-2011

(Contributed by Wafa Aboul Hosn, UNESCWA)

#### Background:

The economic development in the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) region is accompanied by an overexploitation of resources and adverse impacts on the environment, particularly in terms of deteriorating air and water quality, diminishing water resources, land degradation and desertification, and loss of biodiversity, all of which affect the sustainability and the quality of life in the region.

Significant progress was observed in compilation and dissemination of environment statistics, indicators and accounts. Basic environment statistics and indicators are now produced by most member countries. Pilot water accounts have been produced for Bahrain, Egypt, and Oman. Advanced accounts are produced in Jordan according to the System of Environmental Economic Accounting for Water (SEEAW) which was adopted by the Statistical Commission in 2007 as an interim International Standard. Improvements in data collection and dissemination of water and waste statistics were also observed through a 14% increase in the response rate of member countries to the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics in 2010 and a 27% increase in water indicators with data and an 82% increase in waste indicators with data. As a result, ESCWA improved the quality and coverage of its Statistical Information System (ESIS), for environment, water, and energy statistics modules (<http://esis.escwa.org.lb>) thus increasing free accessibility and wider use of indicators.

#### Objectives:

This publication is the third issue covering environment statistics. The ultimate objective of the publication is to disseminate, as widely as possible, environment statistics on ESCWA countries.

The rise of ESCWA countries' interest in environment statistics has encouraged ESCWA to gather and publish environment statistics in the region. The publication, containing the most related environment problems and issues for the region, encouraged ESCWA countries to participate in the publication through editing and reviewing of compiled environment statistics. Five ESCWA countries have replied to the draft tables and edited data. This step was highly encouraged by countries and they opted to express their gratitude on this matter.

#### Contents of publication:

The publication includes seven chapters on environment statistics and covers the 14 ESCWA countries. Chapter one outlines the freshwater resources and management in the ESCWA countries, including freshwater resources, abstraction, use, per capita indicators, water scarcity and market including current and future investments in water and wastewater, water pollution parameters (biological and chemical), wastewater management and concludes with pilot water accounting for Egypt.

Chapter two deals with fisheries production and availability in ESCWA countries; while chapter three revolves around the biodiversity resources available, management of these resources and the contribution of biodiversity to the national economy. An overview of waste management is presented in chapter four with all related data. Chapter five includes data on air pollution such as CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, Ozone depleting substances consumption, CFCs and HCFCs and national air pollution data including specific parameters.

Chapter six covers energy consumption in ESCWA with oil, natural gas, electricity and energy consumption figures of every ESCWA country and average for the ESCWA region and GCC sub-region. Finally, chapter seven discusses the MDG Goal 7 on ensuring environmental sustainability with statistical data related to access to improved water and sanitation.

### European Environment Agency - Towards a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) in the European Neighbourhood - The ENPI-SEIS Project

(Contributed by Cécile Roddier-Quefelec, European Environment Agency)

**A first round of ENPI-SEIS country visits to the South and East was held in 2011.** In the first half of 2011 visits were conducted to Algeria, Jordan, Egypt, Palestinian Authority, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and in the second half to Belarus, Israel, Moldova, Lebanon, Tunisia, Ukraine and Russia.

The purpose of these two-day visits was to bring together existing country networks which manage environmental information, to identify country-specific elements and needs related to SEIS components (content, infrastructure, institutional cooperation), to obtain feedback on country specific needs and readiness for SEIS implementation in the priority areas identified. The National Focal Points

*(Continued on page 11)*



(Continued from page 10)

of each country are now working together with the EEA on the finalization of the country reports and a detailed work plan, which will serve as a basis for project activities in 2012 and further work in the coming years.

Based on the key findings of the country visits, and initial stage of activities towards SEIS implementation in the two regions, the ENPI-SEIS Steering Committee meeting was held in Copenhagen on 24-25 November 2011. During the meeting participants took note of the latest SEIS developments, provided feedback on the process of organizing the country visits and their impact on national level, as well as discussed the way forward and the work plan for 2012.

For the South region, the work plan will be organized around the implementation of specific pilot activities for Horizon 2020 review mechanism, supported with regional workshops and trainings on water statistics and water accounts, as well as on waste statistics (to be implemented jointly with UNEP/MAP, Eurostat, UNSD), as well as capacity building and expert support in environmental data collection, management and QA/QC, including setting-up of a working group on IT.

For the ENPI East the proposed regional activities include workshops and trainings on GHG and air pollution inventories, as well as on water statistics in support of the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (to be jointly organized with Eurostat), as well as a possible waste statistics workshop following the discussion at the October meeting of the UNECE Joint Task Force. Similarly to the South, capacity building and expert support activities are envisaged for the ENPI East region.

**Guidance document on SEIS** (so called 'cookbook') bringing together good practices and examples of developing and implementing Shared Environmental Information System on a country level is now being prepared, based on the experience and working progress on SEIS in the EEA/Eionet member and cooperating countries. The ENP countries have underlined the usefulness of such a document during the country visits made.

The 'cookbook' will be organised around different sections, the first one giving a general overview of SEIS structured around the three main components (Content, Infrastructure and Institutional cooperation). The other section will be a collection of good practice examples that are documents illustrating SEIS principles explained on the basis of the three components, emerging from EEA cooperation with EEA member countries, cooperating countries in the West Balkan, ENPI East, ENPI South and various International organisations.

The 'cookbook' will be an electronic document and it is expected that the first version will be ready by the end of 2011. It is to be noted that the 'SEIS cookbook' will be a living document and will be continuously updated with new examples as technology develops and new systems to support sharing of environmental information are introduced.

**At the seventh Ministerial Environment for Europe summit in Astana**, Kazakhstan ministers of Environment agreed to establish a regular process of environmental assessment underpinned by indicators and to develop the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) across the region. The European Environment Agency (EEA), the European Commission and Member States have been using the ideas underpinning SEIS to gather data over the last 5 years. In the Ministerial Declaration, the EEA was given the flagship role to support the future of environmental reporting in the pan-European region.

More information on ENPI-SEIS Project is available here <http://enpi-seis.ew.eea.europa.eu>

## Joint UN-ECE/EUROSTAT/OECD Task Force on Measuring Sustainable Development

(Contributed by Vania Etropolska, ECE Statistical Division)

A Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Task Force for Measuring Sustainable Development set up by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) launched its work in 2010. It follows up on previous work<sup>1</sup>, which was based on the capital approach to measuring sustainable development. The objective of the new work is to further advance the conceptual framework and identify indicators to present the long-term dimension of sustainable development. In addition, indicators to present the quality of life of the current and future generations are also being developed.

The work has progressed in several directions. The Task Force prepared a draft report that highlights the importance of both the present and the future aspects of the wellbeing. The proposed set of sustainable development indicators covers the "needs of the present generation", the "needs of the future generations" and the "international dimension". The Task Force plans to finalize the report in 2012.

The work of the Task Force follows up on the decision of the Economic Commission for Europe taken at its 64<sup>th</sup> session held in March 2011, which requests the CES to develop a framework for measuring sustainable development within the realm of official statistics. The work of the Task Force is also strongly linked to the work undertaken by other institutions, such as the recommendations of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission, the European Commission's initiative "GDP and Beyond", and the OECD project on Measuring the Progress of Societies. The Task Force closely follows the work of the Sponsorship Group on Measuring Progress of Societies initiated by Eurostat and INSEE, France.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.unece.org/stats/publications/Measuring\\_sustainable\\_development.pdf](http://www.unece.org/stats/publications/Measuring_sustainable_development.pdf)

## REGIONAL NEWS:

### UNECE Intersectoral Task Force on Environmental Indicators

(Contributed by Vania Etropolska, ECE Statistical Division)

A Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators established in 2009 by two UNECE Sectoral Committees, Committee on Environmental Policy and Conference of European Statisticians, continued its work to improve data production and promote comparability of environmental statistics in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. The United Nations Statistics Division and the European Environment Agency are actively involved in the work of the Joint Task Force by providing financial support and expert knowledge.

During the five meetings, held in 2009-2011, the Joint Task Force reviewed 31 of the 36 indicators recommended by the *UNECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (Indicator Guidelines)* endorsed at the Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” in 2007. These include environmental indicators in key areas such as clean air, energy, drinking water, waste, forest biodiversity, sustainable transport, etc. The Joint Task Force also considered additional indicators that are important but are currently not included in the *Indicator Guidelines*, namely the indicator of environmental expenditures, agri-environmental indicators, energy and environment indicators, and new water and biodiversity indicators.

The work will continue in 2012 to further review the *Indicator Guidelines* and agree on the inclusion of additional indicators. Further work will also include the development of a core set of indicators that could be the basis for a regular collection of data. Two workshops will be organized under a UN Development Account project in areas where further methodological work is needed. The first workshop will focus on waste statistics and is planned to take place back-to-back to the next meeting of the Joint Task Force.

### UNECE Activities on Climate Change Related Statistics

(Contributed by Vania Etropolska, ECE Statistical Division)

The Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) asked the UNECE secretariat to undertake a survey among the CES members to explore the degree to which national statistical offices (NSOs) are involved in climate change related work and to identify issues of common concern to be addressed at the international level. For this purpose the secretariat prepared a questionnaire in consultation with experts from Statistics Norway, Statistics Finland, Eurostat and the European Environment Agency.

The questionnaire covered two main parts: a) NSOs’ involvement in producing data for greenhouse gas emission inventories; and b) NSOs’ work on climate change indicators to measure the impact and effects of climate change. The questionnaire also included more general questions about issues, priorities and future plans of NSOs concerning climate change related statistics.

The survey was carried out in 2011 in close collaboration with Eurostat and in coordination with the UN Statistics Division. The UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting expressed support for the work. In total, 47 countries from the UNECE region and beyond replied to the questionnaire. A small Task Force will be set up to identify the scope of work based on the results of the survey and assess the gap between the user needs and the available climate change related statistics, including international reporting activities. The Task Force will present a work plan to the CES Bureau in February 2012.

## COUNTRY NEWS:

### National Workshop on Environment Statistics—Sierra Leone

(Contributed by Andrew A. Kamara, Statistics Sierra Leone)

The growing importance of ensuring sustainable development in the ECOWAS region recognizes that sound policy decisions must be made using timely and reliable information. A major difficulty in assessing the implementation of such decisions and progress made in achieving the seventh MDG, however, has been the lack of basic environmental statistics and indicators. Environment statistics is relatively new to Sierra Leone and it is in this regard that Statistics Sierra Leone (SSL), in collaboration with the Ministry of Lands, Country Planning and the Environment, organized a two day national Workshop on Environment Statistics in August 2011. The main objectives of the Workshop were to:

- establish a consultative network on environmental statistics in Sierra Leone;
- initiate plans for a national database on environmental statistics and indicators;
- develop plans for a national compendium of environmental statistics;
- discuss among the various stakeholders how to improve the data on environmental indicators for MDG Goal 7; and
- assist Sierra Leone to contribute to the collection of data for the agreed set of environmental indicators for the ECOWAS region and to respond to the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics.

(Continued on page 13)



## COUNTRY NEWS

*(Continued from page 11)*

Mr. Andrew A. Kamara, Senior Statistician and focal point for environment statistics - SSL, gave an overview of the Workshop and Mr. Andrew Bob Johnny, Director of GIS and Censuses – SSL, delivered the welcome address. Mr. Cyril Jusu, Chief Environment Officer Ministry of Lands, Country Planning and the Environment spoke on the need for and uses of environment statistics. Mr. Ibrahim G. Kargbo, Director of Data Processing, SSL formally opened the Workshop on behalf of the Statistician General. At least one participant from each organization (33) attended the Workshop.

The topics presented at the Workshop were as follows:

- Recent Developments in International Environment Statistics – United Nations Statistics Division
- Regional Programme on Environmental Statistics and Indicators – ECOWAS Commission
- Strategic Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics in the ECOWAS Region –ECOWAS Consultant
- International Data Sources for Environment Statistics – United Nations Statistics Division
- UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics – United Nations Statistics Division
- National Communication of Sierra Leone on Climate Change – National Coordinator for the Climate Change Project for Sierra Leone
- Nigerian Experience in Environment Statistics – ECOWAS Consultant

The participants were divided into four working groups, each group comprising 4-5 participants, based on the following eleven (11) themes: Natural Disasters and Environmental Performance, Air, Land, Agriculture, Forest and woodlands, Coastal and Marine Resources, Freshwater, Biodiversity, Energy, Waste, and Health and Environment, each working group was asked to focus on 2-3 themes. There was excellent participation in the working groups and each group then presented their comments to the plenary. The comments provided were very constructive which demonstrated the commitment and involvement that the various stakeholders have in the whole process.

The Participants resolved on the following activities as the way forward:

- Establish a Memorandum of Understanding between Statistics Sierra Leone and the Ministry of Lands, Country Planning and the Environment.
- Establish a Committee led by the Ministry of Lands, Country Planning and the Environment and Statistics Sierra Leone, to coordinate the activities of environment statistics in Sierra Leone.
- Update the list of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to be included in the Committee.
- Establish a unit of environment and energy statistics at Statistics Sierra Leone.
- Build and maintain a database on environment and energy statistics.
- Establish an ad-hoc committee comprising selected members that would meet on a regular basis.
- Source funds from/through ECOWAS and other multilateral agencies, such as UNDP or UNEP, and other development partners.
- Create a web site at Statistics Sierra Leone for the dissemination of information on the environment.
- Establish and/or strengthen statistical units in relevant MDAs and Local Councils.
- Submit data from relevant agencies to Statistics Sierra Leone, as agreed upon during the Workshop, within 2 weeks for the completion of the ECOWAS indicators.
- Participate in further capacity building workshops organized by ECOWAS and UNSD.
- Develop an implementation plan at the MDAs for the collection of environment statistics.
- Designate participants of the Workshop as focal persons for environment statistics in their various organisations.

The Workshop raised awareness and understanding of international concepts and definitions as well as best practices in the field of environment statistics. It helped to bring stakeholders together, collect additional information and relevant suggestions for improved data collection methods and knowledge about methods of dealing with the problem of data gaps.

SSL is grateful to all the persons and bodies, especially UNSD and other participants who contributed to this Workshop. Special thanks to the ECOWAS Commission for financing this Workshop.

## RECENT EVENTS

### UNSD Workshop on Environment Statistics for South-East Asian Countries

(Hanoi, Vietnam, 5-7 December 2011)

The Workshop was organized by UNSD in collaboration with the General Statistics Office of Viet Nam and was held in Hanoi. The Workshop was attended by 17 participants from National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and Ministries of Environment or other relevant line ministries from five countries (three national delegates from Cambodia, Laos, Timor Leste, Myanmar and five from Viet Nam.) A representative of the UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) and a staff member from the UNESCAP Statistical Division also participated in the Workshop. The total number of participants including UNSD staff was 21.

The general goals of the 3-day workshop were to review the state of environment statistics in the five countries, provide fundamental knowledge in the field, and assess the needs and resources to engage in future technical assistance and capacity building. The Workshop included the planned sessions to present and discuss: (i) the assessment of the state of, and need for, environment statistics in the five countries; (ii) the fundamentals of environment statistics; (iii) existing methodological resources for the production of environment statistics; (iv) review of new developments in methodology, in particular the revision of the FDES and the Core Set of Environment Statistics; and (v) requirements for training and capacity building in environment statistics.

The participants worked together as national teams elaborating their national presentations according to the directions that had been sent to them in the preparatory phase. The participation of the two regional bodies UNEP and UNESCAP was very important in deepening the understanding of the most important environmental issues and challenges for the participating countries. UNSD delivered presentations on different aspects of environment statistics including the fundamentals, existing and emerging conceptual and methodological resources and data sources as well as the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics. The participants showed high interest in the technical aspects, especially in the development of the Core Set of Environment Statistics.

It was evident that countries were at differing levels of development. Two countries have already published their State of the Environment Report while some have not produced any environment data to date.

There was general appreciation for UNSD's organization of the training in the domain of environment statistics, which is a new area in the participating countries. Participants especially welcomed the idea of bringing together the main national stakeholders (NSOs and the relevant ministries) into the Workshop. In the final session, there were recommendations pertaining to technical assistance and capacity building needs at both the national and regional levels. The identification of requirements can serve as a basis to identify resources to provide further technical assistance to these countries in the organization and development of the production of environment statistics.

### Environment statistics and indicators take a step forward in Central Africa

(Yaounde, Cameroon, 5-9 December 2011)

A Workshop on Environment Statistics was organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa, and was held at the Sub-regional Institute for Statistics and Applied Economics (ISSEA) from 5-9 December 2011 in Yaoundé, Cameroon. This Workshop, conducted in both French and English, was attended by some 37 participants drawn from national statistical offices and ministries of environment from Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and São Tomé and Príncipe. This presented a rare opportunity to harvest the synergies that accrue from the collaboration of persons responsible for data collection, analysis and interpretation in the same statistical domain, but from different national agencies. The Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC), the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), ISSEA, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), also participated. The Statistics Division of FAO, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) could not attend, but prepared presentations that were delivered by UNSD.

The objectives of the Workshop were to: (a) adopt a list of environmental statistics and indicators for the Central African region for national and regional reporting, based on the African regional list of environmental statistics and indicators discussed and agreed upon at several other UN organized workshops on environment statistics for African countries (e.g., those in the ECOWAS region); (b) review methodologies for the ECOWAS regional core set of environmental indicators for use in this region; (c) develop a way forward for a draft regional programme on environment statistics; (d) train participants from national statistical offices and environmental ministries/agencies on basic concepts, methods and best practices in environment statistics; and (e) provide a forum for exchange of information on the status of national environment statistics.

*(Continued on page 15)*



## RECENT EVENTS

(Continued from page 14)

In addition to the presentations made by the resource persons, presentations were also made by each of the countries represented. Country participants dilated on the state of their countries' environments, providing details on current national practices and future plans of work in the area of environmental statistics and indicators. During the Workshop participants were also involved in Working Group Sessions where much information was shared on challenges and practical measures for developing and addressing work programmes on environmental statistics and indicators. Arising out of totality of these deliberations, were a number of recommendations that evolved as the consensus of opinion on the key issues addressed by the Workshop.

The recommendations received the enthusiastic support of all the participants, who promised to do their parts in carrying forward this important aspect of the development of the environmental statistics and indicators that are necessary for enhancing decision-making at the regional, national and sub-national levels. The recommendations included: targeting efforts to improve the methodologies for collecting data; involving specialized regional institutions and others in the harmonization of environmental statistics and indicators; organizing necessary training workshops and other activities to enhance the development of environmental statistics and indicators; and preparing a strategic environment statistics framework plan for the 2012-2015 period. Many of the recommendations involved stakeholders other than those present at the Workshop. These entities will be encouraged to give the agreed actions the prominence they deserve and support the efforts of the participants by garnering the needed financial support for the recommendations.

The documents of the Workshop can be accessed at the webpage of the Environment Statistics Section of the United Nations Statistics Division at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/otherworkshops.htm>.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

UN Statistical Commission (28 February to 2 March 2012, United Nations Headquarters, New York)

ECE Workshop on waste statistics for EECCA countries (11-12 April 2012, Geneva)

DIMESA Meeting and Seminar (23-25 April 2012, Luxembourg)

United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20 (20-22 June 2012, Brazil)

**envstats** is produced by the Environment Statistics Section of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations.

Comments and contributions for inclusion in future issues should be sent to:

ENVSTATS

DC2-1418

2 United Nations Plaza, New York, New York 10017

Fax: (1-212) 963 0623

E-mail: [envstats@un.org](mailto:envstats@un.org)