Ninth Meeting of the

United Nations Committee of Experts on

Environmental-Economic Accounting

Minutes of the Meeting

(New York, 25-27 June 2014)

1.   The Ninth Meeting of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEA) took place in New York hosted by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) from 25 to 27 June 2014. It was opened by Mr Stefan Schweinfest, Director of UNSD and Mr. Ian Ewing, Interim Chair of UNCEEA and Deputy Australian Statistician.

2.   The Ninth Meeting of the UNCEEA discussed the role of the SEEA as a statistical framework in the post-2015 development agenda, and possible contributions of the UNCEEA and wider statistical community to ensuring that the SNA and the SEEA are properly reflected as underlying conceptual frameworks for integrated economic-environmental indicators. The UNCEEA also discussed the importance of developing coherent measures at the corporate level which are aligned with SEEA standards to facilitate high quality data collection from the corporate sector, noting that not all companies (particularly small enterprises) are captured in corporate reporting. The harmonisation of basic statistics with the accounting concepts was considered an important process that should be carried out in the context of an integrated statistical production process and will help to facilitate the mainstreaming of the SEEA in official statistics at the country level. The Committee also discussed progress in the drafting of the SEEA Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and welcomed the process of engagement within the different statistical communities within FAO. It welcomed the finalization of the compilation guidelines on water statistics and accounts. The medium term programme of work for the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework, with particular focus on the activities of the Technical Committee on the SEEA Central Framework, was addressed, as well as the programme of work for the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting. A communication plan for the SEEA, which was developed by a communication consultant, was discussed. The UNCEEA discussed the proposal for the development of a global database for input-output tables, and possible cooperation with the academic and scientific communities to this end. Finally, the Committee received an update on the activities of the groups working within its mandate.

3.   The agenda was adopted without changes.   With regard to the organization of work, it was agreed that agenda item 8 would be discussed after agenda item 9 to accommodate travel plans of those participating.

4.   A list of the main outcomes and actions to be taken by the UNCEEA as agreed during the meeting is presented in Annex I. The agenda and list of participants are included in Annexes II and III, respectively. Papers and presentations of the meeting are posted at http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/ceea/meetings/ninth_meeting/lod9.htm

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting

Summary of statements:

5.   In his opening statement, Mr. Schweinfest welcomed the Committee to the Ninth Meeting. He noted that the Committee is now approaching a new phase of its functioning, with a shift toward activities on the implementation of SEEA Central Framework, the testing of the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting and the advancement of their respective research agendas. The renewed membership of the Committee with a strong participation from developing countries reflects that transition.

6.   Mr. Schweinfest highlighted that work on environmental-economic accounting is approaching a critical moment as the Open Working Group is finalizing the goals and targets on sustainable development for the post 2015 Development Agenda, in which the SEEA presents an excellent tool to monitor progress towards Sustainable Development Goals. This is mainly due to its integrative power of organizing information in a systems framework. In this context, the Committee at its present meeting should address what role it can play in contributing to the work on SDG indicators and how the Committee can support the OWG process and the Friends of the Chair on broader measures of progress.

7.   Mr. Schweinfest noted that the SEEA is likely to gain increasing significance with ongoing efforts for its adoption and mainstreaming in national statistical systems. Mr. Schweinfest welcomed that the Ninth meeting of the UNCEEA was heavily focussed on SEEA implementation and was going to discuss guidelines, training and communication.

8.   Mr. Ewing thanked Mr. Schweinfest for his opening remarks and joined him in welcoming the participants. He reiterated the increasing relevance of the SEEA to the emerging UN Development Agenda's requirement for broader measures of progress. He noted that the Committee has an important role to play in making the case for the SEEA and encouraged the UNCEEA to work with the friends of the chair group on broader measures of progress, as well as any other mechanisms to advocate the SEEA as an important tool in informing the post 2015 development agenda and in particular as a catalyst for integrated data production processes leading to sustainable statistical systems.

Agenda Item 2 – Election of Chair

Outcome and actions:

The UNCEEA:

- Took note of the information that a new permanent Chair has not yet been identified due to several changes at the management level of several NSOs. Mr Ian Ewing accepted to continue in his role as interim chair until a replacement is found.
- Agreed that the issue of electing a new Chair would be passed back to the Bureau of the UNCEEA who will seek a new appointment later this year.

Agenda Item 3: Post-2015 UN Development Agenda and broader measures of progress

Outcome and actions:

The UNCEEA:

- Noted the extensive set of goals and targets currently being discussed in the SDG process and expressed concern on the number of indicators and measurability of some of the targets within current statistical operations, noting the need to focus on selected main indicators.

- Agreed on the need to be transparent on the limitations of indicators and current statistical capacities, and supported the notion to continue to bring to the attention of the Open Working Group what is actually feasible and measurable.

- Asked Mr. O'Connor to consult with the co-chairs of the Open Working Group on the feasibility for the UNCEEA to provide input on statistical measurability to help prioritise the streamlining of targets.

- Agreed that the SDG process is an opportunity for the statistical community to improve statistical systems as well as utilize the sense of urgency to address gaps in statistical capacity for the monitoring of SDG goals and explore possibilities to ensure adequate resources.

- Agreed to contribute to the discussion of how to use non-traditional data sources in conjunction with official statistics.

- Agreed to support activities of the Friends of the Chair on Broader Measures of Progress on issues related to integration of environmental-economic data.

- Requested its Bureau to ask the Technical Committee on the SEEA Central Framework to provide a mechanism for conducting an evaluation of indicators to be proposed for the SDG targets that can be measured by the SEEA and circulate its initial findings to the UNCEEA for comment.

Summary of discussion:

Indicators for the Post-2015 Development Agenda - Principles and Recommendations from the UNSD / SDSN Expert Roundtable
Jessica Espey, United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network

9.   Ms. Espey introduced the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) which was set up by the Secretary General in 2012 and constitutes a global network of research centres with a technical advisory role.

10.   The presentation set out the post-2015 work process, particularly SDSN's supporting work for setting goals and targets. The Open Working Group published a zero draft of 17 goals with associated targets in June 2014 with the focus so far at the target level, rather than on developing indicators. To assist in this next step, SDSN designed a potential list of 100 indicators for the anticipated sustainable development goals, and issued a report in May 2014 that received significant attention worldwide. Ms Espey presented SDSN's Core Principles as a guide to develop indicators that should be: clear and straightforward; consensus based; broadly consistent with systems-based information, including the System of National Accounts (SNA) and SEEA; constructed from well-established data sources; disaggregated; universal; and managed by a designated organization.

11.   Ms. Espey underlined close collaboration of SDSN with the statistical community, and reported on the recently organized SDSN and UNSD Expert Roundtable on Indicators for SDGs. The discussions and outcomes of the two-day meeting on collecting comprehensive and timely data were structured around: filling gaps in available indicators; moving towards annual reporting; having common standards and improved surveys; and consideration of architecture and financing arrangements.

12.   Ms. Espey informed the Committee that SDSN is now working on a robust monitoring tool for the SDG agenda. She noted the particular importance of improving the global statistical architecture, for which SDSN will do a needs assessment.

13.   The Committee congratulated SDSN on their work and considered it a useful channel to provide input to the SDG process, but expressed concern that more than half of the 100 indicators developed cannot possibly be measured under normal statistical operations. The Committee noted the need to be clear and transparent on both the limitations of indicators and on the capabilities of current statistical systems and supported to continue to bring to the attention of the Open Working Group what is actually measurable.

14.   Several members proposed that is would be helpful to develop a core set of indicators, and possibly come up with a priority ranking of these indicators. The Committee agreed that they should advocate a systems approach which uses existing data and frameworks to make indicator measurement feasible. It was noted that the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) have already provided a mapping between draft SDG indicators and an endorsed set of sustainable development indicators in line with SEEA as presented in the '*CES Recommendations on Measuring Sustainable Development*'.

15.   The Committee agreed that the SDG process is an opportunity for the statistical community to improve statistical systems. There is a sense of urgency in the statistical community to address gaps in statistical capacity to monitor SDG goals and explore possibilities to ensure adequate resources.

DSD update on the progress of the Open Working Group
David O'Connor, Division for Sustainable Development, DESA

16.   Mr. O'Connor explained that member states are participating fully in the discussion of the zero draft that is coming to conclusion, working closely with the statistical community. There is an effort to arrive at a more manageable number of targets. There has been strong support from most countries in the current draft for the target on integration of broader measures of progress into national accounts. A key element of the target list is bringing together the social, economic and environmental aspects, thus the Committee has a leadership role to provide recommendations for indicators aligned with the SEEA.

17.   The Committee asked Mr. O'Connor to consult with the co-chairs of the Open Working Group whether it would be feasible to provide input on statistical measurability to help prioritise the streamlining of targets. The Committee also agreed to take further the conversation on developing a core set of indicators within the statistical community given the large set of proposed indicators.

Friends of the Chair Group on the broader measures of progress

Claire Plateu, INSEE, Co-chair of the Friends of the Chair Group

18.   The presentation outlined the Friends of the Chair Group's progress in their work to develop broader measures of progress based on a stocktaking exercise of practices in the field. A report to the Statistical Commission was submitted in March 2014 which stresses the need for statistical capacity development and a target in the SDGs on effective official statistical systems. In June the group conducted an indicator mapping exercise to match the targets contained in the zero draft discussed by Open Working Group with selected indicator sets (SDSN, MDGs and SDI adopted in the *CES Recommendations on Measuring Sustainable Development*) in order to provide an initial and rough assessment of data availability by target to show where more effort and investment in statistical capacity is required to ensure measurability. This analysis was made available to the Co-Chairs of the OWG.

19.   The group welcomed the offer of UNCEEA expertise in support of Friends of the Chair activities on issues related to integration of environmental-economic data.

Eurostat's indicator and environmental accounts activities
Anton Steurer, Eurostat

20.   Mr. Steurer informed the Committee of statistical initiatives at Eurostat which involve an information pyramid of basic statistics, accounting systems / frameworks of integration, and indicators noting that only part of the Eurostat's environmental indicators come from environmental accounting – many come directly from basic statistics. Mr. Steurer presented some of Eurostat's initiatives in environment measurement, including the Resource Efficiency Scoreboard and the publication which monitors the Europe 2020 strategy.

21.   The presentation considered Eurostat's progress and technical expertise in environmental accounting. EU regulations provide a legal base to produce accounts in 6 areas. Mr. Steurer also discussed the 2014-2018 European Strategy for Environmental Accounting with focus on implementing existing modules in countries, making use of existing data and updating handbooks and compilation guides. The European Environment Agency (EEA) will take the lead in work on ecosystem accounting and Eurostat will support the EEA in this work.

The system approach for the derivation of SDG indicators
Ian Ewing, Interim Chair of UNCEEA and Deputy Australian Statistician

22.   The presentation illustrated a range of emerging demands for environmentally relevant indicators which SEEA can and should support. Mr. Ewing noted that SEEA provides a conceptual framework for organising environmental and economic data, which presents a way of compiling indicators in a more coherent manner and integrates environmental-economic data rather than looking at them in isolation. The presentation provided an example of energy-related goals and targets to demonstrate the role of SEEA in a systems approach to indicator development in the post 2015 agenda.

23.   Mr. Ewing presented a set of five guiding principles for the recommendation of indicators to inform the compilation of SDGs. The Committee considered the principles a good basis for conducting an evaluation of indicators to be proposed for the SDG targets that can be measured by the SEEA. Some members placed the greatest emphasis on the principle that indicators need

to be attainable, feasible and timely as well as they should be policy relevant, easy to communicate and interpret by users.

24.   The UNCEEA noted the importance of having a common framework underlying the derivation of indicators which brings, quality, independence comparability over time and across countries. The SEEA provides such a framework but its implementation requires appropriate investments in the statistical systems in terms of developing partnerships with other agencies, harmonizing and streamlining data sources, building capacities, etc. It was recognized that an incremental approach setting clear goals and priorities is key to the success of the implementation.

25.   The Bureau of UNCEEA will ask the Technical Committee on SEEA Central Framework to provide a mechanism to communicate views of the UNCEEA to provide input for the OWG process of developing the SDG indicators. The Technical Committee will be asked to put together an initial proposal of SEEA aligned indicators to be circulated to the UNCEEA for comment.

Agenda Item 4: Towards aligning the measures and indicators at the corporate, national and international level – The role of the SEEA

Outcome and actions:

The UNCEEA:

- Considered important to engage with on-going initiatives to develop and standardize sustainability corporate accounting and reporting to ensure harmonization between macro and corporate reporting. The various initiatives that presented their approach at the UNCEEA expressed interest in working to align their work with the SEEA.

- Recommended mapping the different initiatives on corporate sustainability accounting and reporting and an analysis of similarities and differences with the SEEA concepts and classifications.

- Noted that corporate level sustainability accounting and reporting was a relatively untapped information source and welcomed the interest for closer engagement between business sector initiatives and the SEEA.

- Identified some key areas of potential cooperation with the business sector, e.g. application of terminology, classifications, valuation methodology, data quality validation and linking corporate accounts to environmental accounts.

- Suggested that further consideration of the discussed issues is taken up in the Global Conference on a Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics being organised in January 2015 and the Committee also welcomed the suggestion that private sector institutions consider hosting future discussions.

Summary of Discussion:

26.   Five panellists presented their views on developing coherent measures at the corporate level and the possibilities of their alignment with national accounting and the SEEA Central Framework.

27.   *Gerard Eding, Statistics Netherlands:* Mr. Eding noted that for the multitude of initiatives to measure sustainable development better convergence is needed in which the SEEA can play a specific role. Mr. Eding presented the example of current discussions between Statistics Netherlands, the Global Reporting Initiative and a sustainability consortium on how to achieve convergence and deal with significant differences between corporate and national accounting. Tentative results of a detailed ongoing comparison of indicators reveal many differences and shows that resolving their alignment is a long term process. The final report of the exercise is expected in July 2014.

28.   *Bastian Buck, Global Reporting Initiative:* Mr. Buck introduced the Global Reporting Initiative's aim to develop a global standard for corporate reporting on sustainability impacts. GRI has produced a sustainability reporting framework which is aligned with current accounting practices, and the goal is to establish this framework as a standard similar to those of financial reporting. He noted that corporate sustainability reporting is a relatively untapped data resource and could be further linked to the SDG monitoring discussion and national development plans. Mr. Buck informed the Committee that GRI is working with other interest groups to promote the alignment with SDG developments, the future of corporate reporting and its link to national level accounting.

29.   *Ana Blanco, United Nations Global Compact:* Ms. Blanco introduced the UN Global Compact which is a voluntary initiative of companies committed to implement ten principles of corporate sustainability into their corporate strategies and reporting on their sustainability performance on a yearly basis. The Global Compact has taken a very active role in consultations on the post-2015 development agenda bringing the perspective of the private sector to the SDG discussion. The Global Compact has four main goals: increase the number of companies which are publicly committed to sustainability initiatives and reporting; enhance disclosure and transparency in measurement practices aligned with the post-2015 agenda and SDG goals and indicators; move towards integrated reporting of sustainability and financial information; and establish accepted schemes of third party certification of business sustainability reporting.

30.   *Jessica McGlyn, World Business Council for Sustainable Development:* Ms. McGyln informed the Committee that the World Business Council is a business association of 200 Fortune 500 companies in which a requirement for membership is that companies undertake sustainability reporting. The Council is working towards business solutions for planetary priorities to alleviate global pressures. When the association analysed companies' sustainability reports, there was significant variability in quality, it is therefore developing protocols which companies can follow and toolkits for more rigorous reporting. The eventual aim is to achieve integrated environmental and financial reporting and working toward monetary evaluation of ecosystem services. She expressed interest that businesses participating in the Council and the UNCEEA can work together by sharing lessons learned on valuation methods and techniques for harmonized measurement approaches required by businesses for integrated performance management and decision making.

31.   *Nicolas Bertrand, United Nations Environmental Programme:* Mr. Bertrand introduced the Natural Capital Coalition (formerly the TEEB for Business Coalition), established in 2012, which is a global, multi-stakeholder platform to build the business case and support the uptake of natural capital measurement, management, reporting and disclosure in business decision making. The Coalition is overseeing the development of a Natural Capital Protocol to define what, why and how to account for and value natural capital and hot to apply this to inform business decision

making. The Natural Capital Declaration was launched in June 2012 by the UNEP Finance Initiative and the Global Canopy Programme to integrate natural capital considerations into loans, equity, fixed income and insurance products, as well as in accounting, disclosure and reporting frameworks. A roadmap for this work focusses on four elements: (1) understanding the link between natural capital and financial risk and return; (2) embedding natural capital considerations into loans, equities, bonds and insurance markets; (3) accounting for natural capital financially into accounting frameworks (in the context of relevant initiatives, such as the development of a Natural Capital Accounting Protocol); (4) disclosing and reporting on natural capital.

32.   The Committee was informed that the Philippines has already engaged a taskforce with the aim of facilitating sustainable business reporting from the top 500 corporations and provided templates for the compilation of information which the NSO needs.

33.   The Committee agreed that corporate sustainability accounting and reporting was a useful information source and encouraged further collaboration with the private sector in its work programme. The Committee identified possible areas for cooperation, such as application of terminology and classifications, valuation methodology, data quality validation and linking corporate accounts to national accounts. The Committee suggested that further consideration be given to the issues discussed under this agenda item in the Global Conference on a Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics being organised in January 2015. The Committee also welcomed the suggestion that private sector institutions consider hosting future discussions.

34.   The Committee noted that National Statistical Offices (NSOs) need guidance to transform corporate sustainability reports into information which can be used in national accounts. Some members raised that data used for SEEA should be based on standardized reporting. Panellists and members of the Committee shared their experience on certification of data originating from corporate sustainability reports and its impact on the commitment of businesses to produce those reports.

Agenda Item 5: Towards the harmonization of basic statistics and mainstreaming the SEEA *(for discussion)*

Outcome and actions:

The UNCEEA:

- Recognized that institutional development, coordination between NSOs and line ministries, and the significant gap in human resources capacity remain key constraints for the implementation of the SEEA.

- Noted that the use of different concepts, definitions and classifications for the collection of basic data makes their integration into the SEEA accounts a challenge.

- Noted the need, where appropriate, for a common data production process for economic and environment statistics and called for the use of strategic planning to strengthen basic statistics, assess priorities and develop capability in environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting.

- Considered important developing an integrated statistics programme in the medium to long term and it noted that it will require additional resources. In the short term, it suggested taking a pragmatic approach towards and incremental and gradual process of transformation to a more integrated statistical system by focusing on specific issues (e.g. classifications) in which quick progress can be made.

- Supported the contribution of a paper being drafted by the Technical Committee on SEEA Central Framework, on the implementation of the SEEA and the integrated statistics approach.

- Welcomed the progress in the development of SEEA Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (SEEA AFF) and noted that the SEEA has served as a catalyst to bring together the different stakeholders to organize data in a common framework. The SEEA AFF has served as a data quality framework in comparing individual data sets and in moving towards an integrated approach.

- Noted that activities of international agencies related to the SEEA implementation are often complementary and called for strengthened coordination taking advantage of the strengths and entry points of each agency and for avoiding duplication of work.

- Agreed that tracking and coordinating the SEEA in the activities of international organisations was a worthwhile exercise and suggested to extend it to international agencies working on climate issues.

- Appreciated the update on the FDES implementation and stressed the importance of continued efforts to build capacity in countries to improve availability and quality of environment statistics with special attention to basic environment data which feed directly into environmental accounts.

- Considered necessary to strengthen coordination at the national level for efficient management and participation in multiple international initiatives that run in parallel.

Summary of Discussion:

5.a   Harmonizing basic statistics with the accounts

The Integrated Business Statistics Programme at Statistics Canada
Andre Loranger, Assistant Chief Statistician, Statistics Canada

35.   The presentation outlined the experiences at Statistics Canada in harmonizing economic statistics which feed national accounts. The project, initiated in 2008, was motivated by the need to be more efficient and generate cost savings. The Corporate Business Architecture project represents a new way of doing business aimed to the consolidation of IT functions, organisational alignment with a generic statistical business model (including IT, collection, methodology, analysis and dissemination), an extensive use of administrative data alongside replacing inconsistent methodologies, programme specific classifications and processes, and multiple frames.

36.   As the next phase, the Integrated Business Statistics Programme (IBSP) aims to develop a new processing infrastructure and integrate eventually most business surveys conducted at Statistics Canada. Increased coherence is expected from this project, as well as cost effectiveness

and a reduction in the response burden on businesses due to an increased focus on administrative data, coordinated sampling and electronic collection.

37.   Mr. Loranger noted that further integration is expected of environment surveys into IBSP that feed Canada's SEEA accounts, particularly water use surveys for major industrial sectors, energy surveys and solid waste survey which feed the physical flow accounts. He noted that the programme was a significant undertaking and required extensive time and resources to be implemented.

5.b   Panel discussion on issues in harmonizing basic statistics with the accounts

38.   *Ivo Havinga from UNSD* moderated the panel discussion that considered the implications of SEEA implementation at the national level from the perspective of harmonisation with basic statistics to understand from countries what methodological and institutional challenges they have faced so far.

39.   *Zarinah Mahari presented experiences from Malaysia*, stating that the motivation for the implementation of the SEEA was measurement of Green GDP. The main challenge faced in implementation was the level of institutional decentralisation, whereby there are five main agencies responsible for the data. Ms. Mahari underlined the difficulties of coordination among different institutions and agencies responsible for different data areas.

40.   *Badamtsetseg Batjargal presented experiences from Mongolia,* where they are currently working to establish an institutional structure for implementation of the SEEA. A memorandum of understanding has been signed for an institutional mechanism to improve environment statistics and expand cooperation between organisations. The NSO has carried out an assessment on the status of basic statistics, which found that Mongolia is currently producing 175 indicators related to the Framework for Development of Environment Statistics (FDES). The main challenges are the quality of environmental data and significant lack of professional capacity, thus there is substantial need to increase the number and frequency of training. She noted the need to develop a common production process for economic and environment statistics. Mongolia is in the very early stages of implementing SEEA and would like to present their work at the next London Group Meeting to receive feedback.

41.   *Andrei Tatarinov presented experiences from Russia,* where natural assets accounts are of special interest, and most data comes from administrative sources with special surveys for the environment done at ministry level. Russia has long data series on natural assets that were traditionally designed to be collected on the basis of physical data. The quality of data is varied and consistency is a major issue. Harmonization of classifications with the SEEA classification of natural assets is paramount. A new government plan, expected in 2016, will require ministries to develop special statistical tools for the evaluation of natural assets which are harmonised with the SEEA. There is a need to develop a legal framework for the SEEA implementation and increase training not only for NSOs but also for line ministries.

42.   The Committee agreed that country experiences indicate that (1) institutional coordination; (2) capacity building; and (3) use of different concepts and classifications for data collection are key constraints to the implementation of the SEEA and its harmonization with basic statistics. Some members pointed out that the Statistical Business Register and application of unique identifiers are essential for environmental data to build an accounting system with consistency.

5.c   *Mainstreaming the SEEA*

Mainstreaming of the SEEA Central Framework in the programme of work of international agencies
Alessandra Alfieri, United Nations Statistics Division

43.   The presentation introduced an overview of what different international agencies are doing related to the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework. Mainstreaming of the SEEA is taking place at various levels including adoption of the SEEA framework to inform various policy initiatives, harmonization of the collection of basic statistics consistent with the SEEA standard, and alignment of SEEA implementation within an integrated statistical production process. For example, a Conference of European Statisticians (CES) Task Force is exploring the use of the SEEA Central Framework to derive a set of key climate change-related statistics and indicators. The initial analysis of the practices of international agencies indicates that these can usefully complement each other in the global implementation of the SEEA Central Framework and point to areas in their work programmes with a need for further strengthening coordination, such as in capacity building activities.

44.   The Committee agreed that tracking progress in mainstreaming the SEEA in the operations of international agencies and developing a coordinated implementation programme was a worthwhile exercise and it should be extended to collect information from climate organizations.

Better Statistics by Design – Fast track testing and experimentation of Common Statistical Production and Information Architecture
Ivo Havinga, United Nations Statistics Division

45.   The presentation focused on the benefits of an integrated approach in statistics. Mr. Havinga explained the context in which an integrated statistical programme is developed fully aligned with Generic Statistical Information Model and based on shared Generic Statistical Business Production Model, both endorsed by the CES in 2013-2014.Movement towards an integrated statistical system meets policy demands, improves cost effectiveness and reduces response burdens.

46.   Mr. Havinga argued that an integrated statistics programme would require movement away from the stove piped statistical production process and ensure that consistent statistics and indicators are compiled from an integrated set of economic, social and environment statistics and macroeconomic accounts such as SEEA and SNA as the overarching macroeconomic frameworks for integration. He put forward a proposal to fast track the testing and experimentation of a Common Statistical Production Architecture, being developed by the CES High-Level Group for Modernization of Statistical Production and Services. The development of an integrated approach encompasses policy-use perspective, institutional and regulatory aspects and operational and infrastructural aspects. He emphasized the role of institutional changes and creating centralized statistical services with components such as centralized registers and frames, centralized metadata, quality management, data processing and IT services. A centralized project management is responsible for designing, developing and implementing a highly complex integrated statistical programme.

47.   The Committee recognized the benefits of developing an integrated statistical production process and acknowledged its transformative role in the longer-term move towards the modernization of statistical systems. They noted that adopting this approach would require investment in the improvement of the statistical system, which may be beyond the mandate of the Committee. Many committee members acknowledged that the SEEA can play a catalysing role to moving towards an integrated statistics approach, although some members expressed the view that the implementation of the SEEA may need not be accompanied by complete integration across programmes. Members referred to their national experience with integration indicating that every country has unique setup and resources of their statistical system and pointed out differences in the feasibility to introduce organizational changes. Therefore, the Committee advocated a pragmatic approach to take incremental steps to promote a gradual process of transformation towards a more integrated statistical system. The Committee supported focusing on components of building an integrated statistical production process such as classifications, standard methodologies and business registers.

48.   The Committee concluded to develop a paper on the implementation of SEEA and the integrated statistics approach to outline the role of the SEEA in the modernization of the statistical system and harmonisation of basic statistics. The paper is expected to contribute to the broader considerations at the Global Conference on a Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics scheduled for 15-16 January 2015 at UN Headquarters.

5.d   Mainstreaming the SEEA as part of international organizations operations

SEEA-Agri: Linking agricultural statistics with accounts
Carl Obst, Consultant to FAO

49.   Mr. Obst presented FAO's current work on SEEA for Agriculture (SEEA-Agri) which is developed in the context of the Global Strategy for Agricultural Statistics. The FAO continue to make progress in this work, and aim to complete SEEA-Agri development work by end-2014. SEEA-Agri can be considered an application of the concepts and accounting standards of the SEEA Central Framework.

50.   Mr. Obst explained that SEEA-Agri provides a way of measuring progress toward sustainable agricultural production. SEEA-Agri has been a catalyst for improving statistical governance arrangements and institutional set-ups within and outside FAO. The SEEA has served as a tool to organize the existing information within FAO and to think in an integrated way. The high level endorsement at FAO and link to policy needs was key to establish SEEA-Agri as an ongoing project to support the compilation of accounts. Work on initial country level testing of prototype accounts is progressing well and a draft SEEA-Agri document will be prepared for an expert group meeting in October 2014.

FDES: Linking environment statistics with accounts
Eszter Horvath, UNSD

51.   Ms. Horvath's presentation addressed how to align with SEEA developments the implementation of the Framework for the Development of Environmental Statistics (FDES). The FDES 2013 provides an organizing structure to guide the collection and compilation of environment statistics at the national level. It provides a comprehensive set of descriptive

statistics on the state of the environment and human activities which affect it and consists of a basic and core set of environment statistics. The FDES revision paid special attention to alignment with the concepts, definitions and classifications used in the SEEA Central Framework, and supports the development of environmental-economic accounts providing basic statistics to enable compilation of SEEA accounts.

52.   Ms. Horvath noted that the FDES is structured around six main components and its scope is wider than the statistics which feed into the SEEA Central Framework accounting tables, roughly 35% of the statistics included in the basic set can feed into the accounts. FDES is currently developing a manual on the basic set of environment statistics, to provide guidance for compilation. Ms. Horvath remarked that environment statistics are collected by UNSD through the UNSD/UNEP questionnaire since 1999 and coordinated with OECD, FAO and the Basel Convention, although data availability is low and quality is weak. It allows publishing about 10 series with sufficient coverage and quality. Owing to capacity building and training the trend in response and quality is improving.

53.   Committee members from NSOs in developing countries noted the difficulty they face in collecting environmental statistics, and low capacity in this area. Some NSOs raised the issue of focusing on those environment statistics that can be directly useful for building accounts.

OECD: Task-force on the implementation of the SEEA, harmonization of statistics for producing green growth indicators
Pierre-Alain Pionnier, OECD

54.   Mr. Pionnier presented the work of the OECD Task Force on the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework, consisting of 12 countries and 3 international agencies. The main objectives of the Task Force are: To develop standard tables for the collection of internationally comparable data on air emissions and natural resources; to provide guidelines and practical examples on the construction of air emissions accounts; to provide methodological guidelines on the monetary valuation of natural assets; and to advise on other areas where standard tables could be developed in line with the SEEA. This work is considered fundamental to the implementation of the OECD green growth strategy. Mr. Pionnier indicated that one of the main challenges has been the alignment of different classifications used at the national level.

Eurostat: Work on harmonization
Anton Steurer, Eurostat

55.   Mr. Steurer presented work ongoing in Eurostat to mainstream environmental accounting that has two components. The first is to include environmental accounting into the mainstream statistical system, and achieve incorporation into annual work programmes and regular production. This has been facilitated by EU legal acts on environmental accounting which makes the production of 6 accounts obligatory. The focus now is on the second component to build environmental accounts needs into mainstream national accounts, business, energy, transport, agriculture, forestry statistics, etc.   Mr. Steurer presented the European Strategy for Environmental Accounts 2014-2018 with focus to invest in statistical infrastructure, e.g. make classifications more suitable, and increase cooperation with other statistical areas. The five-year

strategy also includes developing methods and testing new modules e.g. waste and forest accounts, environmental subsidies and resource management.

5.e   Panel discussion on the needs to establish national coordination – country perspectives

56.   Mr. Havinga moderated the panel, to obtain views at national level on SEEA implementation developments and on managing activities related to multiple initiatives by different international agencies to ensure resource effectiveness and best use of scarce national resources.

57.   *Kechuck Suhariyanto presented experiences from Indonesia* where annual asset accounting was developed in 1997 with focus on main natural resources. The plan is to adjust to the SEEA framework. Indonesia actively participates in multiple initiatives, these include: collaboration with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to implement SNA and participate in SEEA training; cooperation with UNSD as a pilot country in the Experimental Ecosystem Accounting project; cooperation with FAO on implementing SEEA-Agri; and cooperation with the World Bank on the WAVES project. These four initiatives present significant opportunities, including a larger budget to compile accounts and build capacity in Indonesia, as well as exploitation of the unique strengths of each institution: UNSD provides conceptual expertise on SEEA, while the World Bank has expertise on linking data to policy, and the ABS provides guidance for bridging theory and practice in implementation and FAO focuses on agriculture, an area specifically important in Indonesia. The main challenges associated with running many initiatives in parallel include the possibility of overlap and difficulty to coordinate the time period for each initiative. In order to tackle these challenges, the NSO is selecting priority accounts based on nationally developed goals and working to establish a national institutional arrangement of local teams to support and coordinate each international initiative. Indonesia is also running a self-assessment on data availability using tools suggested by UNSD to assist in the development of a strategic plan for the SEEA implementation. Indonesia has received a lot of technical from international agencies and is prepared to assist other countries in the region.

58.   *Lisa Bersales presented experiences from the Philippines* which is undergoing a transition phase of its four major statistical agencies merged into one. There is good coordination with the various government ministries involved in the compilation of environmental statistics and accounts. Ms. Bersales noted that the Philippines has significantly benefitted from the help of international organisations, and is currently participating in the training of trainers for SEEA run by UNSD and in the World Bank's WAVES project on pilot ecosystem accounts. These present significant opportunities, including absorption of technology transfers from international agencies but it requires balancing these new initiatives with current work programme. Ms Bersales suggested that good coordination of initiatives at country level requires appropriate timing of activities, particularly taking account of election cycles that influence programming and budgeting at statistical institutions.

59.   *Chris Mukiza presented experiences from Uganda* which is operating under a three year statistical development plan and considered paramount that international initiatives fit in with the national strategic plan for statistics. The main challenges are related to underdeveloped statistical infrastructures in the ministries and planning departments which support statistical production. Opportunities include the advantage of introducing technical change and building capacity in statistics.

60.   *Monica Rodriguez presented experiences from Colombia* where they have been working on environmental accounts for over five years including on water, energy, environmental protection expenditure and environmental asset accounts. There is strong institutional backing for the SEEA from the institute for sustainable development and the ministry of environment. Many international initiatives are operational in Colombia organized by ECLAC, WAVES, and the OECD green growth project. Challenges are associated with the fact that these initiatives have different scope and focus, but the advantage is they bring resources needed to develop capacity.

61.   The Committee noted that these country examples highlight the importance of closer coordination of the various international initiatives involving NSOs and a better understanding of national strategic plans and capacity building needs. The Committee appreciated the additional resources and capacity these initiatives bring to participating NSOs as well as the positive effect on mobilizing national institutions, and underlined the importance of national ownership of implementation that help to institutionalize the projects on a sustainable basis. It also stressed the importance of integrating the various initiatives into the strategic planning and an integrated statistical production process.

Agenda Item 6: Towards a medium-term programme of work for the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework *(for discussion)*

Outcome and actions:

The UNCEEA:

- Endorsed the medium-term programme of work for the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework, and supported the related activities of the Technical Committee on the SEEA Central Framework for going forward.

- Suggested adjusting the timetable for developing Technical Notes and Core Tables to make it more realistic considering the difficulty in identifying an editor.

- Suggested on the following on the structure and content of the Technical Notes and Core Tables for the attention of the Technical Committee on SEEA Central Framework:

    o Proposed that in the template of the Technical Notes a section on data quality should be included;

    o Stressed the importance of properly communicating the purpose of these Technical Notes and Core Tables and Accounts in the introduction; and emphasized that the Technical Notes should target the compiler.

    o Agreed that the Core Tables need to be simplified and based on what is feasible to compile

    o Considered providing examples of indicators a good idea to show compilers what the outcome of the tables would be.

- Expressed satisfaction with the recently produced Guidelines for the Compilation of Water Accounts and Statistics and considered the guidelines very educational that successfully target an audience of compilers.

Summary of Discussion:

Medium-term programme of work for the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework
Alessandra Alfieri, UNSD

62.   Ms. Alfieri on behalf of the Chair of the Technical Committee on the SEEA Central Framework, Sjoerd Schenau, introduced the medium-term programme of work of the Technical Committee on the SEEA Central Framework, established in March 2014, whose mandate is to: advance the research agenda for the SEEA Central Framework; advance the development of implementation materials and tools; and lead the development of the communication strategy for the SEEA Central Framework. In her presentation Ms. Alfieri gave an overview of progress in these goals, alongside plans for the coming year.

63.   Ms. Alfieri informed the UNCEEA that the Technical Committee provides guidance in the compilation of a draft set of Technical Notes to be completed by end-2014, by proposing a generic structure, timeline and process for the drafting of Technical Notes and Core Tables, will support the editor with technical input in the drafting process, and review draft Technical Notes on the various topics.

64.   Work of the Technical Committee is currently focused on addressing methodological issues in coordination with international agencies, review documents and training material related to SEEA implementation, contribute to the SEEA Knowledge Platform and serve as the recognized destination for questions related to the SEEA Central Framework using an inbox in which to collect all technical questions.

65.   The Technical Committee is working closely with the London Group to advance the research agenda of the SEEA Central Framework, with priority placed on the Classification of Environmental Activities and the Environmental Goods and Services Sector, and the Classification of Waste, Land Cover and Land Use. Responding to concerns of some members of the UNCEEA, Ms. Alfieri noted that the research agenda presented short term priorities, and the full agreed research agenda will be addressed in the longer term.

66.   The Technical Committee will be engaged in drafting two concept papers: one on mainstreaming the SEEA in the compilation of basic statistics and another on the adoption of integrated statistics at the national level.

67.   Ms. Alfieri informed the UNCEEA on another area of activity of the Technical Committee to provide input to developing communication materials and ensure a common message is used.

68.   The Committee endorsed the medium-term programme of work.

Template for Technical Notes and examples of Core Tables and Accounts
Alessandra Alfieri, UNSD

69.   Ms. Alfieri presented, on behalf of the Technical Committee on the SEEA Central Framework, the template for the Technical Notes, consisting of an introduction, the presentation of Core Accounts, the Core Tables and Indicators which can be derived from the tables, followed by a description of basic steps in compilation, key data sources and challenges, concluding with

references and links. Where relevant, Core Tables should combine presentation of monetary and physical data.

70. Members of the Committee stressed the importance of properly communicating the purpose of these Technical Notes. Policy issues should therefore be explained in the introduction of Technical Notes, while still maintaining the section on indicators that can be derived from the accounts. The Committee suggested that a section on data quality also be included, and that the construction of the tables should be tied to experiences in current collections and based on what is achievable. It was also suggested that a chapter explaining how the data can be presented might be helpful.

71. Ms. Alfieri presented current work on developing Technical Notes and Core Tables, which aim to support countries in the implementation of SEEA. She noted that to date, draft Technical Notes for land (presented to the UNCEEA in 2013), water and energy have been compiled and the aim is to finalize additional draft Technical Notes by end-2014.

72. The Committee discussed the scope, content and target audience of the Technical Notes. Some members cautioned on the presentation of indicators, others expressed the need for further clarification of the target audience and some encouraged simplification of the presentation, particularly concerning possible overlap between the core tables and accounts. The Committee stressed that the Technical Notes should target the compiler, and simplifications made to the Tables should maintain the accounting structure.

73. The presented timeframe for this work was considered very tight.. The Committee suggested adjusting the timetable to make it more realistic and held the view that the Technical Notes would not need to be submitted to the Statistical Commission.

Compilation Guidelines on water accounts and statistics
Ricardo Martinez-Lagunes, UNSD

74. Mr. Martinez-Lagunes presented the Guidelines for the Compilation of Water Accounts and Statistics which were produced as part of the SEEA implementation programme. The project, commenced in 2012, was steered by an Editorial Board consisting of experts from international organizations and countries, building on their different perspectives. The guidelines consist of five chapters which answer specific questions: 1) why countries should compile accounts; 2) how accounts work; 3) how data is incorporated into accounts; 4) what the outputs of producing accounts are; and 5) how to keep this process working and regularize the compilation of accounts. The compilation guidelines are illustrated with national examples, both from developing and developed countries, they will help compilers gain hands-on experience with modules of SEEA-Water and they will be maintained as a living document online as further experience is gained in the compilation of water statistics and accounts at the national level.

75. The Committee noted that in some cases the presentation of the SEEA concepts are presented differently from the SNA and SEEA to explain basic concepts to non-accountants while maintaining full consistency with the standard. It requested that these alternative presentations be re-evaluated for their clarity.

76. The Committee expressed high satisfaction with the revised draft guidelines. The Committee considered the guidelines very educational, and agreed that they successfully target the audience of compilers of water statistics and accounts.

Agenda Item 7: Communication strategy of the SEEA *(for discussion)*

Outcome and actions:

The UNCEEA:

- Appreciated the work of the external communications company in the development of a communication plan for the SEEA which aims to stress the importance of the SEEA as a multi-purpose information system responding to specific policy demands highlighting the relationship of the environment with the economy.

- Agreed that the primary target audience should be statisticians to raise their awareness about the SEEA and the work involved in compiling environmental accounts. Different audiences should be addressed with different tools

- Supported producing concise material with simple explanation what SEEA is to assist statisticians to become familiar with the SEEA framework and considered necessary to build on partnership initiatives to align the messaging of different organizations.

Summary of Discussion:

77.   The Communication consultant for SEEA presented a Communication Plan in support of the SEEA implementation to be delivered to different target audiences. The aim is to communicate the importance of the SEEA as a multi-purpose information system from which various indicators responding to specific demands on the environment and its relationship with the economy can be derived.

78.   The objectives of the Communication Plan are to: 1) provide information to enable decision makers to become advocates of the implementation of the SEEA; 2) provide communication tools to UNCEEA that increases its effectiveness in coordinating and facilitating the implementation of SEEA; 3) create awareness for statisticians to understand the implications of the implementation of the SEEA; 4) generate interest and create buy-in of policy makers and stakeholders for the implementation of the SEEA; 5) inform the statistical community about progress so that they feel involved; and 6) manage expectations of leaders and the statistical community by demonstrating what the SEEA can inform about.

79.   The consultant proposed that the communication campaign should serve two core functions: broad awareness-building and addressing targeted audiences. Moreover, the communications campaign should clearly differentiate the SEEA from other initiatives and create a unique identity of SEEA.

80.   The Communication Plan prioritized activities that can drive an awareness campaign. The first step is to upgrade core communications materials and develop and deploy National Advocacy Toolkits that can be adapted on a country level to support local communications initiatives. In addition, communications activities should rely on partnership initiatives. The consultant also underlined the need for clear, simple messaging.

81.   The Committee expressed satisfaction with the engagement of communication experts and provided comments on the details of the communication plan. The Committee agreed with identifying the statistical community as the primary target audience. It stressed the need to differentiate between messages to different audiences, and expressed the need to have different

tools of communication to reach them. The Committee concluded that partnership initiatives were useful to align the messaging of different organizations to promote SEEA and demonstrate its uses.

82. The Committee supported producing concise material with easily understandable explanation what the SEEA is in a brochure format. Some members advised to create a toolbox where users could put their data and obtain results in line with SEEA to demonstrate the information obtainable from environmental-economic accounts. Members of the Committee also suggested the extensive use of infographics.

Agenda Item 8: Towards a medium-term programme of work for the SEEA-Experimental Ecosystem Accounting *(for discussion)*

Outcome and actions:

The UNCEEA:
- Noted the progress presented by international initiatives in their activities linked to experimental ecosystem accounting, and encouraged further coordination efforts and links between various programmes, with a view to avoiding duplication of effort and redundancies in the allocation of resources.

- Made suggestions where the medium term programme of work on SEEA - Experimental Ecosystem Accounting could be strengthened.
    - Suggested clarifying the end product to be achieved with the development of an updated SEEA experimental ecosystem accounting.

    - Advised to focus selected issues with a view to agreeing on best practices to be included in an updated SEEA Ecosystem Accounting and in practical guidelines to support the implementation in countries.

- Noted with appreciation the various country experiences in the implementation of ecosystem accounts, and proposed to bring the important lessons that can be derived from them to the attention of the newly created SEEA-EEA Technical Committee.

Summary of Discussion:

8.a   Panel Discussion on activities at the international level

Accounting needs for European environmental policies
Jock Martin, European Environment Agency

83. Mr. Martin presented an overview of European Union policies and ecosystem accounting. Under EU biodiversity strategy to 2020, member states will map and assess the state of ecosystems and their services in their national territory, assess the economic value of such services and integrate these values into accounting and reporting at national and EU levels. He went on to describe the Mapping Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services (MAES) process and pilot studies. The MAES project supports the EU Biodiversity Strategy by reviewing the concept of natural capital and its components, evaluating methodological options for accounting for natural capital (both for physical accounts and valuation), providing concrete examples of

methodological approaches, and gathering information on available experiences and organisational set-up in EU Member States. The EEA have been working in this area for the past ten years, and expect measurable progress in the next five years.

84.   Mr Martin presented the work on simplified Ecosystem Capital Accounting for Europe. An integrated assessment is prepared for the 2015 mid-term review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy. He presented work on connecting accounting modules in systemic approach in the DPSIR (driving forces, pressures, state, impact, responses) framework.

WAVES
Sofia Ahlroth, World Bank

85.   Ms. Ahlroth presented the objectives of the WAVES programme which aims to help countries develop and adopt natural capital accounts. The programme consists of three main components; methodology development, dissemination of policy applications, and provision of training and training material. The WAVES programme aims to promote the development of global standard on ecosystem accounting and contribute to this area of work.
86.   Ms. Ahlroth presented the role of the Policy and Technical Experts Committee in designing pilot studies for ecosystem accounting, and informed that a working paper was published in May 2014. The PTEC are conducting surveys on uses and users in selected OECD countries to try to identify the main uses of environmental accounts. Furthermore, the PTEC are compiling specific stories on policy applications of natural capital accounting.

87.   Ms. Ahlroth illustrated that WAVES have experienced a huge demand for training materials and workshops, and mentioned examples of training provided. The programme is expected to grow significantly in coming years, and the intention is to shift focus to operations at a regional level for the new countries entering the programme. She stressed the need to start training with the Central Framework before proceeding to other modules. She also talked about the challenges of aggregating from the local level to national level in ecosystem accounting.

 The Economic of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) and other UNEP initiativesNicolas Bertrand, United Nations Environment Programme

88.   Mr. Bertrand referred to the focus on natural capital accounting in the UNEP programme of work for 2014-2015. . Recalling the recommendations of the TEEB Study (2010) on natural capital accounting, he indicated that TEEB covers a broader environment policy agenda encompassing subsidy reform and engagement with sectors and the business community.

89.   Mr. Bertrand made the links between TEEB, SEEA and WAVES explicit. TEEB encourages engagement in WAVES, as well as parallel approaches such as the EU ecosystem capital accounts and other accounts across the SEEA volumes. Furthermore, TEEB country studies and national engagement in WAVES are compatible initiatives with significant synergies. WAVES is likely to be more in-depth in its areas of focus, but TEEB country studies and assessment can, for instance supply it with information. In addition, Mr. Bertrand noted various other UNEP led initiatives on valuation and accounting of ecosystem services, notably the VANTAGE (Valuation and Accounting of Natural Capital for Green Economy) project as well as ongoing work in Kenya, Gabon and Morocco on incorporating the value of Forest-Related Ecosystem services Into National Accounts. He referred to the development of guidance on

Valuation and Accounting of Ecosystem Services for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as well as the publication of a first global map of key ecosystem assets. He also mentioned efforts to mobilize data to underpin the development of Natural Capital Accounting, referring to a recent workshop organized by WCMC. Finally, he highlighted the relevance of a new web-based knowledge management platform, 'UNEP Live'

90.   Mr. Bertrand introduced a number of programmes operating under UNEP. In particular, UNEP are working with UNSD and the Secretariat of the Convention of Biodiversity (SCBD) on the "Advancing SEEA-Experimental Ecosystem Accounting project (2014)". This aims to contribute to the global strategy for the testing of the SEEA-Experimental Ecosystem Accounting at the national level. Work includes producing a guidance document and training material for the testing of SEEA-Experimental Ecosystem Accounting, and supporting pilot countries in the assessment of policy priorities, their data situation and development of a programme of work.

BIOFIN – The Biodiversity Finance Initiative
Tim Scott, United Nations Development Programme

91.   Mr. Tim Scott explained that various policy and financing frameworks and programmes at UNDP can support investment in biodiversity management and sustainable growth. He noted that UNDP programmes are implemented at the country level and focussed on long term capacity building projects which incorporate the environment and poverty into policy considerations. For example, programmes such as BIOFIN, the Poverty and Environment Initiative (PEI) and the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) are designed to strengthen the in-country institutional capacity, launch national resource mobilization strategies needed to develop an economic evidence-base to inform and influence national policies and mainstream biodiversity into development and sectoral planning. UNDP will work with and build on TEEB and WAVES and looks forward to strengthening cooperation around the SEEA implementation.

92.   The presentation highlighted that UNDP's BIOFIN project is adapted to national circumstances, offers innovative methodology and learning partnership for biodiversity, builds on political process reaching out to all financing options: public and private, domestic and international, innovative and traditional, promoting efficiency and reallocation and maintaining opportunities for South-South cooperation.

Integrating Geospatial Information and Statistics
Greg Scott, UNSD, Inter-regional advisor on GGIM

93.   Mr. Greg Scott underlined the importance of new ways in statistics of bringing the richness of information to decision makers. There is a need to integrate geospatial data with environment data as well as with economic and social data. Issues to dynamically linking datasets require data fusion and integration.

94.   Mr. Greg Scott argued that collaboration is therefore essential to build capacity, lower costs and turn data into integrated information. An important first step is the coordination between the statistical and geographic offices within a country that requires support and political will.   The level of participation at the International Workshop on Integrating Geospatial and Statistical Information (June 2014, Beijing) demonstrated the high interest of statistical geo-

spatial communities, including from many developing countries. The international workshop concluded that GIS enables information management, supports analysis and statistical modernization programmes create opportunity to instil geospatial and statistical integration. The forthcoming Global Forum on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information (August 2014, New York) will further elaborate on these topics.

95.　The Committee discussed issues related to using geospatial information in statistics, and how to deal with geocoding and geographic units in ecosystem accounting. Several members shared their experience and agreed on the advantages to have more location based information. It welcomed ongoing efforts toward integration of socio-economic and environmental information using geography by the expert group on integration between statistics and geospatial information and stressed its continued interest in following up progress in the area.

8.b　Presentation on a medium-term programme of work for SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting
Alessandra Alfieri, UNSD

96.　Ms. Alfieri presented the proposed programme of work on experimental ecosystem accounting. She reported on the progress to establish the Technical Committee on the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting the mandate of which is to advance the research agenda on ecosystem accounting, identify and recommend best practices to pilot SEEA-EEA and ensure sound relationships with other similar initiatives and projects.

97.　Ms Alfieri explained that the research agenda, in order of priority, can be grouped under five streams of work: 1) Geospatial, including land classifications and delineation of statistical units; 2) Physical measures of ecosystem services and ecosystem condition; 3) Presentation and policy linkages; 4) Valuation techniques and approaches to aggregation; and 5) Integrated accounting issues.

98.　Ms. Alfieri informed the Committee about a project to advance SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting in seven pilot countries with the initial phase until 2014, funded by the government of Norway. The main focus of this project is assisting pilot countries to make assessment of policy priorities and data availability and build capacity for testing selected modules of SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting. The project outputs include development of a guidance document on compilation and training material. A forum of experts in ecosystem accounting to discuss progress in the testing of the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting in countries and the research agenda is scheduled for December 2014.

99.　Members of the Committee informed the UNCEEA of other streams of work which may support the medium-term programme. The CBD is about to publish practical guidelines under the title "Ecosystem Natural Capital Accounts: A Quick Start Package" (ENCA-QSP), ready to be circulated. The next London Group Meeting plans to explore the link between SEEA Central Framework and SEEA experimental ecosystem accounts and a paper related to the policy implications and benefits/challenges of producing these accounts will be shared soon. It was concluded that the objectives of the streams of work on advancing the research agenda and testing the SEEA EEA in countries would lead to a manual of best practices on ecosystem accounting.

8.c   Panel discussion on country experience in ecosystem accounting

100. *Mr. Dixon Landers* (US environmental protection agency) presented work to develop a classification system for final ecosystem goods and services. The key elements of this classification system were that it should avoid double counting, be comprehensive, apply clear definition of the environmental class boundary, link environmental production sectors directly to uses/users and beneficiaries, and facilitate identification of metrics and indicators. This work has resulted in the development of a final ecosystem goods and services classification system, which identifies 338 final goods and services. Mr. Landers noted the importance of understanding who the users of ecosystem goods and services are, and their demands.

101. *Mr. Mark Eigenraam* (Australia) discussed practical experience in the state of Victoria in the development of environmental economic accounts. Experimental ecosystem accounts were compiled in 2013 which kick-started other initiatives to account for ecosystem services on a more local level. This proved to be an effective method for local projects to demonstrate how ecosystems are changing, and has been used to inform policy making.

102. *Mr. Jose Antonio Sena* (Brazil) discussed two areas of particular national priority – water accounts and land use and change accounting. Water accounts are particularly important because of high concentration of reserves in the Amazon region where only 10% of the population live. The strategy to implement water accounts has been approached in four phases: 1) establish national institutional arrangements; 2) self-assessment using a diagnostic tool; 3) data quality assessment; and 4) preparation of a strategic development plan. Mr. Sena explained the challenges presented by technical issues in measuring economic flows with respect to water. He also explained that although Brazil has not yet started in a systematic way, the development of ecosystem accounting, the application of the SEEA-Central Framework for the development of Land Use and Land Use Changes Accounts, Water Accounts and other extensions, would bring important contributions to the Ecosystem Accounting, especially in a context where there is a lacking amount of basic information.

103. *Mr. Jean-Louis Weber* (Consultant) discussed experiences in Mauritius with implementing experimental ecosystem accounting at the request of the Indian Ocean Commission and the Mauritius Government. Statistics Mauritius was involved as implementation agency." It was found that integrated ecosystem natural capital accounts were feasible in Mauritius with existing data available in the country and from international programmes. Furthermore, the cost of IT investments was lower than anticipated, as freeware and cloud computing presented solutions. Staff availability and training were the main issues for capacity building, and external technical support was needed for the creation of the first database. The experience in Mauritius also illustrated that institutional cooperation between the various agencies holding data and knowledge is essential and the creation of a shared environmental information system was recommended.

Agenda Item 9: International Input-Output tables *(for discussion)*

Outcome and actions:

The UNCEEA:

- Noted with appreciation the work being done by the academic community in developing different approaches to multiregional supply and used tables

- Building on these approaches, welcomed the proposal to develop a global supply and use database consistent with the SNA and SEEA based on country data and with participation of national statistical offices and international agencies and called for close collaboration with the scientific community

- Requested UNSD to work in a collaborative fashion with other agencies active in related area of work

- Noted the need for additional resources to carry out such project and cautioned against diverting attention from the core work of the SEEA implementation to carry out this project with regular budget resources.

- Took note of the information on the status of revision of the Handbook on Supply and Use Tables, welcomed that the handbook gives more prominence to the environmental dimension and the physical supply and use tables of the SEEA-CF, and agreed to provide comments on the final draft handbook in the review phase.

Summary of Discussion:

Toward the development of a global database for international supply and use tables
Arnold Tukker, TNO and Arne Geschke, University of Sydney

104. Mr. Tukker and Mr. Geschke presented their work on developing a global, multi-regional input-output table including the environment. There are a number of initiatives internationally towards developing global database on supply and use tables. One of the main challenges is harmonizing basic data that use different definitions and classifications. Mr. Geschke introduced the Eora database developed at the University of Sydney which covers 187 individual countries and has heterogeneous data classification as it represents country input-output tables in their native classification, covering roughly 15,000 sectors. The database is highly automated, making is easy to maintain the input-output table and update it. Mr. Geschke noted that it is important to work with agencies whose data feeds this database, as data often require adjustments and reconciliation. The presentation provided the illustrative results of the Global Resource Footprint of Nations project how carbon, water, land and material are embodied in trade and final consumption.

105. Mr Tukker and Mr Geschke put forward a proposal to develop UN-SEEALab in which various organizations work together to build a global supply and use table consistent with SEEA and SNA using national data. The proposal is inspired by the Australian IELab based on cloud computing for all data storage and computation tasks.

106. The Committee welcomed the proposal to construct a global supply and use tables database, and was impressed with progress made by the academic community. It was suggested that the topic of input-output tables become a standard item on the UNCEEA agenda. Some members expressed concern that UN-SEEALab was a new initiative that may divert attention and capacity from the priority task of SEEA implementation. The Committee suggested a step-wise approach going forward with initial steps of compiling input-output tables with more detailed environment sectors for individual countries to create a database from official statistics, paying attention to resolving issues of data comparability and quality. It was noted that

additional resources were needed to move ahead with the project. The Committee requested the Bureau to consider how to move forward on this issue.

Carbon footprints: reconciling academic and statistical work
Gerard Eding, Statistics Netherlands

107. Mr Eding noted that one of the main uses of international input-output tables is to measure carbon footprints. He provided an overview of publicly available academic work, as well as work by government agencies including NSOs. Mr. Eding provided analyses of differences in coverage, reference year, industry detail, classification or compilation methods due to models used.

108. Mr Eding noted that carbon footprints for the Netherlands from different multi-regional input output sources show variations. Mr. Eding outlined how academic and statistical work could be reconciled through, enhanced cooperation that would bring greater consistency in footprint measurement. Mr. Eding cautioned that supply and use tables are not yet available in many countries and will take time to be developed.

Toward the UN Handbook on Supply and Use Tables
Ilaria DiMatteo, UNSD

109. Ms. DiMatteo presented the UN's work on developing the UN Handbook on Supply and Use tables as a revision of its previous publication entitled "Handbook on Input-Output Table Compilation and Analysis (1999)". This revision process aims to incorporate changes aligned with standards for macroeconomic accounting and classifications, the 2008 SNA, BPM-6 and ISIC Rev.4. The focus will be shifted to practical compilation guidance to assist countries with less developed statistical systems. The revised handbook will address issues related to the use of supply and use tables, the scope of the environmental dimension will also be expanded and the handbook will give more prominence to the physical supply and use tables of the SEEA Central Framework. Ms. DiMatteo asked the Committee to contribute comments to the review of the draft handbook in the final consultation process.

Agenda Item 10: Report of Groups working under the auspices or in collaboration with the UNCEEA *(for information)*

Outcome and actions:

The UNCEEA:

- Noted with appreciation the update on the activities of the various groups working under the mandate and in collaboration with the UNCEEA and thanked for the groups and institutions for their valuable input to this informative report.

Agenda Item 11: Closing

Outcome and actions:

The UNCEEA:

- Welcomed with appreciation the efforts by the secretariat to organise this successful UNCEEA meeting but suggested that for future meetings more time should be reserved for discussion and exchange of views. This will allow the committee to focus even more successfully on core business and exercise its main functions according to its mandate.

Annex 1   Time Schedule and Tasks

The table below outlines the detailed time schedule agreed at the Ninth Meeting of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting and the tasks of countries and organizations.

	Tasks	Countries/ organizations	Timeline
	Contribute to the work on integrating non-traditional data sources with official statistics	UNCEEA	Ongoing
	Strengthen coordination among international agencies	International agencies	Ongoing
	Make changes to the structure and content of the Technical Notes and core tables based on suggestions made during the meeting	SEEA-CF Technical Committee	Sep-14
	Seek a new appointment for Chair of the UNCEEA to replace Mr. Ian Ewing who is acting as interim chair	Bureau	Jan-15
	Draft technical notes for various SEEA Central Framework accounts	SEEA-CF Technical Committee with LG	1st batch Dec-14 2nd batch Jun-15
	Prepare a paper on the implementation of the SEEA and the integrated statistics approach at the national level	SEEA-CF Technical Committee	Jan-15
	Develop a proposal to establish a database on multi-regional supply and use tables to be discussed by the Bureau. This should be consistent with the SNA and SEEA, based on country data and with participation of national statistical offices and international agencies.	UNSD and other international agencies Academic Community-TNO, University of Sydney	Feb-15
	Provide comments to the revision of the Handbook on Supply and Use Table being produced by UNSD.	UNCEEA	Feb-15

	Organize a conference on linking corporate reporting with the SEEA	GRI UN Global Compact Natural Capital Coalition	Spring-15
	Hold a forum on SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting	UNSD SEEA-EEA Technical Committee	Spring-15
	Track activities relating to the mainstreaming of the SEEA and extend this to international agencies working on climate change issues	UNSD	Jun-15
	Develop infographics for the SEEA and tool kits for countries to promote the SEEA	UNSD	Jun-15
	Develop a SEEA knowledge base that will include, among other things material related to the implementation of the SEEA.	UNSD	Jun-15
	Develop a general set of training materials for the SEEA which can be used by multiple trainers and applied across countries	UNSD	Jun-15
	Task the Technical Committee on the SEEA Central Framework to provide a mechanism for conducting an evaluation of indicators for the SDG targets that can be measured by the SEEA	Bureau	Dec-15
	Draft of practical guidelines to support implementation in countries of SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting, to be refined on the basis of practical experience	UNSD SEEA-EEA Technical Committee	Dec-15

Annex II   Agenda

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
STATISTICS DIVISION
UNITED NATIONS

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**Ninth Meeting of the UN Committee of Experts on
Environmental-Economic Accounting
New York, 25-27 June 2014**

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**ANNOTATED AGENDA
UN Secretariat Building, Room S-1522**

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9:00-9:30   Registration of participants

Wednesday, 25 June 2014, 9:30AM – 5:30PM

1. **Opening and objectives of the meeting** (9:30AM – 9:50 AM)

   Stefan Schweinfest, Director, UNSD
   Ian Ewing, Interim Chair of UNCEEA and Deputy Australian Statistician

2. **Election of chair** (9:50AM - 10.00AM)

3. **Post-2015 UN Development Agenda and broader measures of progress** *(for discussion)*
   (10.00AM – 12:15 PM)
   The Statistical Commission recognized the SEEA as an important statistical framework for the Post2015 Development Agenda and the SDG indicators. The Committee will be informed of the on-going processes in the development of indicators in the context of the Post 2015development agenda and in Europe and discuss a set of recommendations on the benefits of using the SEEA and more broadly a system approach for the derivation of the SDG indicators. The UNCEEA is requested to adopt these recommendations and discuss the modalities to inform the Friends of the Chair group on the broader measures of progress and the open working group process on how the SEEA can inform the SDG indicators process.

   Presentations (10:00AM – 10:45AM):
   - DSD update on the progress of the Open Working Group (David O'Connor, DSD)
   - Sustainable Development Solutions Network (Jessica Espey, SDSN)

   <div align="center">

   Coffee break 10:45 AM – 11:15 AM

   </div>

   Presentations (11:15AM – 12:30PM):
   - Friends of the Chair group on the broader measures of progress (Claire Plateu, INSEE)
   - Eurostat indicator initiative (Anton Steurer, Eurostat)

- The system approach for the derivation of SDG indicators (Ian Ewing, Chair UNCEEA and Deputy Australian Statistician)
- Discussion

Lunch break 12:30 PM – 1:45 PM

4. **Towards aligning the measures and indicators at the corporate, national and international level - The role of the SEEA** (1:45PM-3:00PM)

The Committee will discuss the importance of developing coherent measures at the corporate level aligned with the international macro standard of the SEEA Central Framework in order to facilitate the collection of high quality data from the business sector. It will also discuss how the statistical community can contribute and harness existing initiatives to measure the environment and its relationship with the economy using non-conventional data sources. The Committee is invited to discuss the proposal of establishing a subgroup consisting of statistical offices, representatives from the business sectors and major initiatives working on sustainability reporting.

Panel discussion (1:45PM – 3:00PM)
- Natural Capital Coalition (Nicolas Bertrand)
- World Business Council (Jessica McGlyn)
- United Nations Global Compact (Ana Blanco)
- Global Reporting Initiative (Bastian Buck)
- Statistics Netherlands (Gerard Eding)

Coffee break 3:00 PM – 3:30 PM

5. **Towards the harmonization of basic statistics and mainstreaming the SEEA (***for discussion)*** (3:30PM-5:30PM)

The implementation of the SEEA relies heavily on the supporting statistics compiled. Often these statistics are collected and compiled using different concepts, definitions and classifications. In order to advance the implementation of the SEEA it is important that a process of harmonization of basic statistics is put in place. Some international agencies will discuss issues in the harmonization of basic statistics with the SEEA and efforts to mainstream the SEEA in their statistical production (e.g. FDES, SEEA AFF, etc.). An integrated statistical production process will facilitate the mainstreaming of the SEEA and the coordination of activities at the country level with a clear understanding of the role and contribution of each activity in the development of an integrated statistical programme supporting the SEEA implementation. The UNCEEA will also discuss its role in the coordination of a global partnership among international agencies in support of the implementation of the SEEA. This will ensure complementarity of activities and projects implemented at the country level.

Harmonizing basic statistics with the accounts (3:30PM-3:45PM)
- The Integrated Business Statistics Program at Statistics Canada (Andre Loranger)

Panel discussion on issues in harmonizing basic statistics with the accounts (3:45PM – 4:30PM)
- Malaysia (Zarinah Mahari)
- Mongolia (Badamtsetseg Batjargal)
- Russia (Andrei Tatarinov)

Mainstreaming the SEEA (4:30PM – 5:30PM)

- Paper on mainstreaming the SEEA in the programme of work of international agencies (UNSD)
- Integrated statistics (Ivo Havinga)
- Template for technical notes and examples of core tables and accounts (Alessandra Alfieri on behalf of the Technical Committee on the SEEA Central Framework)

Reception DC2-15th floor 6:00 PM hosted by UNSD

Thursday, 26 June 2014, 9:00AM – 5:30PM
Mainstream the SEEA as part of international organizations operations (9:00AM – 10:30AM):
- SEEA AFF – linking agricultural statistics with accounts (Carl Obst, consultant to FAO)
- FDES –Linking environment statistics with accounts (Eszter Horvath)
- OECD – Task Force on the implementation of the SEEA, harmonization of statistics for producing green growth indicators (Pierre-Alain Pionnier)
- Eurostat work on harmonization (Anton Steurer)

Coffee break 10:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Panel discussion on the needs to establish national coordination - - country perspectives (11:00 AM- 12:00PM)
- Indonesia (Kechuck Suhariyanto)
- Philippines (Lisa Bersales)
- Uganda (Chris Mukiza)
- Colombia (Monica Rodriguez)

6. **Towards a medium-term programmed of work for the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework** *(for discussion)* (12:00AM-1:00PM, 2:30PM - 3:30PM)
   The Committee will discuss a proposal for a medium-term programme of work for the implementation of the SEEA. The programme of work reflects the demand from the Post 2015 Development agenda as well as the need for harmonization of basic statistics with the accounts and the linkages with the corporate reporting to ensure integrated reporting moving away from the silo approach of obtaining data. The Committee will also discuss the work programme of the technical committee on the SEEA Central Framework, including proposals for core set of tables and accounts and process to finalize them, training of trainers, compilation guidelines and other materials supporting the implementation of the SEEA.

   Presentations by UNSD (12:00PM – 1:00PM):
   - Medium-term programme of work for the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework (Alessandra Alfieri on behalf of the Technical Committee on the SEEA Central Framework)
   - Training of trainers (Sokol Vako, UNSD)
      .

Lunch break 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

- SEEA implementation guide (UNSD) (2:30 -3:00)
- Compilation guidelines on water statistics (UNSD) (3:00PM – 3:30PM)

<p style="text-align:center; color:red">Coffee break 3:30 PM – 4:00 PM</p>

7. **Communication strategy of the SEEA** *(for discussion)* (4:00PM-5:30PM)
The Committee will discuss a proposal for establishing a branding identity for the SEEA, including logo, core messaging, infographics, illustrative visuals, etc. It will also discuss the way forward in defining the branding identity.

Interactive discussion (4:30PM – 5:30PM):
- Communication strategy of the SEEA (SEEA Communication consultant)

<p style="text-align:center; color:red">Dinner at the Perfect Pint located at 3rd Ave and 45th St--6:30 PM</p>

Friday, 27 June 2014, 9:00AM – 4:00PM

8. **Towards a medium-term programme of work for the SEEA-Experimental Ecosystem Accounting** *(for discussion)* (9:00AM-11:15AM, 11:45AM-1:00PM)
The Committee will discuss the programme of work to advance the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting and coordination with existing activities working on related areas (e.g. TEEB, IPBES, UNEP ProEcoserve, Expert Group on linking geospatial information and statistics). The Committee is invited to discuss modalities of coordination among the different initiatives.

Presentations (9:00AM-9:30AM):
- Medium term programme of work for the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting, including the Advancing the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) Experimental Ecosystem Accounting in pilot countries project (UNSD)

Panel discussion on country experiences in ecosystem accounting (9:30AM-11:15AM):
- US (Dixon Landers)
- Australia(Mark Eigenraam)
- Brazil (Antonio Sena do Nascimiento)
- Mauritius (Jean-Louis Weber)

<p style="text-align:center; color:red">Coffee break 11:15 AM – 11:45 AM</p>

Panel discussion on activities at international level (11:45AM - 1:00PM)
- MAES (Jock Martin)
- WAVES Policy and Technical Experts Committee (Sofia Ahlroth)
- UNEP-TEEB and other UNEP initiatives (Nicolas Bertrand)
- UNDP (Tim Scott)
- Expert Group on linking geospatial information and statistics (Gregg Scott)

<p style="text-align:center">Lunch break 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM</p>

9. **International Input Output Tables** *(for discussion)* (2:00PM-3:30PM)

The Committee will discuss the proposal of establishing a project on establishing a community of practitioners dealing with International Input Output Tables including the environment. The proposal includes the establishment of a website to serve as a repository of different practices.

Presentations (2:00PM – 3:30PM):
-   Toward the UN Handbook on Supply and Use Tables (Ilaria DiMatteo, UNSD)
-   Toward the development of global database for international supply and use tables (joint presentation by Arnold Tukker, TNO and Arne Geschke, University of Sidney)
-   Statistics Netherlands (Gerard Eding)

10. **Report of Groups working under the auspices of or in collaboration with the UNCEEA** *(for information)* (3:30PM-3:45PM)

The Committee will be informed on the programme of work of those bodies working on environmental-economic accounting and supporting statistics for which the UNCEEA plays a role of coordination. The Committee will have before it reports presenting progress of work of the various groups working under the auspices of or in collaboration with the UNCEEA to ensure coordination among the groups.

11. **Closing** (3:45PM-4:00PM)

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