

## Progress on advancing international SEEA-based data collection and dissemination

1. This background note provides an update on the current status of international SEEA-based data collection and dissemination, and serves to provide background information for the discussion at the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental Economic Accounting (UNCEEA) on the way forward in advancing the compilation of SEEA-coherent data at the international level for the SEEA implementation.
2. The UNCEEA was established by the United Nations Statistical Commission with mandates to mainstream environmental-economic accounting and related statistics and to advance the implementation of the SEEA in countries. At its 10th Meeting in June 2015, the UNCEEA discussed the proposal to establish an SEEA database for selected accounts in support of the monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Targets.
3. The Committee welcomed the proposal to consider SEEA based data dissemination at the international level as an important step in implementation of the SEEA. The Committee considered it important to work towards compiling SEEA-coherent data at the international level by using economic and environmentally related data from existing international and regional databases as a first step in the dissemination of SEEA-coherent statistics. It stressed the importance of data sharing and exchange mechanisms on the basis of common data templates and the use of the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange. It encouraged international agencies to do a stocktaking exercise and establish priorities for data compilation for a small set of accounts that could be used to showcase SEEA using existing international data. The exercise of developing global databases on selected SEEA accounts is also in line with the Committee's reiteration of the importance of the SEEA as an important framework to monitor the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
4. In line with the decisions taken by the UNCEEA, a strategic document, which was prepared by Stephan Moll from Eurostat with inputs from UNSD, was presented for informal consultation with selected partners around the joint the joint UNECE/OECD seminar and task force meeting on 'Implementation of SEEA', Geneva, 14-16 October 2015.
5. The meeting was attended by Eurostat, FAO, OECD, Statistics Netherlands, UNECE and UNSD. There was general support among agencies attending the meeting in moving forward with the establishment of a database on selected SEEA accounts. It was considered important to establish a proof of concept of the feasibility of developing such global database to mainstream the SEEA implementation. It was noted that the challenges to setting up such a database should not be underestimated and should be properly assessed before embarking in the exercise.
6. At the 47th session of the UN Statistical Commission in March 2016, the Commission discussed progress made in the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework, including on coordination

and data compilation. The Commission *“agreed in principle with the implementation strategy, urged the Committee of Experts to finalize its work on coordination and partnerships at the global, regional and national levels to support the implementation, including the compilation of SEEA-coherent data based on existing international databases, and requested that the Committee of Experts take into account existing inter-agency mechanisms for coordination in its consideration of the establishment of an appropriate mechanism and also take into account the importance of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) in order to provide source statistics for SEEA”*.

7. This background note is complemented by the aforementioned strategic document (see para 4) that presents a preliminary technical analysis of the possible areas in which global databases can be developed based on existing experience in particular in Eurostat and the availability of global data sets. The document reflects on the usefulness and feasibility of establishing global SEEA datasets in the domain of SEEA physical flow accounting. The document also calls for a coordinated partnership of international bodies such as UNSD, OECD, Eurostat and others in establishing global datasets or databases for SEEA physical flow accounting