



**2020 FORUM OF EXPERTS ON SEEA EXPERIMENTAL ECOSYSTEM
ACCOUNTING**
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Thank you for the opportunity to speak at the third session of the Fifth Forum of Experts on SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA EEA). The Forum aims to advance the theory, practice and application of ecosystem accounting, considering the fast-evolving nature of the topic and ever-increasing policy interest. The objective of the Forum is to provide a general overview of the status of the revision of the SEEA EEA, present the results of testing in countries and discuss remaining methodological issues. This year's Forum is taking place virtually over several different sessions. Today's session focuses on ecosystem services, with nearly 150 experts from the statistical, geospatial and ecological communities in attendance.

Firstly, I would like to thank Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), for joining us today and for her opening remarks that speak to a shared vision for collaboration between the statistical community and the biodiversity community. As Elizabeth pointed out during her opening statement, this is an historic opportunity to bring together and align two global processes which are happening at the same time. The first process is the revision of the SEEA EEA, which is being led by the statistical community. The second process is the formulation of a new global biodiversity monitoring framework, which will be agreed at the biodiversity convention of the Conference of the Parties of the CBD (CoP 15) in 2021 in Kunming, China.

The statistical community has a myriad of experience when it comes to the development of monitoring frameworks. These monitoring frameworks have covered a broad spectrum of topics while maintaining principles which allow for the regular production of high-quality data that can be connected to the rest of the statistical system. Given the role of the statistical community and national statistical offices in shaping the SDG indicator framework, the statistical community is well positioned to contribute to the post-2020 global biodiversity monitoring framework. National statistical offices can help ensure the soundness of any data framework and, through international cooperation and methodological consistency, can produce data that is comparable

between countries and consistent over time. Moreover, the involvement of the statistical community in monitoring frameworks, including that of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, is part of a broader movement of national statistical offices becoming data stewards and providing timely and policy-relevant data which is spatially disaggregated and integrated within official statistics.

This collaboration arrives at a critical moment, when we need to formulate together an efficient monitoring framework for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and when we are working on the SEEA EEA revision with the aim of having it adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2021. Many of you here around the room have been critical to the revision process and represent different technical communities. As I have mentioned before, this broad participation is critical to the development of integrated information, which policy makers are seeking out more and more. We have made a lot of progress in the development of the SEEA EEA, building on the experience of many experts from different domains. Currently, more than 40 countries are compiling SEEA EEA accounts.

Our main objective for 2021 to be frank, is to drop the word “experimental” from the title of the SEEA EEA. It is just “ecosystem accounting” that we want to move forward with. I know there is some hesitation because not all of the technical problems have been solved. On the other hand, all technical problems will never be solved. I believe the title of our future programme needs to reflect our tremendous progress and ambition and be able to attract partners and donors to help us. Thus, I'm looking forward to having the SEEA Ecosystem Accounting adopted during the 2021 United Nations Statistical Commission.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the many experts who have supported the revision process. The revision process is a truly collaborative effort that would not have been possible without your support. In particular, I would like to thank Bert Kroese, Chair of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Economic-Environmental Accounting. Also special thanks to Anton Steurer, Head of Environment Statistics and Accounts and Sustainable Development of Eurostat, who has been leading the work on the subgroup on the SEEA EEA as part of the UNCEEA work programme, and Carl Obst, editor of the SEEA EEA. Finally, I do not wish to forget my own team because it takes the work of many to organize a meeting such as this. Alessandra Alfieri, Chief of the Environmental-Economic Accounts Section at the United Nations Statistics Division and all her team have been working very hard in the background to make this happen.

Finally, thank you all very much for your time and attention.