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**Fourth Meeting of the UN Committee of Experts on  
Environmental-Economic Accounting  
New York, 24-26 June 2009  
Millennium UN Plaza Hotel – Manhattan Room**

## **Mandate and governance of the Committee of Experts**

Paper prepared by UNSD

*(for decision)*

## Mandate and governance of the Committee of Experts

### Introduction

1. At its third meeting which took place in New York from 26 to 27 June 2008, the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting discussed its mandate and governance structure, in response to the request from the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians and the outcome of the Conference on Climate Change and Official Statistics. It agreed to cover as part of its mandate environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics, including statistics on climate change. This is a further elaboration of the original mandate of the Committee which covered environmental-economic accounting and related statistics.

2. To explicitly reflect this, the Committee agreed to change its name to Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting and Environment Statistics. It, however, did not consider necessary to change its acronym – UNCEEA – which was considered to be an established name for the Committee<sup>1</sup>.

3. The United Nations Statistical Commission at its fortieth session (New York, 24-27 February 2009) discussed the Report of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting which presented the mandate and governance of the UNCEEA agreed at Third Meeting of the UNCEEA. In particular, the Statistical Commission<sup>2</sup>:

- (c) Noted that there were differing views regarding the proposed expansion of the mandate of the Committee to include environment and climate change statistics, and requested the Committee to review its mandate, terms of reference and governance structure to reflect the focus of its work on environmental-economic accounting and its role in environment and climate change statistics;
- (d) Considered the establishment of an advisory group on environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics not necessary at this stage, agreed that the Committee would need to receive advice on substantive issues, and recommended that technical panels be convened when necessary on an ad hoc basis;
- (e) Requested the Committee to submit the revised mandate, governance and terms of reference to the Bureau of the Commission for review and to the Commission for further consideration at its forty-first session;
- (f) Also requested the Committee to develop a programme of work outlining its priorities and to disseminate it widely.

4. The text below is taken textually from the Report of the Committee of Experts to the UN Statistical Commission.<sup>3</sup> Section B elaborated on the mandate of the Committee and Section C in the governance. The UNCEEA is requested to provide guidance on how to

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<sup>1</sup> See Minutes of the Third Meeting of the UNCEEA (UNCEEA/3/4) and Note on the Mandate and Governance of the new United Nations Committee of Experts (UNCEEA/3/5)  
<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/ceea/meetings/lod3.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Excerpt of the Statistical Commission – Report of the fortieth session (24-27 February 2009). *Official Records Economic and Social Council 2009, Supplement No. 4 (E/2009/24) Decision 40/104 paragraphs (c) to (f)*. <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc09/Report-English.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> See Report of the Committee of Experts on Environmental Accounting E/CN.2009/7  
<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc09/2009-7-EnvEcoAccounting-E.pdf>

revise the mandate and terms of reference taking into consideration the deliberation of the UN Statistical Commission.

## **Mandate**

5. The mandate of the Committee is to (a) provide strategic vision, direction and coordination to mainstream environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics in national, regional and international statistical systems; (b) develop normative international statistical standards and supporting methodological documents on environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics; (c) promote the development of integrated databases at international, regional and national level on environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics; (d) promote the implementation of international statistical standards of environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics in countries; and (e) promote the use of official statistics in scientific and policymaking communities.

6. To fulfil its mandate, the programme of work of the Committee encompasses six areas, namely (a) coordination; (b) methodological development for normative standards and other research; (c) development of integrated databases; (d) implementation of environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics and statistical capacity building; (e) promotion of environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics; and (f) formulation of a statistical response on emerging policy issues. An elaboration of the Committee programme of work in the six areas is set out in annex I to the present report.

## **Governance**

7. The major elements of the governance arrangements are shown in the attached diagram in the figure below. The description of the governance follows the diagram and it covers the managerial functions, roles and responsibilities of the various groups and organizations involved. The boxes in the shaded large box represent the bodies of the Committee of Experts or projects under the Committee responsibility. The technical subgroups and city groups are presented outside the shaded box. These groups were established by bodies other than the Committee and have their own governance and reporting structure. Nevertheless, their programmes of work overlap with that of the Committee and, within its mandate, the Committee plays a coordination role as mandated by the Statistical Commission<sup>4</sup>. The revised terms of reference of the Committee are presented in annex II.

8. The governance structure presented in this paper has evolved from that presented in the report of the Secretary-General of December 2005 (see E/CN.3/2006/9, paras. 20-31). The Bureau of the Committee was established and met for the first time by teleconference in February 2008. The Bureau works under delegated authority from the Committee and was established to assist the Committee with the day-to-day management of its work programme. The Committee also agreed to establish an Advisory Group on Environmental-Economic Accounting and Environment Statistics to provide the Committee advice on technical matters. The role and responsibilities of these two bodies along with the others is discussed in further detail below.

9. The broadening of the mandate and the proposal of the creation of the Advisory Group has implications on the various groups working under the auspices of the Committee. The Committee discussed the roles of those groups and in particular it considered necessary that

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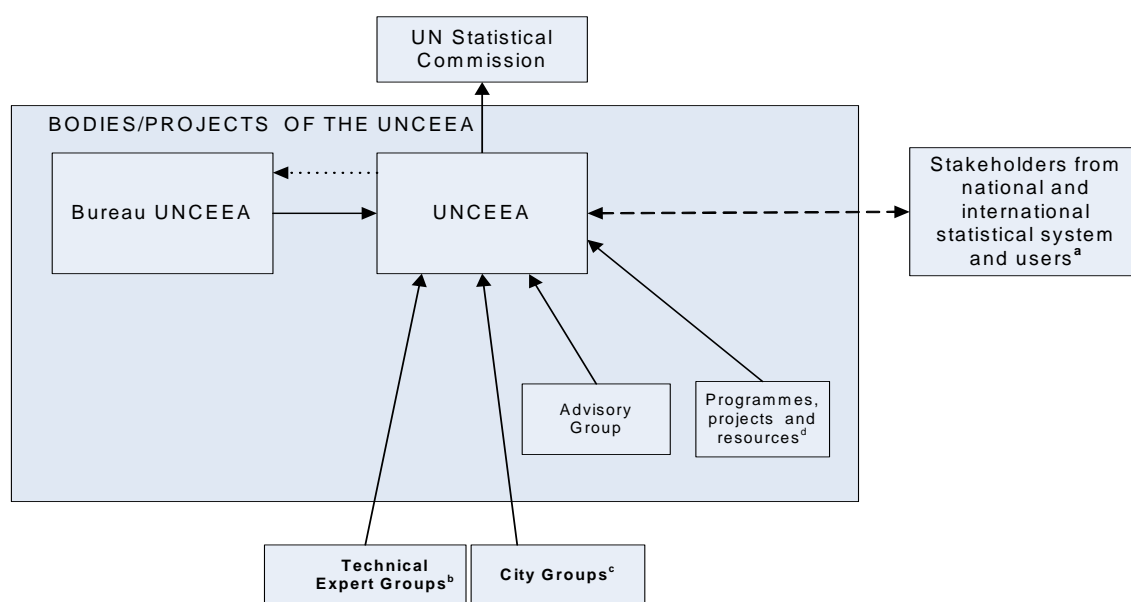
<sup>4</sup> See Statistical Commission Report on the thirty-seventh session (7 – 10 March 2006) Economic and Social Council Official Records 2006 Supplement N. 4 (E/2006/24 E/CN.3/2006/32).

the terms of references of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics be reviewed. It thus requested the Working Group to submit a proposal to its next meeting in June 2009.

*United Nations Statistical Commission*

10. The United Nations Statistical Commission is the entity that establishes the Committee and approves its mandate, work programme, governance and monitors its progress of work.

**Figure  
Governance structure of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting and Environment Statistics**



**Key**  
 ←→ = Consults, liaises  
 ← = Reports to  
 ←···· = Delegates

**Legend:**  
 a. Users include for example academia, line ministries, international agencies, etc.  
 b. These groups include, for example, the OECD-WGEIO-MFA, Working Group on Statistics for Sustainable Development (WGSSD), Electronic Discussion Groups, etc.  
 c. These include, for example, the London Group on Environmental Accounts, the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics, etc.  
 d. Programmes include specific projects. One of the projects as part of the programme to advance methodology is the revision of the SEEA and all the resources involved to carry out the project.

*Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting and Environment Statistics*

11. The Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting and Environment Statistics was established by the Statistical Commission at its thirty-sixth session in March 2005<sup>5</sup> to carry out the mandate and programme of work outlined in section II.A of the present

<sup>5</sup> See E/CN.3/2005/15.

report. The Committee is also responsible for reporting the progress of its programme of work to the Statistical Commission.

12. Within each area of its work programme, the Committee undertakes specific projects engaging existing city groups and/or other expert groups and establishing new groups as needed to carry out the work programme. For large projects, such as the revision of SEEA, it may be necessary to develop project management frameworks for adoption by the Committee.

13. Broadly speaking, the Committee undertakes the following tasks in respect of the programmes under its responsibility:

- (a) Strategic planning, including providing strategic direction to the projects; ensuring their complementarity and proper coordination; and agreeing on their governance arrangements;
- (b) Programming and monitoring, including agreeing with the work plan, schedule, communication strategy and budget of the projects; assigning or negotiating tasks of the technical expert groups; tracking progress made by the projects and ensuring adequate and effective review of technical matters;
- (c) Reporting, including reporting to the Statistical Commission on the projects within its mandate; receiving regular reports from the technical groups; and liaising with stakeholders, managing their expectations and gaining their support;
- (d) Resource mobilization, including ensuring that projects are adequately resourced; raising funds as needed; recommending staffing for the projects (e.g. editor for the SEEA revision); and monitoring cash and in-kind budgets.

14. High-level representation would be necessary to ensure the strategic role of the Committee in setting priorities, bringing forward a research agenda, taking decisions on standards and developing strategic visions.

15. Members of the Committee comprise high-level experts from national governments and international organizations with a broad range of experience in statistics and accounts and their use. Also members would be selected so as to ensure equitable regional representation.

16. Given the wide of range of topics covered by the Committee as well as the need to keep the Committee manageable in size to ensure in depth discussion, the Committee would comprise initially 25 countries/organizations with a maximum representation of two experts per country.

17. Members are appointed to the Committee for an initial period of three years, which may be renewed.

#### *Chair*

18. The Committee elects, among its members, the Chair for a period of three years renewable for one term<sup>6</sup>. The role of the Chair would be to develop, in close cooperation with

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<sup>6</sup> At its last meeting in June 2008, the Committee elected Peter Harper, Deputy Australian Statistician as its new Chair of the UNCEEA replacing Walter Radermacher, currently Director General of Eurostat and previously President of the Federal Statistical Office Germany, who had completed one term.

the secretariat, a multi-year and an annual work programme for the Committee, monitor progress of the various components of the programme and set the agenda for the meetings.

19. The Chair represents the Committee in international meetings and plays a key role in promoting and communicating the work of the statistical community with other communities, namely the scientific, academic, business and policymaking community. He or she engages the various stakeholders and seeks supports for the Committee projects.

#### *Bureau of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting and Environment Statistics*

20. The Committee agreed on the creation of a Bureau to execute those tasks and activities in-between meetings for which it has received delegated authority from the Committee, including the oversight and day-to-day management of the projects under its responsibility. Decisions taken by the Bureau under the delegated authority from the Committee should be reported back to the Committee.

21. The Bureau, under delegated authority from the Committee, will carry out the activities and tasks in relation of strategic planning, programming and monitoring, reporting and resource mobilization for the projects within its mandate.

22. The Bureau of the Committee consists of members of the Committee at the senior level in national and international statistical offices. It includes the Chair, the secretariat, and senior officials from four to five countries/international organizations endorsed by the Committee from among its members for a period of 3 years<sup>7</sup>. The Chair may invite experts, chairs of the city and expert groups, to participate to the Bureau meetings.

#### *Secretariat*

23. The permanent secretariat of the Committee and its Bureau is UNSD. It is the main source of logistical and administrative support and receives guidance for this support from the Committee and its Bureau. Among the tasks that the secretariat undertakes are the following:

- (a) Circulate decisions to countries and/or regional and other expert meetings for discussion;
- (b) Manage the Committee website;
- (c) Prepare the correspondence with the Statistical Commission members and national statistical offices;
- (d) Prepare reports to the Statistical Commission on behalf of the Committee and its Bureau;
- (e) Provide logistical and other support to the Committee and its Bureau.

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<sup>7</sup> Since February 2008, the Bureau consists of: Peter Harper (Chair and Deputy Australian Statistician), Rashad Cassim (Deputy Director General, Statistics South Africa), Estrella Domingo (Assistant Secretary General, National Statistical Coordination Board, Philippines), Pieter Everaers (Director, Eurostat), Peter van de Ven (Head of National Accounts, Statistics Netherlands), Karen Wilson (Assistant Chief Statistician, Statistics Canada), Ivo Havinga (Secretariat UNCEEA). The position left vacant by Mr. Radermacher, outgoing Chair of the UNCEEA is in the process of being filled in

### *Advisory group on Environmental-Economic Accounting and Environment Statistics*

24. The Committee of Experts agreed to establish an advisory group to support it in its deliberations on normative and methodological matters concerning environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics, including climate change statistics and to advise it on proposals in that regard for submission to the United Nations Statistical Commission. It is a body of the Committee and, as such, falls under its overall management and coordination. It is proposed that the advisory group be implemented as soon as projects other than SEEA revision are taken up by the Committee.

25. The advisory group will consist of experts in environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics appointed to be members by the Bureau of the Committee, with balanced regional representation taking into consideration. The advisory group will be a standing body of the Committee advising it on technical matters discussed by the various city groups and other expert groups. It will be chaired by one of the members of the Bureau on a rotating basis. Its terms of reference of the advisory group and its composition are in the process of being developed.

### *City groups and other technical expert groups*

26. Existing city groups and other technical expert groups may be engaged to work on specific projects under the responsibility of the Committee. New Groups may also be created to assist the Committee in carrying out its work programme. The Committee, while respecting the informal character of the city groups, will coordinate, within its mandate, the city groups and other expert groups working in environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting as mandated by the Statistical Commission.

27. Specific tasks and responsibilities of the city groups and technical expert groups will be agreed with the Committee. The terms of reference for the tasks related to the projects will be formulated with every expert group. They will include specifications on deliverables, timelines and work arrangements for monitoring the technical discussions and for reporting recommendations to the Committee.

28. The work of the city groups and other technical expert groups will be discussed by the advisory group on environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics which in turn will present its recommendations on the proposals of the various groups for consideration to the Committee.

## ANNEX I

### PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL-ECONOMIC ACCOUNTING AND ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS

To fulfil its mandate, the programme of work of the Committee of Experts in Environmental-Economic Accounting and Environment Statistics is organized according to the following 6 areas:

- (a) *Coordination:* the Committee should foster coordination, integration and complementarity of programmes in environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics, including statistics on climate change among international and regional agencies and countries. Leadership, a single focal point, and a coordinated vision among international and regional agencies active in the field of environment are considered necessary to raise the profile of environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics.

The Committee coordinates and provides vision, direction and prioritisation to ensure that existing and newly established groups work in complementary fashion. These groups include the soon-to-be established Advisory Group on Environmental-Economic Accounting and Environment Statistics, the London Group on Environmental Accounting, the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics, the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics, the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics and other expert groups that might be established within the scope of its mandate;

- (b) *Methodological development for normative standards and other research:* the role of the Committee is to oversee the methodological development of environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics, including statistics on climate change. This involves managing the current and future revisions of SEEA and its elevation to the level of an international statistical standard as well as contributing to the international debate on measuring sustainability. It also involves managing and setting the direction for the preparation of the suite of publications in support of the new SEEA standard. These include publications on specific resources or SEEA modules (e.g. SEEAW, SEEA for Energy, SEEA for Material Flow, etc.) as well as international recommendations for basic statistics (e.g. international recommendations for water statistics, international recommendations for energy statistics, etc.) and compilation guidelines and quality assessment frameworks providing best practices on data collection and compilation;
- (c) *Development of integrated databases:* until recently environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting have developed in separate tracks. The statistical community recognized the need to harmonize methodologies and data collection of environment statistics and link them to the concepts, definitions and classifications of environmental-economic accounting. The role of the Committee is to ensure that international data collection activities are carried out in line with the standard(s) and the accompanying international recommendations and ensure that information is produced and used in the most efficient and cost-effective way. The set of standard tables should be used as the reference set of information that countries should compile taking into consideration the priorities



and environmental concerns of countries. The Committee should promote the establishment of national, regional and international databases in support of evidence-based decision-making, in particular in the context of sustainable development, climate change and Millennium Development Goals;

- (d) *Implementation of environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics and statistical capacity building:* the increased demand by the national, regional and international agenda for environment information has produced a challenge and an opportunity for the statistical community to mainstream environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics. The elevation of SEEA to the level of an international statistical standard and the development of supporting international recommendations (e.g. international recommendations for water statistics and international recommendations for energy statistics) call for its widespread implementation and statistical capacity building in countries. The Committee should develop a concerted implementation strategy encompassing basic environment statistics and their integration in SEEA in support of decision-making at the country level and for international comparisons. This implementation strategy should be linked to that for basic economic statistics as well as for the System of National Accounts;
- (e) *Promotion of environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics:* environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics are relatively new areas of statistics which often do not enjoy the same priority as other statistics (i.e. economic statistics or social statistics) within the national and global statistical systems. There is a need to mainstream these statistics within the statistical systems in particular in response to the new challenges posed by the users' community in particular with regard to measuring sustainable development and climate change.

At the same time, the statistical community has a role to play vis-à-vis the users' community represented by policy makers, academia and scientists. It has to raise awareness of the uses of the statistics it produces. SEEA has proven its potential and added value for environmental-economic analysis. Building on existing experiences, the statistical community should take an active role in the promotion of SEEA for environmental-economic analysis and for formulating international priorities based on users' needs. The Committee should start by actively engaging on behalf of the statistical community with the International Panel on Climate Change to promote the use and usefulness of official statistics in climate change statistics and policies;

- (f) *Formulation of a statistical response on emerging policy issues:* the national and international community has placed several emerging issues related to the environment high on their political agenda. They include cross-cutting issues such as climate change and sustainable development. Until present, the statistical community has responded to these needs in an uncoordinated and ad-hoc manner. There is a need for the statistical community to engage more prominently in the international debate and articulate a statistical response, based on the international statistical standards, to better meet the users' needs.

## ANNEX II

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL –ECONOMIC ACCOUNTING AND ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS**

- 1) The mandate of the Committee are to (a) provide strategic vision, direction and coordination to environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics, including statistics on climate change; (b) provide the international community with international statistical standards for environmental-economic accountings and environment statistics, including statistics on climate change; (c) mainstream environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics in national and international statistical systems; (d) promote the implementation of international statistical standards for environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics in countries; and (e) promote the use of official statistics in scientific and policymaking communities.
- 2) To fulfil the mandates, the Committee programme of work focuses on the following 6 areas of work:
  - (a) Coordination: foster coordination, integration and complementarity of programmes in environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics, including statistics on climate change among international and regional agencies and countries;
  - (b) Methodological development for normative statistical standards and other research: oversee the methodological development of environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics, including statistics on climate change;
  - (c) Development of integrated databases: ensure that international data collection activities are carried out in line with the normative standards and accompanying international recommendations and ensure that information is produced and used in the most efficient and cost-effective way.
  - (d) Implementation of environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics and statistical capacity building: develop concerted implementation strategy encompassing basic environment statistics and their integration in the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting;
  - (e) Promotion of environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting: mainstream environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics within the statistical systems and raise awareness of its uses in the users' community represented by policy makers, academia and scientists;
  - (f) Formulation of a statistical response on emerging policy issues: engage prominently in the international agenda and articulate a statistical response based on the international statistical standards.
- 3) The Committee brings to the attention of United Nations Statistics Division and United Nations Statistical Commission new developments that impact the development of standards and compilation practices of environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics;

- 4) The Committee has an umbrella function within its mandate in providing overall vision, coordination, prioritisation and direction in the field of environmental-economic accounting and environment statistics. The Committee ensures that existing or new groups working in environmental economic accounting and environment statistics work with the Committee in a complementary fashion.
- 5) The selected members of the Committee comprise high-level experts from national governments and international organizations with a broad range of experience in statistics. Members would also be selected so as to ensure equitable regional representation.
- 6) The Committee elects a Chair who serves for a 3 year-period renewable for an additional 3 years. The Chair represents the Committee in international meetings and plays a key role in promoting and communicating the work of the statistical community with other communities, namely the scientific, academic, business and policymaking community. He or she engages the various stakeholders and seeks supports for the Committee projects
- 7) The Committee is assisted by a Bureau composed of members of selected Committee members at the senior level in the national and international agencies. The Bureau executes those tasks and activities for which it has received delegated authority from the Committee, including oversight and day-to-day management of the projects under its responsibility. Decisions taken by the Bureau under the delegated authority from the Committee should be reported to the Committee.
- 8) The Committee is supported by an advisory expert group which advises it on conceptual issues concerning environment and energy statistics and environmental-economic accounting and on proposals for submissions to the United Nations Statistical Commission.
- 9) The United Nations Statistics Division serves as the permanent secretariat of the Committee. It provides the day-to-day management and coordination and undertakes all internal and external communication on behalf of the Committee. In cooperation with the Chair, the secretariat coordinates, monitor, and report on the activities of the various expert groups, organizes meetings, develops the agenda for the meetings, maintains the Committee website and issues the newsletter.
- 10) The Committee prepares an annual report for presentation to the Statistical Commission. It reports progress made in its activities, including progress made by the various city groups, inter-secretariat working groups and other groups working with the Committee within its mandate.