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News and Notes

Environment Statistics Section
United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)/DESA

FOCUS: The Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals holds an Informal Meeting on Measuring Progress

IN THIS ISSUE

Focus

The informal meeting on measuring progress of the Open Working Group (OWG) of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was convened at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 17 December 2013. The OWG Co-Chair, H.E. Mr. Csaba Körösi of Hungary, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. The meeting was attended by OWG members, chief statisticians and representatives from national statistical offices as well as development experts from governmental organizations and civil society.

UNSD News

The purpose of the meeting was to understand how statistics can support the OWG in its task of designing and proposing SDGs and targets and to establish a dialogue between policy makers and statisticians in order to ensure the measurability of goals and targets. The presentations by the statistical experts during three sessions were followed by open discussions which included questions to and answers by the discussion panel consisting of session organizers and presenters.

International News

Regional News

In his opening remarks the Co-Chair pointed out the role and activities of the UN Statistical Commission in monitoring progress towards the achievement of the MDGs and that the statistical community has been concerned with the measurement of sustainable development, progress and human well-being for many years now. Also, in 2013 the Commission established, based on the request made in the Rio+20 outcome document, a Friends of the Chair Group (FOC) to launch a programme of work on broader measures of progress and to provide support to the preparation of SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda.

Country News

Upcoming Events

The keynote address by Mr. Walter Radermacher, Chief Statistician of the European Union, focused on “How can statistics assist in the design of the SDGs and post-2015 goals and targets”. The first session concentrated on experiences and lessons learned in national monitoring of MDGs and regional monitoring of sustainable development. The panellists were Mr. Philippe Cuneo (France), Mr. Shantanu Mukherjee (UNDP MDG Team), Mr. Enrique Ordaz (Mexico), Ms. Marlene de Smedt (Statistical Office of the European Union) and Mr. Francois Baumgartner (Switzerland).

The second session examined existing proposals of goals, targets and indicators looking at how statistics could assist in the design of the SDGs and post-2015 goals and targets prior to developing the needed indicators. Mr. K.K. Lamba (India), Mr. Peter Harper (Australia) and Mr. Rutger Hoekstra (Netherlands) participated in the panel.

CONTACT US

Session three focused on the way forward and development of a roadmap. The panel consisted of Mr. Edwin St. Catherine (St. Lucia), Mr. Jose Ramon G. Albert (Philippines), Mr. Pali Lehohla (South Africa), Mr. Johannes Jütting (Secretariat of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21)) and Ms. Gabriella Vukovich (Hungary), the current Chair of the Statistical Commission.

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Main issues that emerged

The meeting addressed the need for the statistical community to assist with the development of the goals and targets as well as with the indicators. The reasoning put forward was that this would ensure their measurability and therefore enhance their potential for being sustainably incorporated into the programmes of work of national statistical systems. This process would work best if the involvement was iterative, with regular feedback provided by statisticians. Simultaneously, there were calls to ensure that the indicators developed should be relevant for decision making, consistent with the theories that are being espoused and measurable in a robust and reliable way.

Many speakers gave recognition to the role and usefulness of official statistics. The key attributes of official statistics: consistency and adherence to agreed standards and frameworks, commitment to ethical standards, and inter-linkage within an established global network were lauded as positive and important. However it was also recognized that the delivery of official statistics is sometimes, of necessity, slow and costly.

Another issue that emerged was the need for dialogue among the stakeholders: producers and users, politicians, policy makers and those monitoring and evaluating those policies. A critical aspect of that interaction is the need to define, at an early design stage, what is feasible for measurement.

Concern was also expressed for striking a balance between universal relevance and applicability of the goals, targets and indicators and differentiating and implementing them according to national priorities and circumstances. Suggestions were made to develop a certain minimum set and perhaps incorporate a system of tiers that could assure comparability across the broad swathe of possibilities that exist at global level.

Finally, generating the appropriate capacity for producing and using SDGs was identified as critically important. Suggestion was even made for identifying the related capacity building as a goal in its own right.

Conclusions of the meeting

The meeting recognized the importance of considering measurement issues when making proposals for SDGs and targets and the need for strong statistical support when embarking on building indicators to ensure their monitoring. There is a strong need for dialogue on national and regional levels between producers and users of data and statistics.

The participants felt the need to strengthen institutional capabilities, in a great number of countries, for producing and evaluating the data. That would require cooperation within the countries and the involvement of the national governments. It would also require cooperation among countries, including cooperation among the statisticians and measurement experts.

There was a very strong appeal from many that if the preferred approach was a single set of global goals and targets, a set of supplementary, nationally and regionally relevant and applicable targets should also be considered. The OWG took on the general message that country ownership is essential for successful monitoring.

The statistical community encouraged the OWG to increase its understanding of the so-called data revolution and at the same cautioned the OWG regarding its usefulness and applicability. Statisticians view the data revolution as a combination of the above dimensions and efforts concomitant with the application to national circumstances and a reliance on data of acceptable quality, which is also accessible, reliable, user-friendly and capable of supporting the implementation of sustainable development.

Finally, the meeting recognized that while reporting on progress will have to be designed according to internationally acknowledged standards, the design elements should also respond to and be harmonized at national and other levels. This includes the participation of all stakeholders who will be involved in the implementation of the SDGs.

Organizational arrangements to take the process forward

Mr. Stefan Schweinfest, Acting Director of the United Nations Statistics Division, pointed out several possible elements of engagement between the OWG and the statistical community. The Statistical Commission is the apex entity for statistics in the United Nations system and that national statistical systems are part of the governance apparatus of member States. The statistical community should enrich its cooperation with the policy making community through direct contacts between OWG members with the chief statistician in their country, making this a participative process based on a “common language”.

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He noted that the Commission will continue to provide Statistical Notes as annexes to the issue briefs for the sessions of the OWG and stands ready, through its Friends of the Chair mechanism to answer further technical questions on short order and engage experts of the FOC when considering proposals for goals and targets. That certainly will have to include the building of process monitoring, measuring progress and expert advice on capability development.

As the upcoming session of the Statistical Commission falls during the same week as the Open Working Group session in March 2014, he suggested collaboration between the two forums in the form of a joint session or agenda item of the OWG together with the Statistical Commission.

UNSD NEWS:

UNSD Data Collection and Dissemination

The UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire 2013 on Environment Statistics will be the seventh round of UNSD's biennial environment statistics data collection mandated by the Statistical Commission. The UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire will be sent to more than 170 countries and territories, excluding OECD and European Union members (for which comparable data are collected as part of the OECD/Eurostat Joint Questionnaire on the State of the Environment).

An announcement letter was sent to the heads of the National Statistical Offices and Ministries of Environment in the participating countries in October 2013 encouraging them to nominate a single national focal point for the 2013 Questionnaire. Following from the prior three rounds, the 2013 Questionnaire consists of two sections: waste and water. Each section of the Questionnaire will include a list of relevant definitions and comprehensive guidance to assist respondents with filling the tables. After validation of the responses, the results from the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaires will be disseminated on the UNSD website through the UNSD Environmental Indicators tables and maps (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/qindicators.htm>) and in Country Snapshots (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/Questionnaires/country_snapshots.htm), as well as on UNData (<http://data.un.org>).

The pre-filled UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire 2013 on Environment Statistics will be sent out in early 2014 to both National Statistical Offices and Ministries of Environment in participating countries. UNSD appreciates countries' continuing support on the improvement of reliable global environment statistics.

If you have any questions or comments, please send them to: envstats@un.org.

Training Workshop on Environment and Energy Statistics for Arab Countries (8-12 September 2013, Amman, Jordan)

The Energy and Environment Statistics Branch (UNSD), together with the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA) organized a training Workshop on Environment and Energy Statistics for Arab Countries from 8-12 September 2013 in Amman, Jordan. The workshop was attended by 28 participants from 16 Arab countries. The team of trainers was comprised of 6 resource persons: two from UNSD, two UNESCWA consultants and two experts from Qatar and Denmark (UNSD Consultants). The workshop was delivered in both English and Arabic through simultaneous interpretation.

The workshop was organized into 6 sessions. In the sessions the trainers presented the basic concepts, methods and international recommendations on environment and energy statistics as well as the main interrelationships between these two domains. A forum was also provided for sharing country experiences. The first introductory session focused on the importance of environment and energy statistics, the following sessions, 2 and 3, covered environment and energy statistics respectively. A fourth session was devoted to the information and statistics needed to inform on the linkage between environment and energy statistics. A fifth session covered commonly used indicators on energy and the environment, including the relevant ones from a regional initiative on indicators of sustainable development that had been previously agreed for the Arab Region. The last session was devoted to discuss further capacity building needs of the countries and the region as a whole in both statistical domains.

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Participants were engaged in the training activities, they showed high interest in learning, posed good questions to the trainers, and were very active during the discussions, and particularly during the exercises contained in the workshop. The presentations made by national teams covered the current situation, advances, challenges and future work planned in each of the participating countries in both the fields of environment and energy statistics. This proved to be very useful both for participants and for the trainers in terms of understanding their regional and national priorities, difficulties and challenges.

Overall, the workshop participants welcomed the organization of this workshop, appreciated the substantive contents presented to them, particularly in terms of the methodological guidance documents that were presented and discussed. All the presentations and exercises were well received by participants and they were followed by active and in-depth discussions among participants and trainers. Participants also recognized the importance of high quality environment and energy statistics, and the need for the introduction or further development of specialized programmes in their countries. They also expressed the view that the importance of these statistics is not only for informing on the interrelationship between energy and environment (i.e., informing about energy renewability, energy depletion and energy related climate change, among other key cross-cutting topics), but also for informing on the linkages with other domains (such as social and economic statistics).

During the session on priorities and the way forward, the participants' interventions greatly contributed to identifying priority areas for countries and the region for subsequent training workshops. Participants also expressed the need for additional training in order to discuss in more detail the relevant concepts, methods, sources and classifications for the compilation of these statistics and relevant indicators. They made the suggestion that subsequent training workshops should be organized for the region, separately for environment and energy, so that the contents can be delivered, discussed and put into practice in greater depth in each of these two domains.

Finally, participants also stressed the importance of having the training materials and the methodological guidance translated into Arabic as soon as possible, recognizing that as a practical matter, by providing both methodological guidance and training materials in Arabic, the effectiveness of the training and more intensive use of the concepts and methods could be fostered, for national colleagues back in their countries.

For more information, please refer to the website:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/ENVIRONMENT/unsd_ArabCountries_workshop.htm

UNSD staff exchange to Eurostat (Luxembourg, 11-15 November 2013)

A staff member from UNSD undertook an exchange programme at Eurostat which consisted of bilateral meetings with several Eurostat staff working in the areas of environment statistics and environmental-economic accounts.

During the week detailed discussions took place on conceptual issues in waste and water statistics, as well as on data quality assurance and the validation processes of the environmental data collection exercises of Eurostat and UNSD. UNSD sends out a biennial UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics in the areas of water and waste statistics to the non-OECD/Eurostat countries. This questionnaire is a simplified version of the OECD/Eurostat Joint Questionnaire and harmonization is ensured at various levels in order to promote internationally comparable data. UNSD prepared comparison tables on the terms and definitions in the areas of water and waste statistics used by the various agencies which were used in the discussion. Various issues regarding data collection, including response rates and reporting regulations were discussed. It was noted that not all parts of the questionnaire are jointly carried out by OECD/Eurostat, depending on the reporting requirements. In addition, databases, websites and other resource material were reviewed, all of which will contribute to further promote harmonisation of data at the international level.

The UNSD staff member was invited to a Team Leaders meeting where she made a presentation on the work of UNSD on the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013), on UNSD's data collection and dissemination programme on environment statistics, as well as on capacity building and coordination in environment statistics. The staff member also met with the Director of Directorate E: Sectoral and Regional Statistics, under which environment statistics and environmental-economic accounts are placed, where collaboration in the areas of capacity building, methodological work, training material and data harmonization were discussed.

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The staff member participated in a presentation by the team leader and his colleagues on resource efficiency indicators. A description of the the European Resource Efficiency Scoreboard was given which was followed by a very interesting discussion on the indicators that make up the Scoreboard as well as the meta-data sheets that accompany each indicator. Related to the issue of indicator harmonization, UNSD and Eurostat also discussed further work on the streamlining of indicators between European and other initiatives and comparing them to the FDES Basic/Core Sets of Environment Statistics.

In addition, the staff member had a meeting with the Director of Directorate A: Cooperation in the European Statistical System, International cooperation, and Resources, where discussions about further cooperation activities took place, including capacity building.

A better and deeper understanding of UNSD's and Eurostat's related work was achieved. The exchange will lead to strengthening UNSD's and Eurostat's already existing joint collaboration and coordination even further. New contacts have been made and existing ones enhanced so enriched communication will follow.

UNSD bilateral discussions with OECD (Paris, 18 and 22 November 2013) in conjunction with the third meeting of the OECD Working Party on Environmental Information (Paris, 19-21 November 2013)

In conjunction with attending the third meeting of the OECD Working Party on Environmental Information (WPEI) (Paris, 19-21 November 2013) where UNSD made a presentation on the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) including the Basic Set of Environment Statistics (the presentation also covered UNSD's data collection and dissemination programme on environment statistics, as well as capacity building and coordination in environment statistics), the staff member from UNSD spent two additional days at OECD (18 and 22 November 2013) to conduct bilateral meetings to discuss several substantive issues including the following:

- (i) conceptual issues regarding the OECD/Eurostat and UNSD Questionnaires on Environment Statistics in the areas of water and waste statistics to further promote harmonisation of data at the international level – UNSD had prepared correspondence tables between the terms and definitions between the questionnaires of the respective organizations and detailed discussions were held on several concepts, methods and classifications used in both these fields. Reference to the Eurostat data collection was made as relevant (see previous article), since not all parts are contained in the OECD/Eurostat Joint Questionnaire, depending on reporting requirements.
- (ii) data quality assurance as well as the validation processes of the respective environmental data collection exercises of OECD and UNSD – OECD's annual data quality assurance questionnaire which commenced in 2010 (including water resources and abstraction, population connected to wastewater treatment plants, and generation, treatment and disposal of municipal waste, etc) and which is related to OECD's Key Environmental Indicators, was discussed bilaterally in more detail in the areas of water and waste statistics.
- (iii) the correspondence between the OECD Core Set of Environmental Indicators and the FDES Basic Set of Environment Statistics – it was agreed that the correspondence table that UNSD had prepared between these two sets of indicators/statistics would be updated when OECD's core set was finalized and would be shared with interested parties. Further comparisons between relevant indicator lists, including those of Eurostat, the European Environment Agency and other international/inter-governmental, regional organizations would also be developed which several delegates in the OECD WPEI thought would be very useful.
- (iv) green growth indicators – OECD described in more detail their work and plans on the green growth indicators and UNSD indicated that they would make a comparison between the OECD list of indicators and the FDES Basic/Core Set of Environment Statistics, which could be useful in the planned UNSD capacity-building project on the green economy where the work on the OECD green growth indicators would be taken into consideration.

All these bilateral discussions were very fruitful and will contribute to strengthening the already existing collaboration between UNSD and OECD even further.

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UNEP NEWS

UNEP is implementing a Transboundary Water Assessment Programme

(Contributed by Jaap van Woerden, UNEP)

As part of its global thematic assessment work, UNEP is currently implementing a Transboundary Water Assessment Programme (TWAP), funded by the Global Environment Facility and executed by a consortium of United Nations and research organizations around the world. TWAP is to provide the first global-scale, indicator-based assessment on international waters and improve knowledge for informed decision-making, raise awareness and foster cooperation among all stakeholders. The project will assess five recognised categories: groundwater, lakes and reservoirs, river basins; large marine ecosystems and the open ocean, and at the same time formalise a network of partners to establish a firm institutional basis on which to base future periodic global assessments of transboundary waters.

The data and indicators used and generated through this transboundary assessment are organized and presented in a common data portal linking the five individual water system databases that contain more detailed data and information. Baseline data are provided by many international partners among the UN system and other organizations, including the United Nations Statistics Division, FAO, UNESCO, World Bank and many others. In addition to the current state of the water systems, where possible trends and projections until 2030 or 2050 will be estimated. The TWAP Data Portal is part of the main TWAP website at <http://www.geftwap.org> and will be linked to the wider UNEPLive platform and other information systems. Policy-makers and other users may view, explore and download data, reports and other products for such purposes as setting funding priorities, as in the case of the GEF and international donors; or for exploring the status of, and monitoring the trends in transboundary water systems, in response to national, regional and international management efforts.

The TWAP project was presented at the 7th International Waters Conference (IWC7) held in October 2013 in Barbados. The TWAP consortium, led by UNEP, UNESCO-IHP, ILEC, UNEP-DHI and UNESCO-IOC, held an interactive plenary session to present its anticipated knowledge products to the GEF IW community, i.e., the suite of environmental, socioeconomic and governance indicators for each transboundary basin category, and examples of assessment results and database platforms that allow access to the products in the public domain. After the conference, the TWAP Steering Committee met in order to review progress and further guide project implementation with the aim to finalize by mid-2015.

Strengthening regional networks and national capacities on environmental information in Latin America and the Caribbean

(Contributed by Charles Davies, UNEP)

The important role of regional networks in increasing access to environmental information, and its use for decision making, is increasingly recognized in the framework of global initiatives such as the Eye on Earth network (www.eyeonearth.org). UNEP's Regional Office of Latin America and the Caribbean (UNEP-ROLAC) organized a meeting on 13-15 November 2013 in Panama City, Panama entitled "Strengthening regional networks and national capacities on environmental information in Latin America and the Caribbean", attended by 20 countries and 8 international organizations. Most of these countries participate in the regional ILAC Working Group on Indicators (chaired by Mexico's Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT)) through focal points in environment ministries and national statistical offices. "ILAC" stands for the Latin America and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development, adopted by the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean in 2002, and including a framework of goals and indicators on regional priority themes.

Among other things, outcomes of the meeting included:

- An agreement to review the core regional ILAC indicators, focusing on indicators of sustainable consumption and production and green economy;
- Presentation of a number of national environmental information platforms in the region as well as advances in their policy and institutional frameworks;

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- Identification of priorities for technical and South-South cooperation, taking into account both needs and technical capacities in the region;
- Presentation of standard methodologies on a number of regional indicators (complementing global indicators and methodologies);
- Feedback from countries in the region on the prototype UNEP Live platform (aimed at more dynamic, on-line environmental assessments and information);
- Development by participating Caribbean countries and the CARICOM secretariat of a partnership initiative to strengthen environmental data and information in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

On the last point, some Caribbean countries have applied to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for support to national environmental information under the GEF cross-cutting capacity development portfolio. “Cross-cutting” refers to foundational national capacities - such as environment information and legal and policy frameworks - that support national implementation of a number of different “thematic” environmental conventions (climate change, desertification, chemicals, biodiversity). Concepts for initiatives in Saint Lucia and Haiti have been approved by GEF and will start a project preparation phase with stakeholder consultation and project planning workshops in early 2014.

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UNECE NEWS

(Contributed by Tiina Luige)

Conference of European Statisticians Endorses Recommendations to Assist Countries in Measuring Sustainable Development

In June 2013 the Conference of European Statisticians (CES), held under the auspices of UNECE in Geneva, endorsed the *CES recommendations for measuring sustainable development* and its associated sets of indicators. The recommendations were developed by a Task Force set up jointly by UNECE, the Statistical Office of the European Commission (Eurostat) and the OECD. They take into account various initiatives undertaken by the United Nations, Eurostat and the OECD, as well as by individual countries, and provide analyses of current measurement frameworks. The Recommendations are planned to be published in the beginning of 2014 and will be translated into Russian.

The Recommendations are a key step towards harmonising the measurement of sustainable development, and are expected to contribute to establishing the SDGs and the related targets and indicators. The Conference decided to launch further work to provide countries with practical guidance on implementation issues. Australia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Turkey and Ukraine have volunteered to pilot test the recommended indicators. The pilot testing is planned to start in the beginning of 2014.

The recommendations identify a number of measurement issues that will need to be addressed in the future. In particular, more work needs to be done on measuring the transboundary effects in the context of sustainable development (i.e., the impact of countries on each other) and constructing better indicators in the areas of human, social, financial and natural capital (including better measures of their distribution). Data on time use can be used to measure those non-market activities which are relevant to sustainable development.

Understanding human capital is of significant interest also to sustainable development policies. Statistics on the stock of human capital can be used to analyse the drivers of economic growth, the functioning of the labour market and sustainability of a country's development path. The CES established a Task Force to pursue the conceptual development of human capital measurement.

The *CES recommendations on measuring sustainable development* are available at:

www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/2013/SD_framework_and_indicators_final.pdf

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UNECE Activities on Production of Environmental Data and Indicators to Further Strengthen Environmental Reporting

Close attention to environmental issues has increased the demand for high quality statistics to strengthen environmental monitoring in the UNECE region. A Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators was set up by the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) and the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in 2009 to improve environmental data collection and reporting in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe, and to promote comparability of environmental statistics and indicators in UNECE region. The work brings together environmental experts and statisticians, a cooperation that is crucial to ensure improved methodologies and better time series data. The work is carried out with strong support from the European Environment Agency (EEA) and in close cooperation with other international organizations such as the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Energy Agency (IEA), Eurostat, etc.

The Task Force has reviewed all 36 indicators covered by the *Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia* (Guidelines) that were prepared by the CEP Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment and endorsed at the Belgrade (2007) "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference. The Task Force has included 13 additional indicators in the Guidelines and has prepared common harmonized formats for countries for the production of the indicators. In July 2012, the Task Force agreed on a core set of environmental indicators (8 indicators, 11 datasets) to form the basis for regular data collection. In November 2013, countries reported on progress in producing the selected indicators. The next session of the Joint Task Force in May 2014 will review the production and sharing of the selected indicators. Furthermore, a workshop will be organized back to back with the May 2014 session of the Task Force to discuss and share practical solutions/good practice examples on producing water indicators.

The UNECE completed implementation of a UN Development Account project on environmental sustainability in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. South-East European countries were also participating in the activities thanks to the support of Eurostat and the European Environment Agency. The topics of the workshops covered waste statistics (11-13 April 2012 and 29 October 2013, Geneva); measuring sustainable development and the implications of Rio+20 Conference (29 October 2012, Geneva); agri-environmental statistics (13-15 May 2013, Montenegro) and a high-level seminar on follow-up to Rio+20: measuring sustainable development and implementing the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (12-13 June 2013, Geneva). Three reports have been prepared providing a summary of the current status in EECCA countries of waste statistics, agri-environmental statistics and measuring sustainable development.

More information about the work of the Joint Task Force on environmental indicators is available at:

<http://www.unece.org/stats/environment.html>

UNECE Task Force is Finalizing Recommendations on Climate Change Related Statistics

In June 2012, the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development emphasized climate change as an immediate and urgent global priority. This has increased the pressure to provide new information to support analysis of climate change and improve existing statistics. A CES Task Force on Climate Change Related Statistics is currently finalising its recommendations for improving the statistics related to climate change collected by national statistical systems, and enhancing their utility for the compilation of greenhouse gas inventories.

In drafting its recommendations, the Task Force analysed the results of an earlier survey on the involvement of national statistical offices in climate change related statistics. The survey was undertaken with support by the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEAA) and UNSD. In addition, the Task Force carried out interviews of users of climate information, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), research agencies, non-governmental organizations and universities. The results provided useful input for analysing the user needs and the role of national statistical offices in the area.

The Task Force organised two expert meetings: the first meeting on 19-20 November 2012 to explore user needs and existing practices within national statistical systems, and the second meeting, on 8-9 October 2013 to review the draft recommendations of the Task Force.

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The meetings brought together over 50 producers and users of climate change related statistics, such as greenhouse gas inventory compilers, environment agencies and ministries, statistical offices and international organizations, such as Directorate-General on Climate Action of the European Commission, European Environment Agency, Eurostat, International Labour Organization (ILO), IPCC, UNFCCC, WMO, World Health Organization, World Bank, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), etc. The discussions among various experts at the meetings provided valuable input to the recommendations for national statistical systems.

The Task Force noted that climate change related data are scattered across a variety of organisations, are largely unstructured, and that the wide range of existing environment, social and economic statistics could be much better utilized for climate change policy and analysis. It would be beneficial as well to create national working groups around greenhouse gas inventory compilation and other climate change related statistics.

The report recommends that national statistical offices work more closely with greenhouse gas inventory producers to ensure that official statistics meet the needs of greenhouse gas inventories. National statistical offices should act as the facilitator for inventory compilers within the national statistical system; for example, by assessing the usefulness of existing official statistics for inventory compilers, by reviewing the statistical requirements related to the Kyoto protocol and other global or regional climate change agreements, and by preparing themselves to meet new data requirements.

The Task Force recommends that national statistical offices start improving climate change related statistics gradually and based on their key competencies. First, existing statistics should be better organised for the purposes of climate change analysis; for example, using statistical dissemination channels. As a second step, the usefulness of the existing statistics for climate change analysis should be improved by reviewing existing data collection systems. In this context, the Task Force underlines the importance of geo-referencing data and linking existing datasets to improve their coherence and maximize their potential for climate change analysis. Third, new statistics must be compiled to fill gaps in key areas; for example, on the underlying driving forces of climate change, on its social and economic impacts, on mitigation efforts and on vulnerability and adaptation.

The Task Force realizes that taking action on the points above will challenge the infrastructure of national statistical systems. Reviews of standard classification systems, registers, definitions and survey methods will all be required in order to ensure the usefulness of official statistics for climate change analysis. So too will be finding new ways to ensure confidentiality of official statistics while providing climate change analysts with increased access to microdata. Statistical systems will need to acquire new kinds of expertise through training, recruitment and, especially, through partnerships. Organizational changes may also be required in national statistical offices to support the production of these statistics that cut across the statistical system.

While the recommendations presented in the upcoming report of the Task Force represent useful first steps, further international work will be required to support their implementation. The global nature of climate change calls for wider cooperation among users and producers of statistics to better respond to the growing information needs. International statistical organizations, for example, the Conference of European Statisticians and its secretariat, should ensure close cooperation with the UNFCCC, IPCC, WMO and other international organizations active in the area.

The Task Force's interim recommendations on key directions in climate change related statistics were discussed at the CES plenary session in June 2013. The final report with recommendations will be submitted to the CES for approval in April 2014.

More information about the UNECE work in climate change related statistics is available at: www.unece.org/stats/climate.html

UN-ESCAP

Expert Group Meeting on Strategies for Improving Environment Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 2-4 December 2013

This Expert Group Meeting was organized by ESCAP in close collaboration with partners from FAO, UNEP, UNECE and UNSD. Experts from a variety of government departments from 11 countries in Asia and Pacific participated. The global context for organizing this meeting includes the recent adoptions by the United Nations Statistical Commission of the revised Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES) and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), as well as the call by the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20) for improvements to statistics for producing broader measures of

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progress and to monitor a new set of sustainable development goals (SDGs). Regionally, this meeting was the capstone for a year of re-resurgence of ESCAP into the field of environment statistics, which comprised of training courses on SEEA, multiple national assessment studies on the SEEA and on disaster statistics, an international seminar on SEEA for the Pacific region, a workshop on valuing and accounting for the environment and an expert group meeting on improving disaster data.

The agenda was organized according to six broad FDES components: (i) Environmental Conditions and Quality, (ii) Environmental Resources and their Use, (iii) Residuals, (iv) Extreme Events and Disasters, (v) Human Settlements and Environmental Health, and (vi) Environment Protection, Management and Engagement. The expert group discussed the driving policy questions, priority constraints, and means to overcome these constraints for each of the six FDES components. Multiple strategies, which are complementary but vary according to different national and sub-regional circumstances, emerged from the meeting as a way forward. A summary report will be available shortly on the meeting website and will be used as a central input for the continued development of regional activities for environment statistics in the coming years, building up towards the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs.

For further information, please visit <http://www.unescap.org/stat/envstat/EGM/index.asp>

UN-ESCWA

(Contributed by the Statistics Division)

ESCWA has just published the Compendium of Environment Statistics in the Arab Region 2012-2013 *مجموعة الإحصاءات البيئية في المنطقة العربية* available for download in pdf format at <http://www.escwa.un.org/information/pubaction.asp?PubID=1366> and downloadable Excel files at <http://www.escwa.un.org/divisions/sd/pubs/index.asp?PubNUM=CES-2013> data.

(Contributed by the Sustainable Development Division)

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), in partnership with the League of Arab States (LAS) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and in collaboration with the Ministry of Equipment and Environment in Tunisia, organized an Expert Meeting on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which took place on 18 and 19 November 2013 in Gammarth, Tunisia.

The meeting aimed to consult on the Sustainable Development Goals and post-2015 agenda in light of recent ongoing global consultations on the subject, particularly the outcomes from the 68th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations and the meetings of the intergovernmental Open Working Group (OWG) on the SDGs. It also provided a platform to discuss a regional perspective on the SDGs in line with the Arab regional priorities and progress made against the Millennium Development Goals. The meeting specifically discussed the conceptual issues which will form the basis for shaping/developing the SDGs. It also paved the way for a regional meeting for Arab government representatives planned to be held at the beginning of 2014, and which outcome will feed into the next session of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) which replaced the Commission on Sustainable Development in 2013. The opening statements, presentations, and other meeting documentation including the meeting report can be accessed on the following meeting website: <http://www.escwa.un.org/information/meetingdetails.asp?referenceNum=3248E>.

Recent and Ongoing Work at UN ECLAC

(Contributed by Kristina Taboulchanas, Statistics Division, UN ECLAC)

Environmental Information day

The first “Environmental Information day: progress and challenges for environmental governance” was held on 3-4 December 2013 at ECLAC’s headquarters in Santiago, Chile. The event was jointly organized by ECLAC and the Chilean Ministry of Environment. The objectives of the event were to share the various activities and challenges related to the generation and dissemination of environmental information in Chile and elsewhere in the region, with a view to coordinate efforts to help advance towards environmental governance. The meeting was aimed at users and producers of environmental information: government

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REGIONAL NEWS

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representatives, international organizations, civil society and academics. As part of the agenda ECLAC's Statistics Division made a presentation on the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) and the potential these statistical frameworks have for generating meaningful environmental information for decision making. For additional information visit: <http://www.cepal.org/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/rio20/noticias/noticias/3/51573/P51573.xml&xsl=/rio20/tpl/p1f.xsl&base=/rio20/tpl/top-bottom.xsl>

Measuring public environmental expenditures

ECLAC in collaboration with Mexico's statistical office (INEGI) is developing practical guidelines for measuring public environmental expenditures based on the analysis of government budget accounts. As part of this work a cooperation agreement has been signed between ECLAC and Chile's Ministry of Environment to support their efforts to measure environmental expenditures, while a similar cooperation agreement is being negotiated with the Ministry of Environment in Costa Rica. From 11-12 December 2013 ECLAC co-organized with INEGI a technical workshop to review the draft guidelines. Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and El Salvador participated in the event to provide comments and also share their experiences in measuring public environmental expenditures.

Regional Strategy for the Implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting

ECLAC has elaborated a draft strategy for the implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) in Latin America. The draft strategy was presented during the Regional Seminar on Developing an Implementation Strategy for the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) Central Framework in Latin America and the Caribbean that took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 19-20 September 2013. Moreover, a regional consultation of the draft strategy took place in November 2013. The NSOs, Ministries of Environment and Central Banks of 18 Latin American Countries and several international and regional organizations were invited to review and send comments on the draft. The strategy is currently being revised and will be published in early 2014.

For more information on the above mentioned activities please contact Kristina Taboulchanas at ECLAC (Kristina.taboulchanas@cepal.org) or 56-2-2210-2335.

CARICOM Continues to Strengthen Environment Statistics

(Contributed by Philomen Harrison, CARICOM Secretariat)

In October 2013, The Caribbean Community Secretariat disseminated its third regional Environment Statistics Report - 2009 via the website of the Regional Statistics Programme, www.caricomstats.org. This publication has been reviewed with the assistance of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) Environment Statistics Section. The dissemination of this regional publication is a continuation of the work which began with a highly successful Development Account project that was executed around 1999-2004 by the CARICOM Secretariat and the UNSD on Strengthening Capacity in the Compilation of Social/Gender and Environment Statistics for Conference Follow-up". Over the years there has been support through technical assistance and regional training workshops from International Development Partners including the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Union (EU) and the UNSD.

The last workshop in the area of Environment Statistics was conducted in St Kitts and Nevis in 2011 and was funded by the EU under the Ninth European Development Fund. The main aim of the workshop was to facilitate information interchange and discussions that would serve to clarify issues and problems on the data compiled and submitted for the publication, identify gaps in the data compiled and mechanisms through which these can be filled.

The Region also benefitted from the Caribbean Hub sub-component of the European Commission-funded project on *Capacity Building relative to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries*. Funding was through the CARICOM Secretariat to support the efforts of countries in monitoring of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements and related commitments. Support was provided based on request and commitment to *Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and Jamaica*. The CARICOM Secretariat conducted missions in these countries in November 2012 to enable the strengthening

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of inter-agency coordination to fill the data gaps in the area of Biodiversity – incorporating the themes of Forestry, Land Use, Coastal and Marine Resources and Biodiversity in its own right. The CARICOM Secretariat was able to collect some data and publications under Biodiversity for inclusion in the Regional report. The interactions also resulted in various other benefits.

The CARICOM Secretariat has also released its third regional Environment Statistics report “CARICOM Environment in Figures 2009”, which contains data for the period 2005-2009 and also included data for some countries from the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Census. The report was circulated on 14 October 2013 to Member States and the UNSD for feedback and was also disseminated on the Secretariat’s web site on 17 October 2013. Comments were received from the UNSD. The main sources of data for this report were submissions by Member States for most of the themes with the exception of Waste and Water which were collected by the UNSD under a collaborative arrangement with the CARICOM Secretariat. In addition, the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) and the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI) provided data on Tourism and Environment Health, respectively which assisted in filling the data gaps under these themes. The Secretariat was able to incorporate data on the environment from the 2010 Census Round for The Bahamas, Belize, Saint Lucia, Bermuda and the Cayman Islands. Additionally, the CARICOM Secretariat received Bermuda’s Environment Statistics Compendium 2011, Belize’s Environment Outlook 2010, Dominica’s 2010 Environment Statistics Report, Jamaica’s State of the Environment Report 2010 and St. Vincent and the Grenadines’ 2010 Environmental Statistics Report. These reports speak to the commitment of countries of the region in responding to the initiatives to develop Environment Statistics. The indicators under the themes Waste, Water, Land Use and Air recorded the most data gaps which are areas that used to be or still is the focus of UNSD data collection.

Relative to the data gaps, a CARICOM Workshop on Environment Statistics is being planned for the beginning of the second quarter of 2014 to focus mainly on the significant gaps in the data including the four themes mentioned above. An assessment of the data submitted across the three regional publications is currently being conducted in order to ascertain the impact of interventions in this area of statistics. The workshop would be funded by the EU under the Tenth EDF and it is hoped that funding would be available to enable the participation of statisticians and environment personnel particularly under the themes with the data gaps. The CARICOM Secretariat has also received support from the EU to enable the provision of in-country support to countries. The CARICOM Secretariat continues to encourage its member countries to establish Inter-Agency Committees comprising the relevant stakeholders that can provide the missing data and corresponding metadata on environment statistics. This collaboration can also take the form of one-on-one meetings with stakeholders to inform them of the themes and indicators needed for data and metadata collection under the CARICOM Programme and to obtain from them the relevant data and metadata.

The areas of Environment Statistics as well as Environmental-Economic accounting were on the recently concluded Thirty-Eighth Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians which took place in St Kitts and Nevis from 28th October – 1st November 2013. Some of the conclusions and recommendations of the Thirty-Eighth meeting of the SCCS on this area of statistics are given below.

- The UNSD/United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) 2013 Questionnaire on Environment Statistics for Water and Waste would be dispatched by the UNSD to the countries in December 2013;
- The Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES) 2013 has been adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission at its Forty-fourth Session in 2013;
- The workshop on Environment statistics to be convened by the Secretariat in 2014 will focus on the themes with significant data gaps;
- The need for countries to review the third regional environment statistics report produced by the Secretariat;
- The CARICOM Secretariat should collaborate with the UNSD and other agencies in bridging the data gaps on the themes, Air, Waste, Water and Land Use;
- The benefits of inter-agency collaboration/coordination and the role of the NSO in **providing** leadership, training and oversight to the overall process of data collection and the setting of standards for data quality were emphasised;
- The presentation on the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) by the UNSD was commended as being very comprehensive;
- The consensus reached was that the implementation of the SEEA is not currently a priority in the Region and that the specific responses of countries were as follows:

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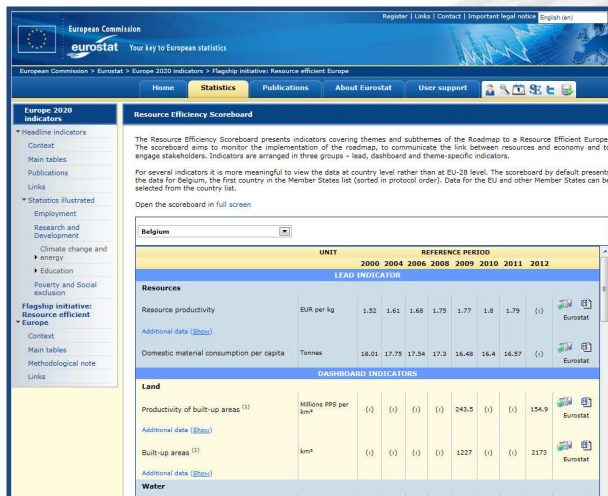
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- ◇ A modular approach through looking at the feasibility of having countries volunteer to pilot the SEEA;
- ◇ The impossibility of implementing the SEEA before 2018/19 possibly, since priority will be the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA) but that in developing the Supply and Use Table (SUT) there will be some focus of the data requirements of the SEEA and that a modular approach was also advisable;
- It was also noted that the UNSD would collaborate with the CARICOM Secretariat and other partners relative to the convening of a workshop on the SEEA to be held back-to-back with a workshop on Environment Statistics or National Accounts in 2014 which would serve to further sensitise personnel about the framework;
- Finally countries needed to focus on the **basic data series in National Accounts and specifically on the Minimum Required Data Set (MRDS)** where there are major data gaps before venturing to implement the SEEA.

Eurostat – Resource Efficiency Scoreboard Goes Online

(Contributed by Christian Heidorn)

Eurostat launched the [European Resource Efficiency Scoreboard](#) on 6 December 2013. (see also ENVSTATS issue 33) The scoreboard presents a set of 30 indicators for assessing the use of natural resources in the EU and for monitoring the progress towards a resource-efficient and circular economy. The indicators provide statistical support for the implementation of the [Resource-efficient Europe initiative](#), one of the seven flagship initiatives of the [Europe 2020 strategy](#) for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. It will provide the basis for a yearly analysis of the progress made in the EU.



The list of indicators builds on consultations organised by the European Commission, as well as the output of expert panels and senior environmental statisticians and economists. It takes into account the need to set targets, as well as availability of statistical data with sufficient quality.

These indicators are briefly explained in [Eurostat's News Release](#), and in more detail in the meta-data sheets accompanying each indicator. The scoreboard is based on the most recent statistics from Eurostat, the European Environment Agency, the Commission's Joint Research Centre and other internationally recognised sources.

It is structured around:

- a lead indicator on resource productivity;
- a dashboard of indicators focusing on land, water and carbon issues; and
- a set of specific indicators focussing on the sub-themes in the Roadmap: 'Transforming the economy', 'Nature and ecosystems' and 'Key areas'.

The scoreboard will be constantly updated and will evolve to cover future demands. At the moment, the scoreboard presents the breakdown of certain indicators into economic sectors but in the future this type of breakdown will expand to more indicators.

EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

The ENPI-SEIS Project: Towards a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) in the European Neighbourhood

(Contributed by Cecile Roddier-Quefelec)

The 4th ENPI-SEIS Steering Committee meeting

The 4th annual ENPI-SEIS Steering Committee meeting took place the 17-18 September 2013 at the EEA, Copenhagen. The

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meeting aimed at taking stock of the activities undertaken in 2013 and contributing to the work plan of the final stage of the project in 2014. In addition to the regular steering committee meeting, participants reflected and discussed openly overarching, long-term goals associated with the implementation of SEIS during a half-day seminar facilitated by Mr. John Bennett.

In the key concluding points for the ENPI-East region, it was recognized that the establishment of data flows is a core driver to advance the SEIS mandate and activities, as the process of sharing and making available commonly agreed data sets helps trigger dialogue and focus actions on the coordination needs and mechanisms, cooperation across topics and networks, and infrastructure developments. The countries agreed that a round of national SEIS workshops/country visits would be beneficial to reinforce the political commitment and take steps towards establishing actual data sharing. Capacity building support in the work plan is primarily thematic and technical/IT oriented.

For the ENPI-South region, despite some delays in the work plan, important progress was achieved with the development of the six Horizon 2020 indicators, the setting-up of the reporting tool and the preparation of the 1st draft H2020 report, including country level contributions. As the 2013 activities focused on the H2020 reporting process, the meeting acknowledged a slow implementation of the PRTR activities, and the postponement of the activities on waste statistics and accounting to 2014. In the proposed approach to operationalise activities, the main areas of concerns identified were the access to and availability of data, methodological issues, data processing, metadata catalogues, and the need for stronger commitment and coordination with thematic partners at national level. It was agreed that technical assistance through the project would focus on the improvement of data quality and harmonisation across the region, the finalisation of the indicator factsheets, and thematic support on waste statistics and PRTR. Discussions also revolved around the regional assessment to be produced by early 2014 on the progress of Horizon 2020, and on raising the importance of the reporting by the countries. More information on the meeting can be found on the ENPI-SEIS website enpi-seis.ew.eea.europa.eu/.

5 neighbourhood countries declared strong interest in an increased collaboration with EEA

Jordan, Israel, Republic of Moldova, Morocco and Palestine have expressed interest in fostering the existing cooperation with the EEA in the framework of the ENPI-SEIS project and have agreed on the objectives for the Increased collaboration and further implementation of SEIS. The so called "InSEIS" project, which will allow deepening the cooperation, and further country-oriented activities on topics not covered in the present collaboration, was signed by the European Commission and the EEA in December 2013. The enhanced cooperation, designed to start in June 2014, will primarily focus on: provision of Technical Assistance in the priority areas identified on the basis of the requests put forward by the countries earlier in 2013; organisation of thematic workshops at national and/or regional level; provision of expertise and training opportunities via participation at dedicated seminars; and gradual involvement in the Eionet activities. There is a possibility to enlarge the scope of activities to other ENP countries subject to their interest and availability of resources.

'SEIS cookbook' – a tool for sharing environmental data and information



To better illustrate the principles of the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) and its applicability in practice, under the ENPI-SEIS project a "SEIS cookbook" was published, full with necessary ingredients and concrete examples to guide the understanding of the SEIS concept.

The 'SEIS cookbook' is meant to be a living document, which will be continuously updated with new examples as technology develops and new systems to support sharing of environmental information are introduced.

The bulk of the cookbook is devoted to case studies from the EEA member-, cooperating and neighbourhood countries which show national and international implementation of SEIS elements. These examples are collectively used to identify an emerging set of common trends, methods, tools and lessons, which have been integrated into the 'SEIS checklist' that can be used as a self-assessment tool to measure progress and identify areas that need further development.

The "SEIS cookbook" is available in English, French and Russian languages, and can be downloaded from the project's website: <http://enpi-seis.ew.eea.europa.eu/seis-infrastructure/seis-cookbook>

Horizon 2020 – Towards the mid-term review of the Horizon 2020 initiative of depolluting the Mediterranean Sea

The first phase of the Horizon 2020 initiative (2007-2013) is now coming to an end and a mid-term review of the initiative is under preparation. The current H2020 regional assessment report under finalisation by the EEA with the ENP-SEIS South partner countries will, together with the results to date of three other complementary and coordinated technical assessments (conducted by the European Investment Bank, UNEP/MAP, the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat) and evaluations of specific project

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implementation (H2020 Capacity Building Mediterranean Environment Programme) feed-in the mid-term review of the Horizon 2020 initiative. This midterm review synthesis will provide a summary description of all the achievements and remaining challenges, and propose technical, institutional and strategic recommendations for the next phase (2014-2020). The draft midterm review synthesis is to be presented at the ad hoc H2020 Steering Group Meeting foreseen in March 2014, and the final version as background document to the announced Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate Change to be held in May 2014.

The production of the 1st H2020 assessment report is based on data and information reported by the ENP South partner countries. The data flows for the key H2020 indicators are progressively in place, with seven out of nine partner countries who nominated data reporters for this reporting flow. Data are progressively reported and shared on Reportnet (See Mediterranean Data Repository at <http://mdr.eionet.europa.eu>, with national folders linked to relevant reporting obligations).

Countries deployed important efforts to prepare and report the required data. Extensive exchanges with the countries took place to improve the data quality and the interpretation of the delivered data sets as well as to allow developing key messages on progress achieved on the three H2020 priority areas (municipal waste, urban waste water and industrial emissions). Based on the data reported by the countries and using the selected H2020 indicators, a “Regional thematic assessment” has been prepared and shared with the ENP South partner countries for review and comments. To complement the regional thematic assessment partner countries prepared national assessments of the three H2020 priority areas following common guidelines. This country level assessment is a new exercise for the countries and revealed to be very challenging, both in terms of method (use of the DPSIR analytical framework, limited length of the narrative contribution), and in terms of the production (sharing of responsibility for writing the different chapters). Despite some challenges met, this exercise provided a very concrete capacity building activity for the preparation of thematic assessments. Five countries already provided their contributions that are under processing and editing.

ENPI East

Ukraine focusing on coordination to allow open access and sharing of environmental data

In a two-day national workshop organised in Kyiv, 13-14 November 2013, 50 participants from various Ministries and Agencies discussed organisational, administrative and technical aspects around open access and sharing of environmental data. It was recognised that the lack of internal coordination, with a clear distribution of roles and mandates among key partners, remains a challenge in Ukraine. Steps needed to improve the mechanism for coordinating the implementation of a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) in Ukraine were discussed.

A major development is the drafting of an Ordinance to establish a multi-agency working group to deal with SEIS implementation at national level. It is anticipated that the process for formalising this working group will be finalised in early 2014, and will provide the forum for the practical implementation of the discussed actions.

Georgia is willing to seal a partnership with the EEA

In cooperation with the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources and National Statistics Office of Georgia, the European Environment Agency organised a two-day workshop on 2-3 December 2013 in Tbilisi, Georgia. The objective was to take stock of the progress in managing and sharing environmental data at national level since the previous country visit to Georgia held within the framework of the project in June 2011. As regards the collection and sharing of environmental data and information, Mrs. Gogaladze Minister of Environment Protection and Natural Resources confirmed during an ENPI-SEIS workshop Georgia commitment towards improving the compliance with existing requirements of the ENPI-SEIS project. The Ministry agreed to sign a Letter of Intent to formalise the commitment for the provision of environmental data and information in the three thematic areas: air, water and waste.

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For more information on the agenda, participants and report of the meeting, please consult the ENPI-SEIS website.

Towards a common approach for sharing water quality data in the East region

A regional training on water quality reporting for the ENPI East region was held in Tbilisi, Georgia on 4-5 December 2013 - to advance the production of common environmental indicators across the region. For the area of water, the priority indicators relate to water quality in rivers and lakes (BOD and concentration of ammonium in rivers, nutrients in freshwater). The event was hosted by the Ministry of Environment Protection of Georgia, and organised in collaboration with the European Topic Centre on Inland, Coastal and Marine waters (ETC/ICM). The mechanism and concepts applied in Europe for sharing water quality data were explored (i.e. the Water Information System for Europe (WISE) "State of the Environment" (SoE) reporting procedure). Efforts will continue in 2014 to assist and enable partner countries to share data based on notions reviewed, working closely with partners such as the Environmental Protection of International River Basins Project and the UNECE Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators (JTF).

Upcoming events:

ENPI-SEIS East national workshop and technical seminar on Reportnet, 29-30 January, Yerevan, Armenia

ENPI-SEIS national workshop, 19-20 February, Minsk, Belarus

ENPI-SEIS South, Joint meeting of the Environmental Indicator and Information Technology Working Groups, end of March, Copenhagen, Denmark

ENPI-SEIS national workshop in Moldova (dates in March tbc); Azerbaijan (possibly April)

8th Session of the UNECE Joint Task Force on environmental Indicators and workshop on water indicators, 13-15 May, Geneva

ENPI-SEIS South Regional workshop on water accounting, Vienna

ENPI-SEIS South Regional workshop on waste, Vienna

ENPI-SEIS South Regional workshop on PRTR, Ankara, Turkey

ENPI-SEIS South Technical Assistance missions on Infrastructure development (1st semester 2014)

More information on ENPI-SEIS Project is available here <http://enpi-seis.ew.eea.europa.eu>

COUNTRY NEWS

National Conference on the Application of the Revised Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) in Nigeria

(Contributed by Philip O. Bankole, Deputy Director (Research & Statistics, Department of Planning, Research & Statistics, Federal Ministry of Environment, Nigeria)

A two-day national conference on the "**Application of the United Nations revised Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES) in Nigeria**" was held at the Bolingo Hotel, Central Business District, Abuja, Nigeria, on 31 July and 1 August 2013. The national conference, which was organized by the Federal Ministry of Environment in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), was attended by over 200 participants, comprising Permanent Secretaries, Directors in-charge of Planning, Research and Statistics from State Ministries of Environment and Federal Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) as well as representatives of international organizations in Nigeria, and prominent environmental non-governmental organizations nationwide.

The Conference was a follow up to the decisions reached at the 9th National Council on Environment held in Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria, from 5-10 May 2013, where the Federal Ministry of Environment had presented a special memorandum on the "**application of the United Nations revised Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES) in Nigeria**".

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With the theme “Facilitation of Credible Statistics for Sustainable Environmental Management and Socio-Economic Development”, the conference had the following specific objectives/outcomes:

- (a) Popularization of the FDES;
- (b) Identification of MDAs that will be responsible for the generation of relevant statistics for the list of indicators in the FDES according to the thematic areas and in relation to the mandate of the respective MDAs;
- (c) Preliminary assessment of national capacities for the generation of relevant statistics and identification of gaps;
- (d) Establishment of the National Steering Committee on the application of the FDES (Policy/Political level);
- (e) Establishment of the National Technical Committee (operational level); and
- (f) Identification of necessary guidance for the selection of Desk Officers on Environmental Statistics delivery service.

The conference was declared opened by the Honourable Minister of Environment, Mrs. Hadiza Ibrahim Mailafia, who was represented by the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Taiye Haruna. Goodwill messages were also received from the Executive Secretary of the National Planning Commission, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, the Statistician General of the National Bureau of Statistics, and the Director of Research & Statistics from the ECOWAS Commission.

The opening session was followed by technical sessions during which the following presentations were made:

- (a) National Strategy for the Development of Statistics in Nigeria, presented by the representative of the Statistician General of the National Bureau of Statistics;
- (b) Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics in the ECOWAS Region, presented by Mr. Chris Ajero from the ECOWAS Commission; and
- (c) An Overview of the United Nations Revised Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES), by Mr. Philip O. Bankole, Deputy Director (Research & Statistics), Federal Ministry of Environment.

At the end of the presentations, the participants were constituted into the following four thematic groups:

- (a) Application of the FDES in Agriculture Statistics;
- (b) Application of the FDES in Climate Change Statistics;
- (c) Application of the FDES in Energy Statistics; and
- (d) Application of the FDES in Water Statistics;

The working groups were required to:

- (a) Identify the relevant MDAs for the production of the statistics for the thematic group;
- (b) Assess the state of knowledge and present capacity for required data (availability of relevant methodology for data collection, manpower, equipment etc);
- (c) Assess the type and volume of data currently available under the thematic group;
- (d) Identify the data gaps;
- (e) Propose the way forward to fill the data gaps; and
- (f) Propose other recommendations for the regular production and management of environment statistics in Nigeria.

The conclusions of the group discussions were presented at the plenary session for further discussion. Furthermore, a communiqué was produced, which spelt out the modalities for the constitution of the National Steering Committee and the Technical Committee for the application of the FDES in Nigeria.

The National Administrative Department of Statistics “Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadísticas de Colombia” (DANE) is coordinating the development of a Strategic Plan to put into practice the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics

(Contributed by Monica Madrid Arroyo, DANE)

Faced with the challenge of producing statistics on environment, DANE and the Environment Statistics Section of UNSD presented the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013), to all Colombian environmental sector entities. From November 18th to 22nd 2013, the DANE’s Methodology and Statistical Production Division welcomed the visit of an expert from the Environment Statistics Section of UNSD, as part of the technical support given for discussing the status of the Basic Set of Environment Statistics established in the FDES 2013.

Such technical support was focused on the revision and the ongoing improvement of environment statistics, as well as the strengthening of technical capabilities of different teams from DANE and other Colombian environmental sector entities, in the production of environmental statistics and indicators related to the methodology and the scope defined in the FDES 2013. This proposal has been geared towards the satisfaction of needs for information for decision-making and the monitoring of public environmental policies.

In this meeting, the UNSD expert presented the FDES 2013 in a statistical workshop, where the representatives from different Colombian environmental sector entities and institutions such as: the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, The Institute for Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies (IDEAM), The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, the Chancellery of Colombia amongst others participated. DANE’s internal representatives including the members engaged in the production of basic statistics, the individuals in charge of the development of Environmental Satellite Accounts and the professional members that design the Environmental sectoral statistical plan also took part in the workshop.

The UNSD expert on environmental statistics and indicators presented the FDES 2013 to all participants, as an internationally-agreed tool for engaging the production and structure of environment statistics. Workshop participants were provided with the structure, components, sub-components and topics, the Basic Set of Environment Statistics and the Self-Assessment Tool on Environment Statistics. Throughout the workshop, the importance of this methodological framework was highlighted as a relevant and strategic input for DANE: the entity involved in the coordination of the National Statistical System and the institution in charge of the development of sectoral statistical plans.

Furthermore, the standards and national policies that determine the production of information on environment in Colombia were discussed in the workshop as well as the progress of the Environmental Information System of Colombia (SIAC), the relevant aspects considered by the National Planning Department (DNP) in terms of the production of environmental information for decision-making, prioritization of projects and assignment of financial resources. In addition, the current projects developed by these entities concerning the production of environmental information were revealed. Such projects include: The Industrial Environmental Survey, the Environmental Survey on Hotels and the Environmental Satellite Accounts, projects under DANE’s management, and the National Study of Water which is developed by IDEAM.

This workshop contributed to promote the inter-institutional coordination for the production of basic environment statistics and also to highlight, at the level of participants, the need of this country for prioritizing a set of relevant environmental indicators that effectively enables the comprehension of the state of natural resources in Colombia.

In addition, the visit was complemented with the development of meetings where the production of environmental data carried out by institutions such as the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS), Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies (IDEAM) and the Alexander von Humboldt Research Institute of Biological Resources was highly recognized. These institutions welcomed with special interest the FDES 2013 and discussed its content by analyzing the Basic Set in terms of the priorities, abilities and institutional organization involved in the production of environment statistics in Colombia, its future application in the development of environmental indicators and also its relation with other frameworks and systems (PIERS, Environmental Accounts, amongst others). Finally, the revision of the variables proposed in this framework was agreed, taking into account the statistical information which is nowadays produced.

Finally, at the close of the technical visit, the different findings about Colombia’s status in terms of the production of environmental statistical information were analyzed, as well as the FDES 2013 contribution with the strengthening and development of environment

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statistics in this country. Likewise, the further steps as well as the opportunity of having additional technical support to continue with the monitoring process of implementation of the FDES 2013 and its associated tools were discussed.

Thanks to this technical visit, DANE strengthened its mission on the production and synthesis of official environmental statistics and indicators in Colombia. It is expected that DANE will design a strategy to put into force the FDES 2013 in partnership with the other environmental sector institutions; activity for which it is hoped to count upon once again with the determined support of UNSD.

The application of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) in Vietnam

(Contributed by N. Phong, V.T. Thuy and Anand Sookun, Team members for the revision of the National Statistical Indicator System on Environment, General Statistical Office, Vietnam)

In order to cater for the need for environmental data, a technical assistance of consultants was received from the UNDP in Vietnam with a view to improve its National Statistical Indicator System (NSIS). For the review of the environmental indicators within the NSIS, the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) was used as the main reference. Given the comprehensiveness of the FDES, including its Core Set of Environment Statistics organised by specific environmental themes, the revision process was greatly enhanced.

In Vietnam, a laudable initiative has been taken to compile environmental indicators for the NSIS which consists of 350 indicators divided into 21 areas. Among the 350 indicators, those pertaining directly to the environment include 24 that reflect environment protection and 7 that reflect climate change. In addition, many of the remaining 319 indicators are also useful for environment statistics. The General Statistics Office (GSO), in collaboration with other line ministries, has been collecting data for these indicators. However, not all of these indicators are feasible to be collected in Vietnam due to a lack of organised data collection strategy and a proper adoption of a framework for an environmental statistical programme. Out of the 31 indicators, directly pertaining to the environment currently within the NSIS, only about 15 were collected. The number of indicators does not sufficiently and comprehensively reflect environmental issues, especially climate change which is widely recognized as the major environmental problem facing the globe in general and Vietnam in particular.

This situation in Vietnam led to the need to review the environment indicators in the NSIS and to propose an updated and supplementary list of indicators which is able to comprehensively reflect the environmental status and to meet the needs for monitoring, evaluating, and making policies regarding environment. The FDES, in particular the Core Set of Environment Statistics, provided some good guidelines in developing the indicators on environment. The new and improved list of environmental indicators will help the current and future environmental data collection and be included in the next revision of the NSIS. The themes covered in the revised environmental NSIS are:

- Physical Features
 - ◇Administration and land Use
- Environmental Conditions and Quality
 - ◇Atmosphere, climate and weather
- Climate Change
 - ◇Drivers of Climate Change
 - ◇Impacts of Climate Change
 - ◇Response to Climate Change
- Natural Extreme Events and Disasters
 - ◇Extreme Events and Disasters
 - ◇Technological Disasters

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- Ecosystems and Biodiversity
 - ◊ Land cover
 - ◊ Forestry
- Water Resources
- Environmental Resources and their Use
- Waste
- Environment Protection and Resource Management

The situation of Environmental Statistics in Vietnam needs to be further revamped as many plans/strategies need data for monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Reporting to international organizations as well require data. The system for data collection and for providing information to the GSO is limited. There are also many limitations in methodology for data collections, indicator developments and the right statistical framework. According to the people working directly on environment statistics at the GSO, FDES would be a good guideline for further development and to set up dedicated programs on an Environment Statistical System in Vietnam. The FDES can further be applied to its entirety if a regular environmental statistical programme is set up at the GSO.

Dissemination of Environment Statistics in Qatar – a working result based on the United Nations Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics

(Contributed by Michael Nagy, Head of Environment Statistics & Sustainable Development Section, Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, State of Qatar)

In 2012 Qatar Statistics Authority (since June 2013 Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics) started to review its environment statistics according to international standards and to better match it with the national and international policy and information needs.

The overall goal of that work was to develop a single national source of environmental information (i.e. environment statistics) which can be used for multiple purposes. This includes the availability of high quality environment statistics for the monitoring of the Nation Development Strategy 2011-2016 and better responding to international organizations (e.g. UNSD), but also the dissemination of environment statistics in electronic form (QALAM – Qatar Information Exchange Portal <http://www.qalm.gov.qa/>) and as printed reports.

The UN Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (UN-FDES) played an important role in this process, even if it was available only as a draft document in the beginning of that work. Qatar was one of the pilot countries for the UN-FDES and feedback on some practical issues was provided to the United Nations and the international expert group.

Finally, on the basis of the UN-FDES as draft Qatari Framework for Environment Statistics (QFES) was developed, which specifies data providers and data collection methods, helps bridging different institutional frameworks with the international statistical standards and lays down the statistics to be collected on a regular basis. The QFES is continuously further developed in close cooperation with the key-stakeholders and fully consistent with the UN-FDES.

The first data collection process under this new Framework was finished in the first half of the year 2013 and one of the first dissemination products is the Qatari Environment Statistics Report 2013.

The Environment Statistics Report 2013 provides statistics about the following environmental domains:

1. Climate
2. Ambient air quality
3. Water resources and water uses
4. Urban wastewater

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5. Air emissions
6. Biodiversity and biological resources
7. Pesticides
8. Solid wastes and waste management

The report shows that Qatar has made significant progress in certain environmental domains such as the collection and treatment of urban wastewater or the protection of natural areas. However, the report also shows that for example air quality in Doha still is at levels which may affect human health and that groundwater abstraction is still at a non-sustainable level which provides a risk for water- and food security.

The report also discusses data quality and data gaps. For example more efforts are needed to provide better information about the quality of coastal waters and the generation, collection, treatment and recycling of solid wastes.

The report is currently being edited and translated from English into Arabic. It will be available in both languages by beginning of February 2014. The main results of the report were presented in a workshop in December 2013 and can be downloaded from here: <http://www.qsa.gov.qa/Eng/Activities/EnvStatistics2013.htm>

Future work includes the improvement of data quality and regular dissemination of environment statistics on QALAM and in form of statistical reports. First steps have also been made to develop environmental-economic accounts (i.e., water accounts).

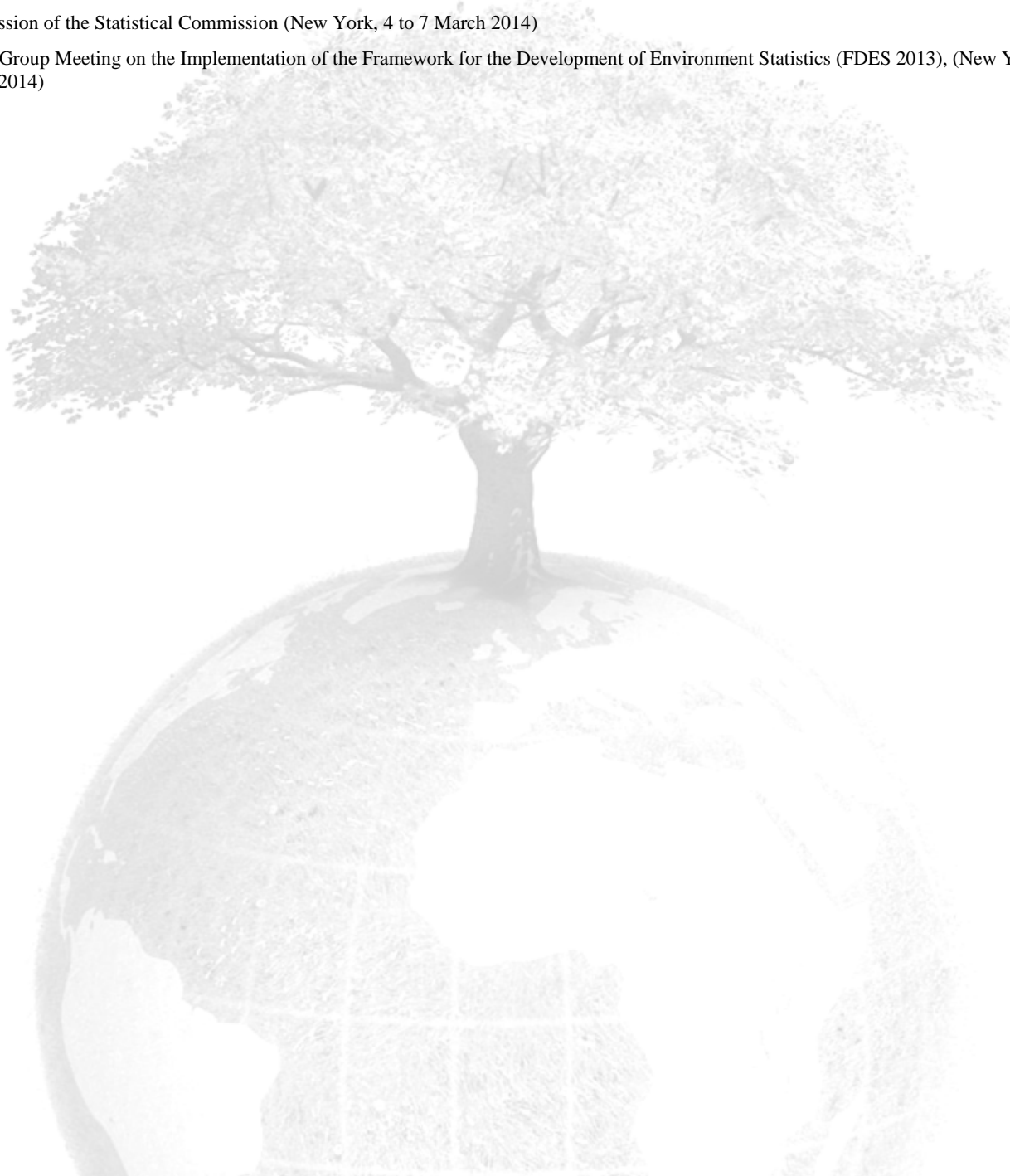
Training on the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013), Tagaytay, Philippines, 21-24 October 2013

The Philippines have been using the FDES as the framework for their environment statistics programme since 1999 when the Philippines Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics had been initiated. The Compendium of Environment Statistics, also based on the FDES, has been published every second year since 2000. In 2007 the Inter Agency Committee on Environment & Natural Resources Statistics (IACENRS) was established to: (i) address issues in environmental statistics; and (ii) recommend policies and standards for the improvement of data generation for environment and natural resources statistics and accounts including their dissemination and utilization. There are three Technical Working Groups (TWG) established under the IACENRS on (i) Water Resource Statistics (2009); (ii) Land & Soil Resource Statistics (2009); and (iii) Mineral Resource Statistics (2013). Examples of the outputs of the TWGs are standard definitions for environment statistics, classification systems, a core set of environment statistics, methodologies for the production of environment statistics and a programme for the institutionalization of recommended statistical activities.

After the adoption by the Statistical Commission of the revised FDES a training workshop, conducted by UNSD, was organized by the National Statistical Coordination Board that brought together 45 participants from more than 20 different governmental and other institutions that are part of the IACENRS and play a role in the production of environment statistics. The objective of the training workshop was to fully understand the new elements in the FDES 2013, to apply the FDES self-assessment tool to identify data gaps and prioritize actions to fill them in, and to test the applicability of the FDES 2013 as a framework for climate change related statistics. Participants discussed in detail the FDES Basic and Core Sets of Environment Statistics including their relevance to the country's environmental policy and the aspects of data sources, data availability, quality, periodicity and timeliness. The workshop concluded with the recommendation of adopting the FDES 2013 as the framework for the Philippines environment statistics and climate change statistics programme.

45th session of the Statistical Commission (New York, 4 to 7 March 2014)

Expert Group Meeting on the Implementation of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013), (New York, 26-28 March 2014)



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