



NEWS from the
Environment Statistics Section
United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)

Issue 11

September 2001 - June 2002



EDITORIAL

by

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Regional Capacity Building: Environment Statistics in the CARICOM Region

In the CARICOM region most of the 15 Member States are faced with growing competition for limited natural resources, pressures from increasing tourism, and a greater frequency of natural disasters. To ensure sustainable development in the region, sound policy decisions must be made using timely and reliable information. It is well accepted that a major difficulty in assessing the implementation of the commitments emanating from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 and the United Nations Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in 1994, has been the lack of basic environmental statistics and indicators to measure the progress made.

Environment statistics is new to the CARICOM region. It is only in Belize and Jamaica that efforts have been made to formally institutionalise environment statistics within the national statistical offices, supported in both cases by Statistics Sweden. Two environment statistics compendia have been published by Belize and one by Jamaica. UNSD has been assisting the CARICOM region since 2000 in the development of environment statistics through the Project "Strengthening Capacity in the Compilation of Statistics and Indicators for Conference Follow-up in the CARICOM Region". The Project, jointly carried out by UNSD and CARICOM, covers the areas of social/gender and environment statistics, with a supporting component of information technology. Its overall objectives have been to strengthen the capacity of national and regional statistical offices to collect and analyse statistical information, and establish a network of experts to improve intra-regional cooperation. The main outputs will include two regional publications, one on social/gender statistics and the other on environment statistics, and increased capabilities in information technology.

Following a preparatory phase, the environmental component of the Project was launched at the Workshop on Environment Statistics held in Belize in 2000. The Workshop included participants from national statistical offices and environmental agencies, as well as regional and international institutions. The participants agreed upon a list of environmental statistics and indicators to be collected jointly by UNSD and CARICOM, and to be presented in the regional publication. Subsequently, Member States engaged in compiling data, some supported by intra-regional study tours and ad hoc consultancy and advisory services.

The publication "The CARICOM Environment in Figures", currently being finalized, presents the major environmental issues through textual summaries, tables, charts and graphs together with detailed comments on the data. An Expert Group Meeting to review the draft publication was held in October 2001 (see *WHEN* and *WHERE* below). Collaboration was a key factor in the entire process of the production of the publication. Several regional and international institutions were consulted and contributed data or text to the chapters. Continued communication with these institutions throughout the Project was seen as essential to enhance coordination of activities and to minimize duplication of various on-going capacity-building efforts.

The Project has spurred a number of initiatives in environment statistics at the national level. Several Member States have organized workshops or seminars on environment statistics and have increased inter-agency collaboration. The Project has provided stimulus and support to the existing initiatives of Belize and Jamaica. Grenada published its first environment statistics compendium in 2001. Dominica and St. Lucia have advanced draft versions and expect to publish compendia shortly. St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Vincent and the Grenadines have initiated work on draft compendia. These efforts have been achieved through a combination of Government commitment and the additional technical assistance provided through the Project.

In order to ensure sustainability in the areas of social/gender and environment statistics in the region, a CARICOM Advisory Group was established last year comprising selected directors of statistics from national statistical offices, and CARICOM and UNSD representatives. Two meetings of the Group have been held to date (see *WHEN* and *WHERE* below), to agree on the terms of reference, procedures for its operation and to develop programmes in social/gender and environment statistics to produce outputs in alternate years. The setting up of the Advisory Group clearly shows the commitment and ownership that the Project has spawned relative to sustaining the activities of data compilation, the organization of national workshops, inter-agency groups or committees, and the publication of regional and national compendia in these two fields of statistics.

(Besides the national statistical offices and environmental agencies, the following institutions contributed in some way to the Project: the Caribbean Development Bank, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency, the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute, the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre, the Caribbean Planning for the Adaptation to Global Climate Change, the Caribbean Tourism Organisation, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, the United Nations Division for Sustainable Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, the University of Technology and the University of the West Indies Centre for Environment and Development.)

WHAT?



Progress on the SEEA revision

The SEEA revision process is in its final stages. It started in 1997 when the Statistical Commission at its 29th session, requested the London Group on Environmental Accounting to

collaborate with UNSD in the revision of the interim SEEA handbook published by UNSD in 1993. The revision process was coordinated by the London Group Coordinating Committee, which comprises representatives from UNSD, the World Bank, OECD, Eurostat, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Netherlands (immediate past meeting hosts) and Statistics Canada (Secretariat). Members of the London Group have contributed to the drafting of the text, which was then edited by Ms. Anne Harrison. An extended London Group with the participation of several developing countries met in Voorburg, the Netherlands, in May 2001. The meeting reviewed the first edited draft and a final draft of the handbook was prepared in January 2002 for revision by the Friends of the Chair Group established by the Statistical Commission at its 32nd session in March 2001. The Group comprised directors or deputy directors of statistical offices of Brazil, Canada, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Korea and United States and was chaired by Mr. Longva, Director General of Statistics Norway. They recommended the approval of the revised SEEA subject to the changes proposed in their report to the Statistical Commission. Statistics Canada is currently finalizing the handbook and an editorial oversight board, formed by the publishing agencies (United Nations, Eurostat, IMF, OECD and the World Bank), was created to oversee the publication process of the revised SEEA.

PREPCOM 3 Side Event on the SEEA

UNSD organized jointly with New York University, Statistics Canada and the Wuppertal Institute for Climate Environment and Energy a side event to the Third Preparatory Committee Meeting for Johannesburg Summit (New York, 25 March-3 April 2002) entitled "Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting - A framework to measure sustainable development". The event presented the revised SEEA as a framework to measure the interaction between the economy and the environment, thus providing a tool to measure certain aspects of sustainable development. Experience in the application of the SEEA for designing economic and environmental policies was presented for Southern African countries and Canada.

Questionnaire 2001 on Environment Statistics

As part of UNSD's regular data collection activities, the biennial Questionnaire on Environment Statistics was sent out during the second half of 2001 to all countries and territories except those that are covered by OECD and Eurostat. The responses received to date indicate a slow but steady improvement in the quantity and quality of environmental information. A total of 64 countries already returned the completed Questionnaire or sent relevant national data. Others are still in the process of compiling the requested information. Some countries reported that activities to establish environment statistics programmes or units are underway and emphasized the relevance of the Questionnaire as well as their interest in future contributions. The ongoing data validation process in close consultation with the countries provides an opportunity to improve data quality and strengthen collaboration between UNSD and the relevant institutions in the countries.

Development Indicators

Following the request of the Economic and Social Council, the Friends of the Chair Group (FoC), established by the Statistical Commission, carried out the technical assessment on more than 280 statistical indicators derived from United Nations summits and major conferences held over the past ten years. Experts from 34 member states contributed to the work of the seven thematic sub-groups. In response to the request for a limited set of conference indicators, the FoC Group elaborated an indicator framework containing three priority tiers, each containing about 40 statistical indicators. In

addition, a further category consists of indicators useful for a more detailed understanding of the policy area. In the environment/energy field, the first two tiers include the following indicators: emissions of greenhouse gases, share of forest area, share of annual water withdrawal, share of protected area, energy use per GDP, generation of hazardous waste (Tier 1); urban air pollution, consumption of ozone depleting substances, use of fertilizers, use of pesticides, land affected by desertification, algae concentration in coastal areas, biochemical oxygen demand in water bodies, share of renewable energy sources, intensity of energy use in selected sectors, generation and treatment of industrial and municipal waste (Tier 2).

Millennium Indicators

The United Nations Millennium Declaration was adopted by a total of 191 nations in September 2000. It was followed by the Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, identifying strategies for action to meet the goals and commitments in the Declaration. Eight goals, 18 targets and 48 social, economic and environmental indicators were selected to help track progress towards development and the eradication of poverty over the period 1990 through 2015. "Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability" deals with environment related issues and covers the following indicators: share of land area covered by forest; land area protected to maintain biological diversity; energy use per unit of GDP; per capita carbon dioxide emissions; consumption of CFCs; use of solid fuels for cooking and heating; population with access to improved water sources, to improved sanitation and to secure tenure. UNSD coordinated the preparation of the report on the progress towards the millennium development goals at the global and country levels in close consultation and collaboration with all relevant institutions. In addition, UNSD established a database containing the statistical information for the indicators. The database contains data series supplied by various international agencies. Two expert group meetings (March and April 2002) were held to discuss the periodicity, consistency and reliability of the existing data series and the contents of the report. (<http://millenniumindicators.un.org>).

Regional Development Account Projects

UNSD/ASEAN Project

The project "Strengthening Regional Capacities for the Statistical Development in South East Asia" started in 2000 and is in its last year of activity. The Project aims at strengthening national statistical systems and intra-regional co-operation among the countries of the Association of the South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). The substantive programme focuses on the following areas: national and satellite accounting, development indicators and statistical organization and management. The first workshop organized under the ASEAN project was the *International Workshop on Environmental and Economic Accounting* held in Manila, the Philippines from 18-22 September 2000 (see *envstat* 9). (See <http://www.un.org/depts/unsd/enviro/manilaworkshop.pdf> for the full report). A second workshop on environmental and economic accounting is scheduled to take place in September 2002 in Indonesia and it will follow up on the development of the implementation of environmental accounting in the region. The ASEAN project includes a fellowship component whose purpose is to finance the participation of representatives of countries in the ASEAN region to significant statistical events (such as international conferences) or training programmes.

UNSD Project in the ESCWA region

The new Development Account project "Strengthening Statistical Capacity in the ESCWA Region" organized by UNSD aims at developing a regional approach to official statistics and strengthening inter-country coordination among the ESCWA countries. Scheduled for the period 2002-2004, the project will cover the following thematic areas: (i) management of statistical operations, (ii) dissemination and marketing of official statistics, and (iii) provision of technical assistance in the areas of Population Census, Environment and Disability Statistics.

technical matters and issues.

The main objectives of the environment statistics component are to build a network of environment statisticians in the ESCWA region, improve their technical skills, and foster collaboration between the National Statistical Office, the Ministry of Environment, and other relevant institutions involved in the production, dissemination and use of environment statistics. The assessment of existing national and regional capacities and national priorities for the development of environment statistics is underway with the assistance of an expert consultant. A training workshop on the frameworks, concepts, and methodologies as well as strategies for implementing an environment statistics program, is scheduled to take place in Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic, in spring 2003. Participants will be invited from the national statistical offices as well as from national and regional institutions involved in environmental data production. It is furthermore planned to organize fellowships in 2003 to intensify the workshop experiences and facilitate exchange of good practices among the data producers in the region.

News from the regions

Development of Environment Statistics in the ESCAP region, by Selma Guven

The Statistics Division of ESCAP implemented a two-year statistical capacity building project entitled "Development of Environment Statistics in the ESCAP region" supported by the Government of the Netherlands. The main objective of the project was to assist countries to achieve the goals of the United Nations Conference for Environment and Development with respect to environmental statistics, indicators and accounting.

Four subregional workshops were held: in Bangkok (8-19 May 2000); in Hyderabad, India (2-14 April 2001); in Port Vila, Vanuatu (30 April - 11 May 2001) (see *envstats 9 and 10* for details) and the last in Bangkok (1-12 October 2001). In total 73 country representatives from 38 developing countries in the region participated in the workshops. Resource persons included representatives from Statistics Netherlands, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the National Statistical Coordination Board of the Philippines, FAO, Turkey, OECD and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme.

The workshops covered the following modules: general introduction to environment statistics and its relation to indicators and accounting; statistics of emissions and environmental quality covering air, water and waste; agri-environmental statistics; and environmental and economic accounting. Participants suggested that the Secretariat might conduct further workshops according to thematic environmental issues and subregional priorities. (See <http://www.unescap.org/stat/envstat>).

Development of environment statistics in selected Developing Member Countries (DMCs) of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), by Bishnu Pant

ADB has just completed a two-year project entitled "RETA 5860: Strengthening the Collection of Environment Statistics in Selected DMCs". The overall objective of the project was to strengthen statistical capacity of the State Statistical Committees of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in the collection and compilation of environment statistics. The Concluding Workshop, held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, from 1 to 3 May 2002, was attended by 28 participants.

The objective of the project has been achieved to a large extent. The State Statistical Committees of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan have established separate environment statistics units, whereas others have identified a group of statisticians to work in this area. All countries have formed a high level Steering Committee to coordinate the collection of environment statistics from all environment and related offices. They have also formed technical working groups on six environmental components namely flora, fauna, atmosphere, water, land/soil and human settlements to assist the State Statistical Committees and Steering Committees on

Another major output of the project has been the preparation, based on the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES) developed by UNSD, of country specific FDES and compendia of environment statistics by all participating countries. ADB has also prepared a Handbook on Environment Statistics that is expected to contribute significantly in strengthening the statistical capability of the national statistics offices of all ADB DMCs in the collection and compilation of environment statistics.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), by Farid Isa

The Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC organized a Workshop on Environment Statistics in Santiago, Chile from 10 to 12 December 2001. The main objective of the workshop was to discuss a proposal on an Integrated Environment Statistical System which could be applied by the countries of the region. The proposal, prepared by ECLAC, was based on the work of the Ad-Hoc Working Group established in the First Conference of Statistics of the Americas. The Working Group was constituted by representatives from the national statistical offices from Belize, Chile, Mexico and Puerto Rico, under the coordination of ECLAC.

The Workshop also provided a forum for the exchange of information among countries in the region on the systems currently applied in the compilation, coordination and dissemination of environment statistics. The Workshop concluded that there were important improvements in the legal and institutional fields and in the use of GIS, but the lack of better coordination and agreements among different producers of environment statistics has been an obstacle to more dynamic development. Institutionalization of environment statistics within the national statistics offices and coordination between producers and policy makers should be improved. Based on the comments exposed by participants, a new proposal on an Integrated Environment Statistical System will be prepared by the Ad-Hoc Working Group. (See <http://www.eclac.org/estadisticas>).

Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE): Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, by Mikhail Kokine

With the support of the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring, the European Environment Agency (EEA) is preparing a 3rd pan-European report on the environment, the "Kiev Assessment", based on region-wide indicators. For the purpose of the Report, wherever possible, data from international databases are used to avoid any unnecessary burden on countries. Where those sources are not available, data are gathered either through questionnaires or direct contacts with specialized institutes in countries concerned. The report will be submitted to the Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" to be held in Kiev, Ukraine, 21-23 May 2003.

At the second session of the Working Group (Geneva, 28 February-1 March 2002), EEA presented a preliminary analysis for the Kiev Assessment, in the form of completed indicator data sheets, of the countries that are covered by EEA networks. Furthermore, various issues were discussed that pertain to the preparation of the Kiev report as well as measures to improve and streamline the development of national environmental monitoring activities, and to facilitate pan-European assessments at the same time. Other items on the agenda included: air pollution monitoring, monitoring of hazardous substances, waste data and classifications, information technologies for environmental monitoring, and use of remote sensing for environmental assessments. The Working Group was informed about UNSD's data collection activities and the results of the UNSD Questionnaire 2001 on Environment Statistics in countries not covered by EEA. UNSD will make these data available for the Kiev report.

(See <http://www.unece.org/env/europe/wgmeeting.htm>).

WHO?



Staff news

Gabor Valko, an economist from the Hungarian Central Statistical Office assisted the Environment Statistics Section from December 2001 to June 2002, in compiling a Compendium of Environment Statistics and Indicators.

The following interns assisted UNSD as part of the United Nations Internship Programme between September 2001 and March 2002.

Johan Svensson (School of Economics and Commercial Law, Gothenburg University, Sweden), **Kevin Chang** (University of Sydney, Australia), **Heinrich Tschochohei** (University of Lueneburg, Germany) and **Kinuyo Kanamaru** (Shinshu University, Japan).

Our thanks for their invaluable contributions.

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WHEN AND WHERE?



Fifth Technical Training and Research Workshop on Linking the Theory and Applications of Environmental Accounting (Zanzibar, Tanzania, 13-15 September 2001). The workshop was jointly organized by UNSD and the Resource Accounting Network for Eastern and Southern Africa (RANESA), funded by Sweden and provided

the participants with training on the theoretical underpinning of environmental accounting as well as the more practical approaches to implementation. The combination of theoretical sessions together with more applied ones was very well received by the participants. (<http://www.ranesa.co.za>).

Joint ECE/Eurostat Work Session on Methodological Issues of Environment Statistics (Ottawa, Canada 1-4 October 2001).

The meeting discussed issues related to the development of indicators of sustainable development. It was organized in the following sessions: (i) experiences in the compilation of sustainable development indicators (SDI); (ii) concepts and frameworks for the compilation of sustainable development indicators; (iii) eco-efficiency; (iv) water; (v) waste; (vi) health indicators and (vii) a panel discussion on the role of statisticians in the development of SDI. UNSD chaired the session on ecoefficiency indicators and presented a paper on Water accounting and related indicators. (<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2001.10.env.htm>).

Expert Group Meeting on Environment Statistics (Grenada, 8-12 October 2001). The Meeting was convened by UNSD and CARICOM to review the draft regional publication on environment statistics. The Meeting comprised 18 experts on environment statistics from national statistical offices and ministries of environment, and environmental experts from regional and international institutions.

First Meeting of the Advisory Group on Social/Gender and Environment Statistics (Bahamas, 20-21 October 2001). The meeting, convened by UNSD and CARICOM, discussed and adopted the terms of reference for the Group. The Group considered that as the Project was winding down, the initiative should be viewed as a programme and that regional publications on environment and social/gender statistics should be produced by CARICOM on a

biennial basis, in alternate years. It was agreed that the Advisory Group should meet at least once a year to review the progress of work and discuss new developments.

Twenty-sixth Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) (Bahamas, 24-26 October 2001). The meeting was organized by CARICOM. UNSD presented the following three reports to the meeting: (i) progress on project implementation; (ii) report of the Expert Group Meeting, and (iii) the draft regional publication on environment statistics. The meeting stressed that among the key tasks of the recently established Advisory Group was ensuring coordinated initiatives in these fields of statistics and their institutionalization in the CARICOM region. The meeting also endorsed the draft publication and plans for the completion of this and the social/gender publication.

Conservation International RED Annual Training and Planning Workshop (Key Largo, Florida 18 February - 1 March 2002).

The workshop was to provide training on environmental economics and on environmental-economic accounting to country economist working with Conservation International in several developing countries. UNSD presented the revised SEEA, in particular asset accounts for minerals, forest and water. It was concluded that the SEEA constitutes a useful tool for designing conservation policies.

Thirty-Third Session of the Statistical Commission (New York, 5-8 March 2002). The Commission had on its agenda the following items relevant to environment statistics: reports by the London Group and the Friends of the Chair Group on the revision of the SEEA; the report of the Friends of the Chair Group on the development indicators; and a report on the activities of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

Task Force meeting on Water Satellite Accounts and Expert Meeting on Water Resource Accounting (Luxembourg, 17-19 April 2002). The Task Force meeting discussed the outcome of the pilot compilation of water satellite accounts in selected European countries. The Expert meeting discussed the outline of the handbook on water resource accounting, which is under preparation and will be jointly published by UNSD and Eurostat.

Second Meeting of the Advisory Group on Social/Gender and Environment Statistics (Dominica, 28-30 May 2002). To ensure sustainability of the work initiated by the Project, the Meeting, convened by UNSD and CARICOM, discussed, inter alia, a framework to institutionalise the compilation and dissemination of social/gender and environment statistics and recommended strategies for implementation. Sources of funding and technical assistance, as well as training opportunities, were also discussed. A programme for the compilation of social/gender statistics and indicators was formulated, with the target date for publication being December 2003. A parallel programme will be formulated for environment statistics in the near future.

Forthcoming meetings

World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002). (<http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/index.html>).

UNSD - BPS Workshop on Integrated Environmental Economic Accounting (Jakarta, Indonesia September 2002).

Third Session of the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring (Geneva, Switzerland, 28 - 30 August 2002). (<http://www.unece.org/env/europe/wgmeeting.htm>).

envstats is produced by the Environment Statistics Section of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations.

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