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News and Notes

Environment Statistics Section

United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)/DESA

FOCUS: Rio+20 and the Measurement of Sustainable Development

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The UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), scheduled to take place in Rio de Janeiro from 4-6 June 2012, will be a landmark event, where countries will take stock of progress since 1992 in implementing Agenda 21 and set parameters for integrated economic, social and environmental policymaking for the future.

Rio+20 seeks to re-launch the world on a sustainable development pathway, by renewing political commitment, strengthening the global partnership for cooperation on sustainable development and ensuring adequate action on the ground at the country level. The main outcome of Rio+20 will be a focused political document that provides a roadmap for achieving a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, as well as lays a new institutional framework, particularly at the global level, for sustainable development.

Member states decided to hold the conference because they recognized that the enormous progress in material welfare over the past two decades since the first Rio conference has come at huge costs. Incomes are greater but their distribution is more skewed. Natural resources are under more severe stress. The long term implications of the multiple crises - energy, food and climate - threaten to derail development goals.

The good news is that in a growing number of countries, recent experience has shown that a green economy – one that is less resource-intensive and more socially inclusive - can create jobs and stimulate growth, while protecting ecosystems.

Among the expected outcomes of Rio+20 could be a green economy roadmap or guidelines with a broad menu of policy options, toolkits, and possibly a set of targets, all of which would need to take into account country-specific concerns and equity considerations. Meaningful commitments would also be needed at Rio+20 on the resources front, such as creation of a green economy fund for promotion of research, development, transfer and deployment of clean technologies to benefit developing countries, in particular. The Rio+20 outcomes could include mechanisms for enhancing capacity building, as well as for sharing knowledge, experience and practices so as to facilitate the creation of an inclusive green economy. On the institutional framework, possible decisions on strengthening UNEP, the Commission on Sustainable Development and ECOSOC, through an incremental approach, can be expected.

The preparations for Rio+20 as well as the outcomes will need to rely on a solid statistical basis for the measurement of progress on Agenda 21, as well as for the setting of goals and targets for the future. Reliable economic, social and environmental data and indicators will add value to the preparations and the follow-up to Rio+20, by ensuring the precision of sustainable development and green economy goals and targets, as well as by providing the means for benchmarking and measuring their implementation. Rio+20 preparations, as well as its outcome and follow-up, should take into account all the recent developments in the measurement of well-being and sustainable development, including the work of the UN Statistical Commission, UN expert group meetings, OECD and civil society initiatives such as the Stiglitz Commission and the global footprint network, among many other sources.

The statistical community can already contribute to the quality of the outcome document of Rio+20, by ensuring that their national contributions to the compilation text for the outcome document, expected to be sent to the Rio+20 Secretariat by 1 November 2011, draw extensively on available national environmental, social and economic data, as well as on the methodological and empirical findings and lessons learned of recent expert groups on environmental, social and economic statistics.

Revision of the UN Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics

The Second 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 4 to 6 May 2011.

The meeting was attended by 27 experts from countries and agencies worldwide. The discussions were based on 12 papers and presentations prepared by EGM members and UNSD. All papers and presentations are available at http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/fdes/fdes_egm.htm

The meeting was opened by Mr. Paul Cheung, Director of UNSD. He emphasized that the fundamental principle of practical utility should prevail over purely theoretical approaches. He urged participants to share their knowledge and expertise by contributing to the work and support UNSD in finalizing and submitting the revised FDES and the Core Set of Environment Statistics to the 43rd session of the Statistical Commission in March 2012, in time to be considered as a tool to be presented at the Rio+20 Conference.

The experts reached agreement on the objective, scope and coverage, and the outline of the revised FDES; the process and criteria for the selection of the core set of environment statistics; and on the work programme, timetable, responsibilities and contributions.

To complete the significant progress that was attained by the Working Groups in the elaboration of the structure and contents for the revised FDES, it was agreed that the groups would further elaborate and fully describe their proposals for the structure, components and building blocks of the revised FDES and send them to UNSD by 3 June 2011.

The Expert Group appreciated the progress towards the identification of a core set of environment statistics, and agreed with the process that had been followed; agreed that the leading criteria for the selection of the core set should be policy relevance, measurability, methodological soundness and frequency of use; and recommended that UNSD continue the work following the evolving structure of the revised FDES.

There was general agreement that the core set of environment statistics should be part of the FDES document. It was agreed that the relevant chapter will include why a core set is needed; how the statistics were chosen; and what the relationship is between the core set and the FDES.

For further information about the EGM please visit the Expert Group's website at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/fdes.htm>.

The next step is the drafting of the chapters of the revised FDES, which will be assisted by and consulted with the Expert Group until September. Global consultation of the draft will most likely take place during October. Despite the lack of resources, the Expert Group unanimously agreed that a face-to-face meeting is necessary, preferably after the global consultation process, so that the experts can discuss the observations and suggestions and collectively work to finalize the revised FDES. The tentative dates for this meeting were set as 2-4 November 2011.

After the November meeting, UNSD will prepare the report to the 43rd session of the Statistical Commission for its consideration and endorsement of the revised FDES in February 2012, thus enabling it to be promoted during Rio + 20 in June 2012.

With respect to the Rio + 20 preparations (*see article on page 1*), it can be said that environment statistics, generally overlooked, is the pillar that needs most attention and investment within sustainable development statistics, in order to bring them to an equivalent level with economic and social statistics, thus enabling more robust assessment and data integration. This process needs an increase in the investment of time, effort and sufficient resources, particularly in developing countries, for the advancement in the last 20 years has been insufficient, despite the committed guidelines and actions in Agenda 21.

UNSD Environment Statistics - Data Collection and Dissemination

The UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire 2010 on Environment Statistics was sent out to 172 countries and territories in April 2010. By February 2011, 88 countries/territories responded, with 83 countries submitting data and five countries with no data available. The response rates varied significantly for each region. The best response rates were found in East Europe (78.6%), followed by the Americas (61.9%) and Asia (56.5%). The response rate for Africa was 44.4% and there was no response from Oceania. Among the 83 countries submitting data, 67 countries were able to provide data for both the water and waste sections of the questionnaire, while 16 countries provided data for only one of the two sections.

UNSD publishes global environment statistics through two main web-based products, [UNSD Environmental Indicators](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/qindicators.htm) and [Country Snapshots](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/country_snapshots.htm). The environmental indicators in the areas of Air and Climate; Biodiversity; Energy and Minerals; Forests; Governance; Inland Water Resources; Land and Agriculture; Marine and Coastal Areas; Natural Disasters; and Waste have been recently updated. Statistics on Water and Waste are based on official statistics supplied by national statistical offices and/or ministries of environment (or equivalent institutions) in response to the biennial UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics, complemented with comparable statistics from OECD and Eurostat, and water resources data from FAO Aquastat. Statistics on the other themes were compiled by UNSD from other international sources. The updated Environmental Indicators, published in the form of indicator and time series tables, charts, along with maps, are available at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/qindicators.htm>. The [Country Snapshots](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/country_snapshots.htm) are in the process of being updated.

In addition, the complete data and footnotes received from each respondent country have been uploaded to the [Country Files](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/country_files.htm) webpage with password protection. Country files are available, by request, for national, regional and international organizations that are involved in the collection of environment statistics. Also, selected water and waste statistics will shortly be updated on [UNdata](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/undata.htm).

The next biennial UNSD environment data collection will take place in 2012.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS:

Eye on Earth Summit

Abu Dhabi will host the first Eye on Earth Summit on December 12-15 2011, in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The summit will focus on the issue of greater access to environmental and societal data.

Over the past ten years, Abu Dhabi has undertaken to develop thought and practice leadership in the field of environmental data. In 2002, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, Abu Dhabi launched the Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative (AGEDI) designed to help the world's emerging economies acquire and best use environmental information.

Despite progress, much remains to be done: missing, inaccessible or hidden data cannot contribute to decision-making. Flawed judgments may result, with serious consequences. Abu Dhabi's Eye on Earth aims to find the solutions that will fill those gaps, helping the world move towards a more sustainable future based on informed policy-making.

Eye on Earth will address this challenge by convening world leaders, the environmental and societal information networking movement and others to identify data initiatives from around the globe delivering greatest benefit; reach a consensus on the key issues regarding greater data accessibility; and encourage stakeholders to collaborate in strengthening existing initiatives and, where necessary, launching new ones.

The Summit will be hosted by the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, facilitated by the Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative (AGEDI) and held in partnership with UNEP. An Eye on Earth Exhibition will showcase the latest developments in environmental information and technology.

Welcoming the announcement of the Summit, Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UNEP said: "In the run-up to the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development, Eye on Earth presents a timely opportunity to identify practical measures to bridge the environmental knowledge gap and deliver the information and data needed to support a transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient global Green Economy."

For more information, please visit www.eyeonearthsummit.org

REGIONAL NEWS:

CARICOM - Sustaining the Production and Dissemination of Environment Statistics in the CARICOM Region

(Contributed by Philomen Harrison, CARICOM Secretariat)

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat continues to work with its member countries to sustain the production of Environment Statistics. In the process the support of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) is also sought. The work in this area of statistics dates back to a joint project executed by CARICOM and the UNSD from 1999-2003 on strengthening the Compilation of Social/Gender and Environment Statistics and Indicators for Conference Follow-up. The project led to the production of Environment Statistics compendia in a number of countries of CARICOM as well as a main regional report CARICOM Environment in Figures 2002. This project was followed by a programme developed by a CARICOM Advisory Group which was established to enable sustainability of the production of statistics in Environment and Social/Gender Statistics.

The CARICOM Secretariat continued to build capacity in this area through continuation of the data compilation procedure which led to the production of a Second Regional Report which was reviewed in a workshop that was held in Antigua and Barbuda in 2009 at which the support of the UNSD in facilitating this workshop with CARICOM was obtained. The CARICOM Secretariat along with its member states reviewed the official Millennium Development Goals indicators in the area of Environmental and Social/Gender Statistics and formulated Caribbean Specific MDG indicators (CSMDGs). Five Caribbean Specific indicators thought relevant to the regional goals and targets were formulated for data compilation.

Another regional workshop was also organized by CARICOM in 2010 in Suriname relative to a Third Regional Report which should be available by the end of this year. It is expected that a regional workshop will be held in September 2011 (with the support of the UNSD) at which the data collected will be reviewed. In the interim the CARICOM Secretariat is encouraging countries to make every effort to fill the existing gaps in the data through inter-agency collaboration of key stakeholders in the area of Environment at the national levels. In addition, the Secretariat also attempts to get data from key regional organizations operating in the area of the Environment. It is also anticipated that the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean will contribute to the development of this area of Statistics through a forthcoming project.

REGIONAL NEWS

UN-ECLAC - New Regional Public Goods Project on Environmental Statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean

(Contributed by Kristina Taboulchanas, UN-ECLAC)

The Regional Working Group (WG) on Environmental Statistics of the Statistical Conference of the Americas submitted a 3-year project to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)'s Regional Public Goods Fund that has been pre-approved to the tune of US\$ 1.3 million. The main objective of the project is to elaborate a regional strategy and action plan to develop and strengthen the official environmental statistics systems of Latin American and Caribbean countries. Specifically, the strategy will address the institutional and technical strengthening required for the production of basic statistics, indicators and environmental accounts in line with country priorities and available resources. The WG is currently developing an operational plan for the implementation of the project that will be submitted to the IDB's Board for final approval over the coming months. For more information contact Kristina Taboulchanas at ECLAC (Kristina.taboulchanas@cepal.org) or 56-2-210-2335.

UN-ECLAC - Progress on ECLAC-UNSD water statistics and accounts project

(Contributed by Kristina Taboulchanas, UN-ECLAC)

Through a competitive process Colombia and Ecuador were selected to participate in a project financed by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH to strengthen the capacities of countries to use the System of Environmental and Economic Accounting along with the International Recommendations on Water statistics to develop and implement water statistics collection strategies. During the week of 9 May 2011 representatives of ECLAC and UNSD visited the project teams in Colombia and Ecuador to carry out a preliminary assessment of the national water information systems and to jointly plan the activities of the project. In Colombia the project is being coordinated by the National Administrative Department of Statistics (www.dane.gov.co) and in Ecuador it is being coordinated by the National Water Secretariat (www.senagua.gob.ec). The coordinators are currently setting up the inter-institutional project teams and preparing the ground for carrying out water information assessments. For more information contact Kristina Taboulchanas at ECLAC (Kristina.taboulchanas@cepal.org) or 56-2-210-2335.

ECOWAS - The Development and State of Environment Statistics in the ECOWAS Region

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

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission was established in 1975. ECOWAS has an objective to achieve the creation of West African economic and monetary union. The ECOWAS commission creates a regional mechanism for the harmonious development of environment statistics in the region which would ensure the efficient collection, analysis, compilation, printing, publishing and dissemination of environment data at both national and regional levels.

The ECOWAS Commission, in collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), made remarkable progress in the formulation and implementation of the Regional Environment Statistics Programme for the member States. The Commission, in collaboration with UNSD, organized a series of meetings and workshops to validate, finalize and adopt the Regional Programme as well as to develop a core set of environmental indicators and methodology sheets for the ECOWAS region. Most recently, the ECOWAS Commission organized a Workshop on Environment Statistics and on Monitoring MDG Goal 7 which was held in Dakar, Senegal from 28 March to 1 April 2011, under the technical guidance of UNSD. The Workshop was a follow up to those held in Abuja, Nigeria in 2008 and in Accra, Ghana in 2010, during which participants identified and agreed upon the core set of environmental indicators. The Workshop achieved the following objectives:

- Finalization and completion of the methodology sheets for the core set of environmental statistics and indicators adopted by the member States during the UNSD/ECOWAS Workshop held in Accra in March 2010;
- Validation of an action plan for the implementation of the Regional Environment Statistics Programme; and
- Adoption of the plan for data collection and for the preparation of an ECOWAS regional compendium on environment statistics.

The Workshop recommended increased capacity building assistance to enhance the establishment of national environment statistics programmes in member States. It was noted that the national workshop on environment statistics that was held in Ghana in October 2010, to which the ECOWAS Commission and UNSD provided support, was very positive, and other member States were also encouraged to request similar assistance from the ECOWAS Commission.

REGIONAL NEWS

UN-ECA - Environment Statistics and Accounts in the UNECA Region

(Contributed by the African Centre for Statistics, UNECA)

In recent months, several meetings have been organized in the area of environment statistics and accounts in the UNECA region. The Seventh African Development Forum (ADF VII) was organized under the theme “Acting on Climate Change for Sustainable Development in Africa” at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 10-15 October 2010. The African Centre for Statistics (ACS) and the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) of UNECA, in collaboration with the InWent Centre for Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics of Germany organized an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on Climate Change Measurement as a Pre-ADF VII side event on 11 and 12 October 2010. More than forty participants attended the two-day EGM. The objectives of the EGM were to map out the climate related information situation for Africa, identify the needed information to address the issues of climate change, and to highlight the importance of information in climate change studies for adaptation and mitigation.

A Workshop on Environment Statistics and Accounts was organized by ACS on 7-11 March 2011 at UNCC in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to train staff of the national statistical offices (NSOs) and environment ministries of member States on the concepts of environment statistics and the system of environmental and economic accounting; and to agree on a core set of environmental indicators and statistics for national, sub-regional and regional reporting. During the Workshop, participants shared their country experiences in the collection, compilation and dissemination of environment statistics and accounts, and established 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). In total 17 participants attended the workshop and they were from Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Representatives of the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) also attended the workshop.

In addition, a Workshop on Environment Statistics and on Monitoring MDG Goal 7 was organized by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission under the technical guidance of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) in Dakar, Senegal from 28 March to 1 April 2011 (see article contributed by the ECOWAS Commission). Another Workshop, jointly organized by UNSD and UNECA and hosted by Statistics South Africa, was held in Pretoria, South Africa on 6-8 June 2011 and attended by participants from Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. The Workshop provided hands on technical assistance to the participating countries to develop an agreed programme of work and institutionalizing water accounts and statistics using SEEA-Water and IRWS.

In general, environment statistics and accounts are not yet well developed in this region. Most countries do not even have a unit that is dedicated to work in the area. As found in the Global Assessment of Environment Statistics and Environmental-Economic Accounting prepared by UNSD to the 38th Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, the number of African countries that had environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting programmes were only 11 and 5 respectively out of 53 countries. Furthermore, based on the information posted on the UNSD environmental indicators website and that was updated in March 2011, the number of African countries that reported data through the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics on water supply by industry were 15, on wastewater 10, on municipal waste collection 16, on municipal waste treatment 9, and on hazardous waste generation 8. As observed in the South Africa workshop almost all the participating countries have not yet developed water accounts.

In face of the challenges that there is a lack of capacity and resources in the area of environment statistics and accounts in the region, UNECA-ACS is committed to work in close collaboration and cooperation with all development partners including international, regional, and sub-regional organizations to meet the demands from countries. So far, the training activities to member countries in the region have been conducted for smaller groups of countries or for sub-regions. As there are 54 member countries in the UNECA region, for cost-effectiveness purposes, there is a need for a certain number of countries to be involved each time when a workshop/seminar is organized, e.g., at least 10 to 15 countries should be involved to develop their capacities better and share their experiences with other countries. To be effective in addressing the problems, there should be a regional project on environment statistics and accounts that run for about three years and cover most African countries.

UN-ESCAP - Green Growth Indicators for Decision and Policy Support

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

How do we know whether a country is growing along a green trajectory – or not? Green growth and green economy strategies have featured prominently in government responses to the convergence of food, fuel and financial crises of late 2008. Evidence that these crises are not yet over has deepened interest in better understanding how the “greenness” of economic growth can be measured. Existing environmental indicators tell little about the trajectory of growth and are disconnected from the system of national accounts that are the basis for economic assessment.

Eco-efficiency indicators meet this need in a very limited way – such indicators have been identified and pilot-tested in Viet Nam and Cambodia. To further this work, ESCAP, with partners, is planning a major effort to develop green growth indicators that can better serve as the basis for decision-support and policy analysis. This effort will build on the work of the Australia Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation and UNEP to link economic and resource-use modeling. The UNEP-CSIRO partnership has already produced material flows data for Asia and the Pacific (available at www.csiro.au/AsiaPacificMaterialFlows). For more information on the green growth indicator work, contact Masakazu Ichimura at the ESCAP Environment and Development Division (escap-esdd-evs@un.org).

REGIONAL NEWS

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)

The ENPI-SEIS project was launched to promote the protection of the environment in the European Neighbourhood. It is implemented in the period 2011-2014 by the European Environment Agency (EEA) together with the partner countries and in close cooperation with UNEP/MAP/Barcelona Convention, UNECE and EEA member and cooperating countries.

The project covers the following partners: **ENP Southern partners:** Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria and Tunisia, **ENP Eastern partners:** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, as well as **Strategic partnership** with the Russian Federation. The project is financed through the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI).

This project aims to help develop the capacities of the relevant environmental and statistical authorities in the areas of cooperation, networking, monitoring, data management, assessment and indicator-based reporting on the environment. It will also provide long-term and sustainable perspective for cooperation with the partner countries by focusing on the following objectives:

- to identify and develop data and information flows and environmental indicators suitable for the design and review of environmental policies, supporting the monitoring and compliance with various national, regional and international obligations and targets;
- to improve capacities in the field of monitoring, collection, storage, assessment, and reporting of environmental data in the relevant environmental authorities including the national statistical systems, in compliance with reporting obligations to international agreements and in coordination with relevant regional initiatives;
- to set up national and regional environmental information systems in the countries of the ENP area that are in line with the EU Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS); and
- to track progress of the regional environmental initiatives (ENP, Eastern Partnership, Strategic Partnership, Horizon 2020).

A first round of ENPI-SEIS country visits to the South and East started in early April 2011 with visits conducted to Algeria, Jordan, Egypt, Palestinian Authority, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia as of today. The purpose of these two-day visits is 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. Country visits to the rest of the ENP partners will continue after the summer-break.

More information available here (<http://enpi-seis.ew.eea.europa.eu/>).

The EEA aims to support sustainable development and to help achieve significant and measurable improvement in Europe's environment by providing timely, targeted, relevant and reliable information to policymaking agents and the public. Currently EEA has 32 member countries and seven cooperating countries, all represented in the European environment information and observation network (Eionet).

UN-ECE - Measuring Sustainable Development

(Contributed by Vania Etropolska, ECE Statistical Division)

In 2009, the Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Working Group published its work on measuring sustainable development available at <http://live.unece.org/stats/archive/03.03f.e.html>. The Report contributed to reaching a common understanding of the principles of measuring sustainability based on the capital approach. A new Task Force was established in 2009 to further pursue the conceptual framework based on the capital approach with a broader perspective to include the distributional, i.e., quality of life aspects of sustainable development.

Progress has been made in the main directions given in the mandate of the Task Force, including on the measurement of human and social capital. The work on human capital has advanced in close collaboration with OECD, taking into account their ongoing project in this area. Progress has also been made on analysing the currently used sustainable development indicators. The indicators are put into a conceptual framework that aims to respond to the demands of the policy makers and covers the "needs of the present generation", the "needs of the future generations" and the "international dimension".

The work of the Task Force is strongly linked to the work undertaken by other institutions, such as the recent recommendations in the Report issued by the Stiglitz Commission, the European Commission's initiative "GDP and Beyond", and the OECD project on Measuring the Progress of Societies. The final report is planned to be submitted to the Conference of European Statisticians at its 2012 plenary session.

REGIONAL NEWS:

UN-ECE - Statistics on Climate Change

(Contributed by Vania Etropolska, ECE Statistical Division)

The Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians discussed in October 2009 the proposed work on climate change in view of the outcomes of the 63rd UNECE session in February 2009 and the meeting of the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEA) in June 2009.

The UNECE took the lead to conduct a survey among the ECE member countries and beyond to assess whether the national statistical offices are involved in producing emission inventories and other climate change related statistics. For this purpose the ECE Secretariat, in consultation with experts from Statistics Norway, Statistics Finland, Eurostat and the European Environment Agency, developed a questionnaire to study the state of the art in the member countries. The objective of the initiative is to identify issues of common concern for the countries that should be addressed at the international level and find ways to strengthen the capability of countries to produce high quality statistics for climate change analysis.

The survey was carried out in the beginning of 2011 and the results are currently being analyzed. At the request of the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting and the UN Statistics Division, the survey was extended to some countries outside the ECE region to ensure a more global coverage. The outcome of the survey will be reviewed by the CES Bureau in November 2011 and decide on possible follow-up.

COUNTRY NEWS:

Environment Statistics – Developments in India

(Contributed by Sekhar Jeyalakshmi, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Central Statistical Office, India)

The Framework for Development of Environment Statistics (FDES) which was developed in 1984 by the United Nations defines the nature of environment statistics in terms of its scope and characteristics. India has adopted the UN-FDES for the compilation of environment statistics.

Responsibility for producing publications on environment statistics is spread over a number of agencies. The Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation publish official environment statistics. The State/Union Territory Departments of Environment and Statistics also produce statistical publications independently. The Ministry of Environment and Forests published the very first issue of “State of Environment Report 2009” in July 2009.

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has been producing the publication “Compendium of Environment Statistics” regularly with the first issue relating to the year 1997. India has developed its national publication based on the UN-FDES. The various States and Union Territories are also encouraged to bring out State of Environment reports and Environment Statistics publications.

Major challenge

In the publication on Environment Statistics of India, the statistical data/information is presented in the following categories:

Component	Categories of Information (Prominent)
Biodiversity	Flora (species, rare and threatened species); Fauna (species, national parks and wild life sanctuaries, zoological parks, fish production, livestock population); forest cover, forest produce, tree cover estimates
Atmosphere	Ambient air quality in residential areas, in major cities; production and consumption of ozone depleting substances; installed capacity for electricity generation; towns and villages electrified in India; inventory of geological reserves of coals; domestic production of petroleum products; natural gas; bio-mass power projects; effluent standards for various industries; emission of carbon dioxide and other green house gases; noise pollution in various metropolitan cities
Land and Soil	Land uses, crop production, area under principal crops, consumption of pesticides
Water	Ground water, river water
Human Settlements	Population and poverty; Housing slums and Basic Facilities; Waste management

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COUNTRY NEWS

(Continued from page 7)

Although a significant amount of tabular information classifying data in the various categories has been produced, it is still not possible to obtain statistics pertaining to major thematic areas such as climate change, natural resource depletion, hazards and disasters, pollution (air and water both industrial and non-industrial), land use change, etc.

There is no indicative list of indicators for the various themes and hence it is difficult to scan through the available data sets to identify the relevant ones. The subjective judgement of the country statistician comes into play and hence, in the process, comparability within the country is not achievable as the lists are prepared by many statisticians working at different levels.

The solution

In order to overcome this problem, it is essential that the international framework for environment statistics be supplemented with sub-frameworks for the various thematic subjects of environment statistics. Additionally, the identification of separate core indicator lists for the recognized environment statistics themes would be most welcome.

Action taken by India in this direction

Through the involvement of country experts, the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation in India has recognized the need for identifying the core list of statistical indicators for describing climate change and has prepared the core indicator sets for climate change, as well as those for mitigation and adaptation. A variety of agencies has been involved in these efforts and has been consulted in the identification process. These include the Ministry of Environment and Forests and other Union Government Ministries involved in environment matters such as new and renewable energy, the Ministry of Earth sciences, the Geological Survey of India, the Central Water Commission, the Central Pollution Control Board, the Central Electricity Authority, NGOs working in the field, and State Governments.

RECENT EVENTS

Sixth Meeting of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEA)

(New York, 15-17 June 2011)

The United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEA) is mandated by the Statistical Commission to provide strategic vision and direction to environmental-economic accounting and supporting statistics. The Sixth UNCEEA meeting discussed the progress made in the finalization of the central framework (Part I) of the System of Environmental and Economic Accounts (SEEA), which is expected to be adopted by the UN Statistical Commission in February 2012. It agreed on a proposed roadmap for the development of experimental ecosystem accounts to be included in Part II of the SEEA and on the structure and content of Part III on Extensions and Applications of the SEEA. The UNCEEA discussed the implementation strategy of the SEEA as well as other initiatives, including the SEEA-Energy and the SEEA-Agriculture.

At a broader level, a key focus of the meeting was the relevance and presentation of the SEEA at upcoming major international events such as the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20 and other global initiatives (green growth, green economy, biodiversity).

Eurostat Directors' Meeting on Environment Statistics and Accounts

(Copenhagen, 20-21 June 2011)

UNSD took part in the Directors' Meeting on Environment Statistics and Accounts (DIMESA), organized by Eurostat and hosted by the European Environment Agency (EEA). DIMESA comprises the directors of environment statistics and accounts in national statistical offices or environmental ministries of the EU, EFTA, EU partner and accession countries. The main issues discussed at the meeting included the new EU statistical regulation on environmental-economic accounts covering emission accounts, environmental taxes and economy-wide material flow accounts. During the negotiations of the new regulation the European Parliament insisted on the inclusion later of additional environmental-economic accounting modules. While being supportive in principle, the Member States raised attention to current budgetary restrictions that make it difficult to expand work due to lack of resources. Thus, at this stage, Eurostat is proposing to continue with the development of Environmental Protection Expenditure (a simplified module), Environmental Goods and Services, and Energy Accounts with the view of their inclusion in the Regulation after 2012. Other issues discussed included environmental indicators, climate change related statistics, regional and spatial environment statistics, land use and land cover statistics, waste and chemicals management statistics and compliance monitoring. Eurostat presented the main objectives of the Statistical Work Programme 2012 in the environmental domain and the state of the art concerning the preparation of the multi-annual work programme 2013-17. The Directors were briefed about UNSD activities in environment statistics with a special focus on the ongoing revision of the UN Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDSE), which is a process carried out with the participation of several European countries and organizations, including Eurostat.

RECENT EVENTS

Seminar “EU2020, Resource Efficiency”

(Copenhagen, 22 June 2011)

The DIMESA meeting was followed by a Seminar “EU2020, Resource Efficiency, and the role of environmental data, indicators and accounts”, jointly organized by DIMESA and the Management Board of the European Environment Agency. The Europe 2020 strategy with its focus, inter alia, on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth is driving demands for timelier, spatially resolved and integrated data and indicators to monitor progress, supported by various information technologies. Of the seven Europe 2020 flagship initiatives, Resource Efficiency is most relevant for the environment sector. The seminar shed light on the status and prospects for the many elements in play based on inputs from relevant partners, and discussed how the organizations and countries could collaborate on effective implementation of expected forthcoming demands and so help maximise the environmental dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy implementation.

UPCOMING EVENTS

International Seminar on Green Economy and Official Statistics (Seoul, Republic of Korea, 6-8 July 2011)

Third session of the ECE Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators (Geneva, Switzerland, 11-13 July 2011)

Fifty-eighth Congress of the International Statistical Institute - Water Theme Day (Dublin, Ireland, 24 August 2011)

National Training Course and Workshop on Environmental Indicators (Quito, Ecuador, 22-26 August 2011)

CARICOM Workshop on Environment Statistics (St. Kitts & Nevis (tentative), 12-16 September 2011)

Fourth session of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators and Meeting of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (Geneva, Switzerland, 18-21 October 2011)

Third Expert Group Meeting on the revision of the FDES (New York, USA, 2-4 November 2011)

Regional seminar on methodological developments and operational challenges in environmental statistics for LAC region (Dominican Republic, 14-15 November 2011)

High level international seminar on environmental statistics as part of the official program of the sixth Statistical Conference of the Americas (Dominican Republic, 16 November 2011)

Workshop on Environment Statistics for the South-East Asian Countries (Vietnam, December 2011)

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