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envstats News and Notes

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

FOCUS:

United Nations General Assembly's Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, New York, 19 July 2014

IN THIS ISSUE

The United Nations General Assembly's Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals completed its mandate at the end of its 13th and final session at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on Saturday, 19 July 2014. The OWG adopted its outcome, the *"Proposal of the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals"* by acclamation, and the proposal will be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly for consideration and appropriate action at its 68th session.

At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, governments agreed to launch a process to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They requested the establishment of an Open Working Group (OWG) of 30 elected UN Member States to elaborate a proposal for SDGs through an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process open to all stakeholders, and to submit it to the 68th session of the General Assembly (GA) for consideration and appropriate action. The Member States decided to use an innovative, constituency-based system of representation that was new to bodies with limited membership. This means that most of the seats in the OWG were shared by several countries.

The Group's work was organized into two main phases. During its first eight meetings, from March 2013 to February 2014, the work concentrated on information gathering and stock-taking as well as collecting views on the main themes identified in the Rio+20 outcome document. In the second phase, from March to September 2014 (sessions 9-13), the Group negotiated the SDGs and the contents of the report to the 68th session of the GA.

At its 13th and final session, the OWG performed three readings of the drafts during three days of "informal-informal" consultations, followed by five days of informal meetings of the 13th session. On 19 July the OWG completed its mandate at the final formal session by adopting (by acclamation) the "Proposal of the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals" and the session ended with a standing ovation for the Co-Chairs, Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya, and Csaba Kőrösi, Permanent Representative of Hungary.

The final report of the OWG containing the Chapeau and the proposed 17 goals and 169 targets (including 62 targets on means of implementation) will be submitted to the GA for consideration in September 2014, where the next steps will be determined. The proposed SDGs are only a part of the broader post-2015 development agenda that is to be adopted in late 2015. There is likely another year's worth of deliberations before the SDGs are formally adopted by the GA along with other components of the post-2015 development agenda that will succeed the MDGs.

The 17 proposed goals of the OWG's outcome document are as follows:

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere;
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture;
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all;

CONTACT US

ENVSTATS
DC2-1418
2 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

Fax: 1-(212)963-0623

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5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all;
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all;
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all;
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation;
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries;
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts[1] ;
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss;
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; and
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Proposed goals 1-6 build on the advance of the core agenda of the MDGs, while goals 7-17 break new ground. The well-recognized defects of MDG 7, which only partially integrated the environmental dimension, have been corrected in the proposed SDGs. The environmental dimensions of sustainable development are fully fleshed out in the goals on oceans and marine resources, ecosystems and biodiversity including land degradation and desertification, and are also mainstreamed under all other goals.

The need for improvements in the field of data and statistics to monitor progress on the SDGs and the associated need for statistical capacity building in developing countries have been highly recognized in the Report.

Paragraph 17 of the Introduction (Chapeau) says the following:

"In order to monitor the implementation of the SDGs, it will be important to improve the availability of and access to data and statistics disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts to support the monitoring of the implementation of the SDGs. There is a need to take urgent steps to improve the quality, coverage and availability of disaggregated data to ensure that no one is left behind."

Under Goal 17, there are two targets in the section on "*Data, monitoring and accountability"* that directly refer to statistics:

17.18. *"by 2020, enhance capacity building support to developing countries, including for LDCs and SIDS, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts* ".

17.19. *"by 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement GDP, and support statistical capacity building in developing countries"*

Goal 15 includes a target with direct reference to ecosystem accounting:

15.9. "*by 2020, integrate ecosystems and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes and poverty reduction strategies, and accounts*".

(For more see: http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focusdgs.html)

[1] Acknowledging that the UNFCCC is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.

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FOCUS:

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Preliminary assessment of data availability for monitoring the SDGs based on the OWG's Zero Draft of 2 June 2014

The United Nations Statistical Commission Friends of the Chair (FOC) on broader measures of progress conducted a matching of selected existing or proposed indicators sets with the targets contained in the Zero Draft of the Open Working Group on SDGs and an assessment to what extent data for these indicators are broadly available in countries.

The FOC evaluated three indicator sets: the indicators of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) (60 indicators), the Sustainable Development Indicators of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES SDI) (90 indicators) and the proposed Indicators for Sustainable Development Goals of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) (100 indicators). All three indicators sets have been or are being discussed by the international statistical community.

The assessment provided an initial, rough illustration of the current indicator and data availability, showing in which areas information is more readily available and where information is potentially sparse. It was carried out rapidly, thus taking into account only a limited number of countries, most of them developed. It will be improved when the OWG finalizes its proposed goals and targets on sustainable development for consideration by the United Nations General Assembly in the broader post-2015 development agenda.

Out of the 166 targets identified in the OWG Zero Draft (excluding targets under Means of Implementation), 105 have indicators from at least one of the three indicator sets that could potentially be used for measurement. Of these 105 targets that have indicators, data are widely available and currently produced for 59 targets. More efforts are required to measure indicators widely for 17 targets, while only some countries have data for 29 of the targets.

The analysis does not represent an assessment of the measurability of individual targets. It however shows where more effort and investment in statistical capacity is required to measure the target.

A complete assessment of the indicators is available in an Excel sheet published on the FOC website, including a list of targets that have 'A' indicators, which are considered feasible to measure.

Measurement issues of all areas are discussed in the *Compendium of Statistical Notes* for the Open Working Group. These notes also contain more detailed information on existing indicators in the respective areas.

(For more see: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/broaderprogress/work.html).

UNSD NEWS:

Designing Indicators for the SDGs: Collecting Comprehensive and Timely Data, New York, 23-24 June 2014

The Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) in cooperation with the UNSD hosted an expert roundtable discussion on 23-24 June in New York. Professor Jeffrey Sachs delivered an opening statement. The meeting provided a platform for discussion among 40 experts from national statistical offices, international agencies, NGO/research institutions and the private sector on the topics of indicator gaps, annual reporting, the use of surveys and statistical architecture for SDG monitoring. The meeting stressed the importance of having a first needs assessment for statistical capacity building for SDG/post-2015 monitoring very soon. Also, they agreed that the issue of statistical capacity building for SDG monitoring should be included in the discussion on financing for development.

Data Collection 2013

The UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire 2013 on Environment Statistics was sent out on 17 April 2014 to 173 countries and territories, excluding OECD and European Union members (for which comparable data are collected as part of the OECD/Eurostat Joint

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Questionnaire on the State of the Environment). The questionnaire (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/questionnaire2013.html) was sent to both National Statistical Offices and Ministries of Environment (or equivalent institution) and asked for coordination within the country. The deadline for submitting the completed questionnaire was 31 May 2014. To date, more than 50 countries have replied to the questionnaire. UNSD is currently validating the data and is contacting countries for further information as necessary. A reminder was sent on 20 May 2014 to all countries that have not yet replied.

The complete results from the 2013 round of data collection will be disseminated on the UNSD website after validation of the responses has been completed. All countries are invited to take the necessary actions to ensure that available data arrives at UNSD as soon as possible.

First Meeting of the Expert Group on Environment Statistics – Outcomes and Work Plans for the Three FDES Tools

The First Meeting of the Expert Group on Environment Statistics (EGES), organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), was held in New York from 26 to 28 March 2014. It was attended by experts from 18 countries and organisations and was chaired by Ms. Iva Ritschelova, President of the Czech Statistical Office.

The meeting was divided into five sessions. Session 1: Methodological guidance manual for the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) Core Set of Environment Statistics (FDES Tool 1); Session 2: The Environment Statistics Self-Assessment Tool (FDES Tool 2); Session 3: Handbook for setting up/strengthening an environment statistics programme (FDES Tool 3); Session 4: Technical assistance, training and capacity building for the implementation of the FDES 2013 in countries; and Session 5: Work programme of the EGES for 2014-2015.

Regarding Tool 1, the Expert Group discussed and approved the template for the draft Methodology Sheets which are part of the planned Methodological Manual for the Core Set of Environment Statistics. Agreement was reached that the scope of the Manual should be extended to include not only the Core Set (approx. 107 statistics), but also the Basic Set (approx. 492 statistics) of Environment Statistics. Agreement was also reached on the need for additional detail on the statistics, metadata, definitions, etc. throughout. Based on the experts' presentations of their national experiences in applying the FDES, a plan of action was agreed upon where various members of the EGES could commit to contributing their expertise toward developing and/or drafting Methodology Sheets, or participating in teams to review/develop outputs alongside UNSD. The Expert Group agreed on a distribution of tasks for the development of Methodology Sheets whereby experts' knowledge in their fields of speciality could be best applied. Over the longer term, the plan among the experts and UNSD is to have Methodology Sheets for all statistics in the Basic Set of Environment Statistics completed by the end of the 2015 calendar year.

Regarding Tool 2, the Expert Group expressed appreciation for Parts I and II of the Environment Statistics Self-Assessment Tool (ESSAT), as well as the draft Part III on the Institutional Dimension of Environment Statistics. The Expert Group discussed and approved in general, the structure and content as presented by UNSD. In response to the discussion regarding the ESSAT, UNSD will examine the possibility of merging Parts I and II of the ESSAT. The Group agreed that Part III should be moved forward to become Part I. Other comments will be taken on board and experts volunteered to participate in the finalization of the tool.

Regarding Tool 3, the Handbook for setting up/strengthening an environment statistics programme, the need for brevity and practicality was agreed upon, though it was acknowledged that this is often a careful balancing act. The use of examples of countries with successful programmes and practices was supported.

The Experts agreed on a continued exchange of information on their activities and supported the idea of coordinating training and capacity building activities. The Experts requested that training materials be made available on the UNSD website. They also requested that UNSD make an effort to coordinate bilateral and multilateral donor activities in the field of environment statistics.

The EGES's discussions were based on documents and the corresponding presentations prepared by EGES members and UNSD. All papers and presentations submitted for the EGES are available and can be downloaded from the Expert Group's website at: http://unstats.un.org/environment/FDES/fdes_eges1.html.

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Sine the EGES, UNSD has finalized the template for the Methodology Sheets and experts who have volunteered to be responsible for drafting methodology sheets on selected topics are currently working to this end. Regarding the ESSAT, UNSD has combined Parts I and II and is currently reviewing this version. Comments received from the EGES have been taken into account for Part III and UNSD is analysing the entire ESSAT tool with a view to its finalization. For the Handbook for setting up/strengthening an environment statistics programme, UNSD is revising the outline based on the comments from the EGES.

The second meeting of the Expert Group on Environment Statistics will be held in New York from 25 to 27 March 2015.

UNSD Brown Bag Seminars on Various Topics Relevant to Environment

As part of the UNSD Spring Series of Brown Bag Seminars, colleagues and experts from within and beyond UNSD delivered seminars on a variety of topics relevant to environment.

Mr. Christian Heidorn, Senior Statistician at Eurostat, presented on “Environment and Sustainable Development – Statistics-Accounts-Indicators. What we do in Europe.” He gave an overview on the organization of Eurostat's Environment and Sustainable Development related statistical activities. Modern methods of dissemination of indicators were shown and methodological papers related to indicators, which are under development, were previewed.

Ms. Sandra Averous from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) delivered a presentation focusing on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP). Content covered was three-fold: 1) What is SCP and what are the fundamentals behind it; 2) UNEP activities on SCP; and 3) SCP Indicators: experience in the regions and possible indicators.

Mr. Gregory Scott, UNSD’s Inter-Regional Adviser on Global Geospatial Information Management, gave a presentation on “UN-GGIM: A Prelude to the 4th Session of the Committee of Experts”. The presentation updated on activities of the Committee of Experts in the past 12 months and provided insights into the 4th Session of the Committee to be convened in New York in August 2014. The presentation also informed of events related to urban hazard mapping, land and poverty, sustainable development, and integrating statistical and geospatial information.

Ms. Viktoria Bolla from Eurostat presented on, "Statistical Indicators in the Policy Making of the EU. Monitoring the Sustainable Development and the Europe 2020 Strategy". A summary of developments were presented, including different processes that led to indicator sets published by Eurostat (Sustainable Development Indicators, Europe 2020 indicators, Resource efficiency scoreboard), and a monitoring framework and systematic indicator-based assessment of progress communication methods.

Mr. Ricardo Martinez, UNSD’s Inter-Regional Adviser on Environmental-Economic Accounts, presented on “Linking Supply and Demand: The Case of Water”. He shared experiences using a systems approach in the production of policy relevant information for developing and protecting water resources. The virtuous circular links of demand and supply of information were illustrated through examples from different parts of the world.

A team of researchers from the Gund Institute for Ecological Economics (University of Vermont) visited UNSD and described some recent research towards development of a new series of sustainable welfare indicators. They also discussed integration across the indicators towards calculation of a new composite index known as the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI). The research team created a database of more than 100 development indicators for each of the 50 states of the USA and also worked to develop new and more coherent indicator methodologies. Key themes of the seminar included: time use, economic inequalities, national accounts, land use and ecosystem services, energy consumption, costs of pollution, and other externality social costs affecting welfare.

Dr. Christian Avérous, expert in green growth, sustainable development and environmental management among other fields, delivered a presentation entitled, "Measurement lessons from OECD work: green growth and environmental performance reviews". His presentation discussed the concepts of inclusive green growth, how best to measure it, and political drivers influencing it.

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UNSD's Environment and Energy Statistics Branch Work on Development Account Projects

Work has started on a project, **"Supporting developing countries measure progress towards achieving a Green Economy",** as part of the 8th tranche of the United Nations Development Account, which will be carried out in the Asian and Latin American regions during 2014 and 2015. The project is organized by UNSD in collaboration with both Regional Commissions and selected pilot countries, and in coordination with UNEP, UNIDO and other relevant global and regional organizations. The project aims to assist countries in producing data for a regionally adapted set of indicators, emphasizing the basic industrial, energy, environment and agricultural statistics needed to compile and sustain green economy indicators that are suitable and statistically feasible for the two regions and particularly for the pilot countries. Four pilot countries have been chosen in each of the two regions, namely Bhutan, Malaysia, Mongolia and Vietnam in Asia and Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Uruguay in Latin America. Mexico and South Korea will be contributing as resource countries in their respective regions. The project's main activities include: regional and national assessments of initiatives and assessments related to Green Growth/Green Economy and Sustainable Production and Consumption; the identification of a regionally/nationally relevant set of green economy indicators; the provision of technical assistance to pilot countries; tailor-made capacity-building workshops; and regional seminars to share experiences. The project is currently undertaking a global review of green economy indicators and will be followed by the regional assessments for Asia and Latin America, whose results will be discussed at two regional seminars in November and December 2014.

Preparatory activities have also been undertaken for the 9th tranche of the United Nations Development Account project, **"Supporting Member States in developing and strengthening environment statistics and integrated environmental-economic accounting for improved monitoring of sustainable development"**. The project aims to address the technical and institutional barriers to the establishment of routinely produced environment statistics and environmental-economic accounts at the national level. The project, which will be developed in the second half of 2014 and will be operational till the end of 2017, is divided into two modules. Module A aims at strengthening national capacities to produce **environment statistics** with five participating countries from the East African Community sub-region and will be based on the **FDES 2013** and its tools. Module B aims at implementation of the **SEEA 2012 accounts** in four selected countries in the African and Asian regions. This project is led by the Environment and Energy Statistics Branch and the Economic Statistics Branch of UNSD, in collaboration with the Regional Commissions, the participating countries and the relevant regional and sub-regional agencies operating in the different regions.

Staff Exchange – UNSD and Eurostat, New York, March 2014

Within the frame of a staff exchange programme between Eurostat and UNSD, Mr. Christian Heidorn, Senior Statistician in Environment Statistics from Eurostat, worked with the UNSD Environment Statistics Section for three weeks in March 2014.

During his stay in New York, Mr. Heidorn, who has contributed to the three year work on the revision of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) and participated in all related Expert Group meetings, worked on the planned Methodological Manual for the Core Set of Environment Statistics and on the documents for the first meeting of the Expert Group on Environment Statistics. He delivered a seminar to UNSD staff entitled "Environment and Sustainable Development – Statistics, Accounts and Indicators: What we do in Europe". During his visit, Mr. Heidorn also had the opportunity to participate in the 45th session of the Statistical Commission.

The exchange was seen as a mutually beneficial activity to both organizations, where a better and deeper understanding of UNSD's and Eurostat's related work was achieved. The exchange will lead to further strengthening UNSD and Eurostat's collaboration and coordination in the field of environment statistics.

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UNSD's Involvement in the Preparation for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, Apia, Samoa, 1-4 September 2014

UNSD has been involved in various elements in the preparation for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States to be held in Apia, Samoa, from 1 to 4 September 2014. One of the most significant elements has been its contribution to the Trends in Sustainable Development: Small Island Developing States (SIDS) that is being developed by the SIDS Unit of the Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). The report, which will be released for the Samoa conference, will highlight the situation in the SIDS with regard to, inter alia, demographic trends, social development, health and non-communicable diseases, climate change, oceans and seas, natural disaster management, energy, tourism, waste management, and finance and trade. UNSD has assisted in the development of the outline and contents of the publication, and has contributed its expertise in statistics and indicators to the various thematic areas.

For the Samoa conference, UNSD is also producing a special SIDS edition of the United Nations annual World Statistics Pocketbook that includes country profiles for 39 countries or areas. The Pocketbook (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/pocketbook/) is an annual compilation of key economic, social and environmental indicators prepared by UNSD and contains over 50 indicators that have been collected from more than 20 international statistical sources and are presented in one-page profiles for countries or areas of the world.

The draft Outcome Document of the Samoa conference (http://www.sids2014.org/index.php?menu=1537) contains a section on Data and Statistics, where the work of the international statistical community is clearly mentioned. In this regard, the importance of strengthening national statistical systems to face the challenge of increased demands for data is evident.

Workshop on the Implementation of Water Accounts and Statistics in Southern Mediterranean Countries, Vienna, Austria, 1-3 April 2014

UNSD in partnership with the European Environment Agency (EEA), the Austrian Institute of Environment (UBA), UNESCWA, and the Subregional Office for Northern Africa of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, organized a workshop on water accounts and statistics for the following countries: Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia. The participants were from the National Statistics Offices and from the Ministries of Water and/or Environment. Participants discussed the technical aspects involved in the data collection and compilation in order to produce policy relevant information about water. Interagency collaboration was emphasized. The workshop was also useful for testing the Guidelines for the Compilation of Water Accounts and Statistics being developed by the UNSD, especially the example that illustrates the use of the different tables and accounts.

Ninth Meeting of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEA), New York, 25-27 June 2014

The UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEA) held its ninth meeting to discuss the adoption of the SEEA, and its implementation and mainstreaming in countries as part of the work programme of international agencies. The Committee discussed the role of the SEEA in monitoring the post-2015 development agenda and in particular, its role in the development of the SDG indicators. UNCEEA members agreed to advocate a systems approach to the derivation of indicators and to prepare a paper identifying indicators that can be derived from the SEEA linked to the relevant targets proposed by the Open Working Group, as well as an evaluation of available data. It discussed the importance of ensuring alignment of the different initiatives on business sustainability reporting and the SEEA, and agreed to jointly organize a meeting on this topic in November this year. There was also discussion about populating the core tables and accounts with data, and in this regard UNSD, Eurostat and OECD were requested to provide information about the quantity and quality of the data submitted through the respective data collection exercises on the various topics in environmental statistics and accounts. The UNCEEA also discussed its medium term programme on the SEEA Central Framework and the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting.

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS:

UNEP NEWS

UNEP Live – A Global Environmental Knowledge Platform

(Contributed by Ron Witt, Division of Early Warning and Assessment, UNEP)

UNEP provides capacity building amongst its member countries and assessments for actionable policies at national, regional and global levels. Its work covers a wide range of themes including mitigation and adaptation policies for climate change, managing ecosystem services, improving urban infrastructure and the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals. Given the growing demand for detailed, contextualised knowledge about the environment, UNEP is now developing richer sets of data and knowledge flows, and communities of networks. UNEP Live aims to support this need.

UNEP Live is a web-based platform to:

- Facilitate the exchange and sharing of up-to-date data, information, assessments and knowledge amongst member countries, research networks, communities of practice, indigenous peoples and society, in order to keep the environment and emerging issues under review
- Provide access to national and regional information (MyCountry, MyRegion) and global data sets
- Provide a range of big-data, visualisation, mapping and publishing tools via local and cloud services.

UNEP Live will provide a system-wide data-knowledge service, a consistent approach to community networking and knowledge synthesis, an Information Communications Technology governance strategy and a comprehensive data policy for external and internal use. It will achieve this by:

i) Encouraging and supporting greater community networking;

ii) Embracing new developments in information and communication technologies;

iii) Implementing a governance strategy regarding privacy, user accountability, propensity and auditing, and a data policy that reflects the general principles of streamlining, sharing and access; and

iv) Involving staff and experts from across UNEP, the multi-lateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other UN organisations and national institutions, plus regional and global environmental change programmes and assessments.

UNEP Live goals

Key goals are to:

- Underpin UNEP's **role** as the United Nations Environment Assembly's information and knowledge service provider especially in the delivery of information and evidence to support the SDGs and post 2015 agenda;
- Improve information and knowledge service **delivery** through improved translation and search functions;
- Improve **access** to its information and knowledge services using distributed computing;
- Increase the **efficiency** of its service delivery through improved search and algorithmics;
- Widen the **use** of its services through clear strategies for governance and data use; and
- **Enlarge** the knowledge base for global environmental policy through community networking.

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Benefits

- UNEP Live will provide countries with the knowledge to support their policy needs, especially those arising from the post-2015 agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- UNEP Live will provide a transparent, simple to use, authentic platform to publish information about the environment; the national equivalent will be owned and operated by countries and adapted to their own needs.
- UNEP Live will support cloud computing so that all member countries can have a continuous, digital presence for reporting on historical trends, current situation reports and emerging issues. It will also provide secure and continuous access to national reporting, improve streamlining, reduce operating costs and lower greenhouse gas emissions.
- By adopting at its core open standards alongside proprietary systems, UNEP Live will strengthen and broaden participation, communication and information exchange.
- Encouraging the use of big-data assessments, and implementing the findings accurately will offer tangible benefits to data-users and governments especially in terms of identification of emerging issues and early warnings.

UNEP-Regional office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC)

(Contributed by Charles Davies, UNEP)

The Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean held its XIX meeting in Los Cabos, Mexico, from 11 to 14 March, 2014. One of the focus topics of the meeting was the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative on Sustainable Development (ILAC), a regional framework adopted in 2002 with the aim of establishing a practical approach to sustainability based on regional priorities. To support ILAC implementation, the Forum has established a Working Group on Environmental Indicators, with focal points both from Environment Ministries and Statistics Offices. A set of 47 core indicators has been developed and agreed upon by the Group over the past years (most now with standard regional methodologies), and several countries report these indicators regularly in their national information systems.

A new work plan for the Group has been approved by the Forum of Ministers, including the development of indicators to track sustainable consumption and production policies, synergies with other related initiatives in the region, as well as capacity development in the field of geo-information. The Forum has also requested the Group on Indicators to support a revision of the ILAC Initiative (to take place in the inter-sessional period) and to advise Government discussions on the post-2015 agenda, specifically on the Sustainable Development Goals.

For more information, please see: http://www.pnuma.org/forodeministros/19-mexico/documentos.htm; http://www.pnuma.org/deat1/datoseindicadores.html

FAO NEWS

FAO Project on SEEA-Agriculture

(Contributed by Josef Schmidhuber, Statistics Division, FAO)

Introduction

A key aspect of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics project is to improve the measurement of the links between agricultural activity (including forestry and fishing) and the environment. In this context the broad Global Strategy project is supporting the development of a System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Agriculture (SEEA-AGRI).

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The fact that the SEEA-AGRI work is resourced within the *Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics* recognizes the important connection between statistics (both environment and economic) and accounting frameworks. Furthermore, both the work to improve agricultural statistics (including environmental and social dimensions) and the work to develop SEEA-AGRI are directly associated with the FAO's strategic objective 2 aiming to "*Increase and improve the provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner".*

Work on SEEA-AGRI was first proposed in 2010 and endorsed by the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEA). The SEEA-AGRI work sits within the broader SEEA work and can be considered an application of the principles and accounting standards described in the SEEA Central Framework. Direct work on the design of the components of the SEEA-AGRI commenced in June 2013 and has continued steadily since that time.

The scope of SEEA-AGRI covers agricultural, forestry and fishing activities and the design of the relevant accounts reflects an application of the tables and accounts of the SEEA Central Framework to the organization of data on these activities. A central aspect of the work has been to consider the use of many separate statistical datasets (e.g. agricultural production, fertilizer production and use, land use, water statistics, energy and emissions statistics, and others) within an accounting framework.

Main developments to date

- Papers describing the SEEA-AGRI design approach have been presented to the 26th FAO/IICA working group on agricultural and livestock statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean in (June 2013), the 19th meeting of the London Group (November 2013), the Sixth International Conference on Agricultural Statistics (October 2013), the 23rd African Commission on Agricultural Statistics (December 2013), and the 25th Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics (February 2014). The SEEA-AGRI concept has been well received and there is strong interest in the development of the associated data and indicators.

- Prototype accounts (asset accounts and supply and use tables) have been designed in 7 of 9 main data domains. The design of the accounts reflects a combination of the structure of accounts from the SEEA Central Framework and the available information on agriculture, forestry and fishing activities in the FAO datasets. The table designs are thus an application of the concepts in the SEEA Central Framework.

- Work has commenced to develop a database based on the structure of the prototype accounts using data available in the FAO and covering all countries. This work is advancing well and a review of data coverage and quality is underway.

- Initial country level testing of the accounts is underway with two countries, Canada and Australia, leading the way following their offers of assistance at the London Group meetings. In addition, proof of concept testing is being initiated in Indonesia and Guatemala in the coming months.

- Discussion on the derivation of agri-environmental indicators from SEEA-AGRI has commenced with a joint FAO, OECD, Eurostat meeting held in March, 2014.

Next steps

- Work will continue on refining the prototype accounts, taking into consideration the feedback from countries and discussion on potential indicators. An updated set of tables will be completed by mid-2014.

- Associated with the development of tables, drafting will commence on a SEEA-AGRI document with the intention that this document focus on a description of the tables and associated compilation issues.

- Proposals for possible agri-environmental indicators that can be derived from SEEA-AGRI will be made with the aim of developing a set of indicators to inform on the topic of "sustainable agricultural production".

- Population of the SEEA-AGRI database within the FAO will continue and these data will be used to test the derivation of selected indicators. A report on data coverage and quality will also be prepared.

- A small Expert Group Meeting will be held in early October to discuss the findings and materials developed, including a draft SEEA-AGRI document.

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- As a contribution to the Global Strategy for the Improvement of Agricultural Statistics, a discussion paper will be completed on the use of the SEEA-AGRI framework as a conceptual basis for determining the core data set for agricultural statistics, particularly from an environmental perspective.

The FAOSTAT Emissions Database for the Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use Sector

(Contributed by F. Tubiello, P. Prasuła, M. Salvatore, H. Jacobs and R. Biancalani, Climate, Energy and Tenure Division , FAO)

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations released a major update of its FAOSTAT Emissions database. First launched in 2012, the database provides its member countries with state-of-the art information on key sources of emissions from agriculture, forestry and other land use (AFOLU) activities, allowing national analysts and decision makers to identify effective climate change mitigation actions. The 2014 FAO emissions data served as a basis for the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report. They will be updated annually in an automatic fashion, using the official activity data reported to FAO by its member countries.

The 2014 release covers greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions statistics for all countries, with continuous time-series (agriculture, 1961-2011; forestry and other land use, 1990-2010), and projections of agriculture emissions to 2030 and 2050. The FAOSTAT Emissions database is available at http://faostat3.fao.org/faostat-gateway/go/to/download/G1/*/E (agriculture) and http://faostat3.fao.org/faostat-gateway/go/to/download/G2/*/E (land use). A companion analysis report can be downloaded at: http://www.fao.org/docrep/019/i3671e/i3671e.pdf

The FAO data show that emissions from agriculture have nearly doubled over the past 50 years, with projections of an additional increase of 30 percent by 2050 under a business-as-usual scenario, i.e., without further mitigation actions. Yet while agriculture emissions continue to increase, they are not growing as fast as emissions from fossil fuel in other sectors, so that the share of AFOLU to total anthropogenic GHG emissions is decreasing over time.

Over the last decade, from 2001 to 2011, agriculture emissions from crop and livestock production grew from 4.7 billion tonnes to over 5.3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents (CO_2 eq.), a 14 percent increase. This increase occurred mainly in developing countries, due to a significant expansion of their agricultural activities. In contrast, net emissions due to land use change and deforestation—averaging some 3 billion tonnes CO_2 eq. annually— decreased by 10 percent over the same period, due to reduced deforestation rates and increased carbon sequestration in many countries.

FAOSTAT emissions database was developed by the "Monitoring and Assessment of GHG Emissions in Agriculture" Project of FAO, financed by the governments of Germany and Norway. The project conducts capacity development activities for FAO member countries, with a focus on improving rural statistics in support of better climate change analysis and planning, including support for national GHG inventories, Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions, and other reporting requirements under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

OECD Environmental Directorate

(Contributed by Myriam Linster, OECD)

OECD - Environmental indicators

Over the past 30 years, the OECD has developed several sets of indicators to measure environmental performance and monitor policy integration. Among these is the OECD Core Set of Environmental Indicators that was developed in 1991 and revised in 2013. The indicators are regularly used in environmental country reviews and in policy analysis. To communicate information about major environmental trends, a selection of indicators targeted at a broader audience was published in December 2013 (OECD 2013, Environment at a Glance), and a set of web-based environmental country profiles presenting key environmental indicators is being developed.

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OECD - Environmental data collection

The purpose of OECD work on environmental data is to provide objective and reliable data on the environment to support international policy work, and to harmonise these data across OECD regions (Europe, Americas, and Pacific) and beyond. The data are collected directly from member and partner countries via the OECD questionnaire on the state of the environment and from other international organisations. The work is closely coordinated with UNSD and UNEP, and is done jointly with Eurostat for European Member States. In 2014, the data collection via questionnaire focuses on inland waters, solid waste, and environmental protection expenditure and revenues. The questionnaires will be sent to countries in early October 2014 for reply by 19 December 2014. An annual quality assurance of environmental reference data is carried out in parallel to give countries the opportunity to check and document the data series that underlie the OECD's key environmental indicators and country profiles. This annual quality assurance includes simplified data on air emissions, water abstractions, population connected to sewage treatment plants, municipal waste, threatened species and forest resources.

OECD - Monitoring progress towards green growth

Green growth is about restoring and fostering economic growth and development while ensuring that natural assets continue to provide the resources and environmental services on which our well-being relies. To assist governments in pursuing policies designed to promote green growth, the OECD has developed a green growth strategy, including a measurement framework and a set of indicators to monitor progress.

The OECD measurement framework combines the main features of green growth with the basic principles of accounting and the pressure-state-response (PSR) model used in environmental reporting and assessments. It organises the indicators along four areas:

- **Environmental and resource productivity**, to capture the need for efficient use of natural capital and to capture aspects of production, which are rarely quantified in economic models and accounting frameworks.
- **Economic and environmental assets**, because sustained growth requires the asset base to be maintained and because a declining asset base presents risks to future growth. Particular attention is given to natural assets.
- **Environmental quality of life**, to capture how environmental conditions and environmental risks interact with people's lives.
- **Economic opportunities and policy responses**, to help discern the effectiveness of policy in delivering green growth and to realise the economic opportunities associated with green growth.

Indicators describing the socio-economic context and the characteristics of growth complete the picture. A few headline indicators have been selected to facilitate communication with policy makers, the media and citizens. The list of indicators has been kept flexible enough so that countries can adapt it to their different national contexts.

A first set of green growth indicators was proposed in *Towards Green Growth: Monitoring Progress* in 2011. A ***new report*** updating and extending the indicators has just been published (OECD 2014, *OECD Green Growth Studies, Green Growth Indicators*, Paris, OECD publishing).

Since 2011, ***practical applications*** of green growth indicators have progressed. Governments use the OECD framework to develop indicators appropriate for their national circumstances and to assess the state of their economy in terms of green growth. Green growth indicators are also being integrated into OECD work, including country reviews and policy analysis. A database bringing together the indicators has been established to this end. To achieve synergies at an international level, the OECD works with the Global Green Growth Institute, UNEP and the World Bank within the framework of the ***Green Growth Knowledge Platform*** to promote common approaches and advance knowledge about the measurement of green growth.

To advance the measurement of green growth and support the ***implementation of the SEEA***, a small set of SEEA core tables is being developed to help compile internationally comparable data to calculate the OECD's green growth indicators. Priority is given first to air emissions and to natural assets (in monetary and in physical terms). This is done jointly by the OECD Environment and Statistics Directorates and via a Task Force on the Implementation of the SEEA Central Framework.

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OECD - Material resources, productivity and the environment

Establishing a resource efficient economy involves putting in place policies that ensure a sustainable resource and materials management building on the principle of the 3Rs — reduce, reuse and recycle. To be successful such policies need to be founded on a good *understanding* of the material basis of the economy, of international and national flows of materials, and of the factors that drive changes in resource use and productivity over time, across countries and in the different sectors of the economy. Some natural resources such as water, energy, and forests are monitored internationally, but information is insufficient to give an integrated view of how minerals, metals, or timber flow through the economy throughout their life cycle. In addition, little is known about how this affects the productivity of the economy and the quality of the environment. The OECD report *Material Resources, Productivity and the Environment* is a first step to fill some of these gaps. The report brings together the best available international information on material resources. It uses concepts and tools from material flow analysis to provide a basis for understanding some of the key challenges and opportunities associated with material resources and resource productivity. (OECD 2014, *Material Resources, Productivity and the Environment,* Paris, OECD Publishing, forthcoming).

REGIONAL NEWS:

UNECE News

(Contributed by Tiina Luige, Vania Etropolska and Anu Peltola)

Conference of European Statisticians' Recommendations on Measuring Sustainable Development Feed into the Process of Setting up Sustainable Development Goals, Targets and Indicators

In June 2013 the Conference of European Statisticians (CES), held under the auspices of UNECE in Geneva, endorsed the **CES recommendations on measuring sustainable development**. The Recommendations were developed by a joint Task Force of UNECE, the Statistical Office of the European Commission (Eurostat) and OECD. They take into account various initiatives undertaken by the United Nations, Eurostat and OECD, as well as by individual countries, and provide analyses of current measurement frameworks. The Recommendations were published in the beginning of 2014 and are available at: http://www.unece.org/publications/ces_sust_development.html

The Recommendations are a key step towards harmonising the measurement of sustainable development and contribute to establishing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the related targets and indicators. The indicators from the Recommendations will be linked/adjusted to the SDG targets and indicators when these will be established.

The Conference decided to launch further work to provide countries with practical guidance on implementing the Recommendations. Eight countries: Australia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Turkey and Ukraine **pilot tested the recommended indicators**. The results are currently being analysed.

The Recommendations identify a number of **measurement issues that will need to be addressed** in the future. The follow-up methodological work will start with stocktaking of measuring transboundary impacts of sustainable development, measuring sustainable development at different scales (such as, regional, local, city, company level) and linking subjective and objective indicators.

Improving Production and Sharing of Environmental Data and Indicators

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 in 2009 to **improve environmental data collection and reporting in the**

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countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe, and to promote comparability of environmental statistics and indicators in the 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), International Energy Agency (IEA), Eurostat, etc.

The Task Force has reviewed the indicators covered by the *Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia* (Guidelines) endorsed at the Belgrade "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference. From now on, the work will focus on the production and sharing of the indicators from the Guidelines. In May 2014, the Task Force reviewed countries' progress in producing and sharing a **core set of environmental indicators** (8 indicators, 11 datasets) to monitor air and water quality, protected areas and waste generation. The work aims to build up a regular environmental reporting process in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia linked with the EU Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS). The next meeting will take place on 3-5 November 2014.

More information about the work of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators is available at: http://www.unece.org/stats/environment.html.

Conference of European Statisticians Endorses Recommendations on Climate Change Related Statistics

The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) plenary session endorsed the ***CES recommendations on climate change related statistics*** in April 2014. The recommendations were prepared by a dedicated CES Task Force in order to support development of climate change related statistics and to enhance the role of official statistics in greenhouse gas emission inventories. The recommendations are now being edited and finalized for publication.

The recommendations provide guidance for national statistical offices on how to better use the wide range of existing environmental, social and economic statistics for climate analyses and emission inventories. National statistical offices should start improving climate change related statistics gradually based on their key competencies and work more closely with greenhouse gas inventory producers to ensure that official statistics meet the needs of greenhouse gas inventories.

While the recommendations represent useful next steps, **further international work** will be required **to support their implementation**. This work will be carried out in close cooperation with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and other international organizations active in the area. In April 2014, the CES plenary session supported establishing a regular expert meeting for producers and users of climate change related statistics to share ideas and experiences, discuss concepts and measurement issues, and identify areas where practical methodological guidance would be needed. Further work should also consider a set of key climate change related statistics and explore the use of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) Central Framework for climate change related statistics.

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

EUROSTAT NEWS

Eurostat Director's Meeting on Environment Statistics and Accounts (DIMESA), Luxembourg, 10-11 April 2014

The annual meeting of the directors of environment statistics and environmental-economic accounts is a forum to take stock of the previous year's activities and discuss the future work programme of Eurostat in the relevant fields of statistics. The meeting had on its agenda the EU regulation on environmental-economic accounts, which will be extended after the first three modules (air emission accounts, environmental taxes and economy-wide material flow accounts) to another three modules (environment protection expenditure accounts, environmental goods and services sector accounts and physical energy flow accounts); the launch of the resource efficiency scoreboard; the project on streamlining environmental indicators; and all sectoral statistics under the auspices

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of the DIMESA (forestry and biodiversity, water, waste and chemicals, energy, transport, agriculture, land use and land cover, regional, urban and rural statistics and geographic information systems). The meeting was informed about Eurostat's activities on sustainable development and Europe 2020 indicators as well as about the latest developments and the implementation of current EU policies, new priorities and statistical needs. UNSD was represented by the Chief of the Environment and Energy Statistics Branch. She informed the meeting about global developments in the field of environment statistics and environmental-economic accounts and about the work steered by the Friends of the Chair of the UN Statistical Commission in support of the post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Review of European Water Statistics

(Contributed by Jürgen Förster)

Over the winter 2013/14, a Review of Water Statistics was conducted by Eurostat, covering a description of the status quo, identifying problems and setting out recommendations for the way forward. The review concluded that water statistics should be simplified while keeping all elements needed for indicator production and future water accounts. In order to guarantee completeness and raise quality, the remaining core statistics should then be converted from voluntary to compulsory data collection by way of legal cover.

The discussion of the review by the European Directors Meeting on Environmental Statistics and Accounts (DIMESA) who met in April 2014 in Luxembourg resulted in acceptance of Eurostat's proposals for simplification and in a recommendation to first streamline water reporting to the European Union level before a legal base should be developed. As a first step towards streamlining, Eurostat has developed a coarse mapping of 13 different exercises of reporting to Eurostat, the European Environment Agency and the Commission's Directorate-General for the Environment. The mapping identified candidates for closer inspection and detailed discussion with the data flow owners as a next step.

The expected results are a phasing-out of overlapping/double work, reduced reporting obligations and eventually better quality of water statistics, pre-requisite for the establishment of European water accounting, which is planned in the medium term.

UN-ESCAP

ESCAP Commission Establishes an Expert Group for Developing a Basic Range of Disaster-Related Statistics for Asia and the Pacific

(Contributed by Rikke Hansen)

The first phase of the seventieth session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (the Commission) was held in Bangkok on 23 May 2014. Member States put forward disaster risk reduction as a priority for development beyond 2015 and stressed the need for better data related to disasters to improve the understanding of risks and strengthen evidence-based policymaking at all levels for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

The Commission endorsed a resolution establishing an Expert Group to work towards developing a basic range of disaster-related statistics for Asia and the Pacific. Reflecting the priority attached to disaster risk reduction by governments across the region, the resolution was sponsored by the Philippines with co-sponsorship from Australia, Bhutan, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives and Pakistan.

The Expert Group, comprising experts from statistics and disaster management fields, will build on the statistics on extreme events and natural disasters in the revised Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) as well as the outcomes and recommendations of a number of Expert Group Meetings and country studies organized by the ESCAP secretariat since 2013.

It is expected that the Expert Group will hold its first meeting during the second half of 2014. For more information, please contact ESCAP Statistics Division <stat.unescap@un.org> or Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division <escap-idd@un.org>.

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Strengthening Environment Statistics in the Pacific Sub-region

Environment statistics, including statistics related to climate change and natural disasters, has been identified as a critical area for statistical capacity development in the next phase of the Ten Year Pacific Statistics Strategy. At the Pacific Statistics Steering Committee (PSSC) meeting held in May 2014, the Government Statistician of the Federated States of Micronesia, Mr. Mathew Chigiyal, underlined this priority by stating that the compilation of environment statistics "is not an option" – in other words, it is essential.

In the background paper discussed by the PSSC, ESCAP is identified as the lead agency for the coordination of efforts to develop capacity in environmental-economic accounting in the Pacific. To this end, ESCAP has developed a proposal for building the capacity of countries in the Pacific to implement the SEEA through national assessments and regional capacity building activities. ESCAP also recently released a brief on SEEA implementation in the Pacific. The brief is available from: http://www.unescap.org/EPOC/activities.asp.

For more information on activities to strengthen environment statistics in the Pacific sub-region, please contact ESCAP's Sub-regional Office for the Pacific <registry.epo@un.org>.

CARICOM Environment Statistics

(Contributed by Philomen Harrison, CARICOM Secretariat)

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat convened the **CARICOM Regional Workshop on Environment Statistics** in collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) on 7 and 8 April 2014 in Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The Workshop was funded by the European Union (EU) under the Tenth European Development Fund (10th EDF), CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and Economic Integration Programme, and the UNSD, which supported the attendance of the Associate Members and a representative from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Agriculture, Belize.

The workshop reviewed the Environmental Statistics and Indicators submitted to the CARICOM Secretariat and published in the 2009 CARICOM Environment in Figures publication, which was disseminated in *November 2013*. The workshop focused on the thematic areas with significant data gaps, which were *Land Use, Air, Waste, Water and Biodiversity*, seeking to fill the data gaps in these areas. Prior to the workshop, member countries were encouraged to meet with the relevant stakeholders in national agencies that can provide the missing data and corresponding metadata on environmental statistics. They were then required to present a report to the workshop on inter-agency activities held and also to make recommendations for improvements in the collection of data and metadata in these specific areas. The following were some of the conclusions of the workshop:

- Countries should submit data and publications to the CARICOM Secretariat as well as disseminate the statistics in national publications;
- The approach of using Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in national level data collection and the use of mechanisms such as stakeholders' meetings, one-on-one discussions or the use of committees that are already in existence to enable inter-agency collaboration were recommended;
- The Agriculture Census should be used as a source of Land Use data especially for Agriculture Land use;
- The use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Satellite Imagery and contacts with well-reputed statistical institutes in these areas relative to enabling data availability on Land Use were recommended;
- The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) provides training and assistance including under the theme Climate Change/Air Quality Emissions, which can be explored by countries;
- A short form of the questionnaires for Waste and Water could be explored as a means of reducing the data gaps in the next round of data collection and increasing the response rate;
- The *main challenges* facing Statistical Offices and hampering the collection of Environment Statistics include *limited capacity/experience in the area*, *lack of human resources, lack of financial resources, availability of periodical data only for some indicators and lack of cooperation* from some stakeholders; and

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- A Technical Working Group (TWG) for Environment Statistics was formed to advance the work in this area.

The Regional Statistics programme of the CARICOM Secretariat will continue to strengthen capacity in Member countries in 2014 and 2015 through capacity building activities including the south-south cooperation mechanism and continued collaboration with regional and international organisations to improve data collection in environment statistics.

1st Technical Committee Workshop of the Project "Official Environmental Statistics Development and Strengthening through a Regional Framework in Latin America and the Caribbean"

(Contributed by Martin Wilson, INEGI-Mexico)

According to the Project framework, the 1st Technical Committee Workshop of the Project **"Official Environmental Statistics Development and Strengthening through a Regional Framework in Latin America and the Caribbean"** took place in Mexico City on 10 and 11 April 2014 as a result of the agreement of the technical cooperation signed between the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico (INEGI).

The meeting aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- Introduce the Project: main characteristics, components, governance bodies, and operational regulations.
- Share new methodological developments in the field of environmental statistics.
- Share previous experiences from national and regional diagnoses about the official statistics status at large and the environmental statistics in particular, which could be useful as a reference to the project activities.
- Share environmental statistics assessment tools from global, regional and national initiatives.
- Discuss and agree on the aspects and key elements to be addressed during the assessment phase of the project.

During the discussion of the workshop objectives, some considerations were expressed and agreement was reached about designing and applying a strategy towards informing and involving authorities with responsibility on environmental issues within the participant countries and institutions as a basis of the project development. Other workshop outcomes involve additional efforts to reinforce the Project's connection with similar developments by diverse multilateral institutions as well as generate better synergies among the participants of the institutions through sharing the tools and good practice.

As planned, the representatives of the National Statistical Agencies and the Environmental Ministries of the nine countries participating in the Project attended the meeting: Bahamas, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Suriname and Venezuela. Likewise, also in attendance were representatives from the international agencies supporting and advising the Project: IDB, ECLAC, CARICOM, UNEP, and UNSD.

Finally, the workshop was a great success since the technical objectives, the knowledge sharing, and the agreements were fully attained with regard to the operational dynamic of the governance mechanism represented by the Technical Committee. Therefore, it is expected that their members will contribute significantly to the achievement of the Project objectives.

EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY NEWS

Sharing Environmental Information in the European Neighbourhood Countries – Recent Developments

(Contributed by Inese Podgaiska, EEA)

Background on the project

The ENPI (European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument) Shared Environment Information System (SEIS) project implemented

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by the European Environment Agency (EEA) supports Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood countries to improve environmental monitoring, data and information sharing. In particular, it contributes to identify and develop environmental indicators; improve capacities in the field of monitoring, collection, storage, assessment, and reporting of environmental data; set up national and regional environmental information systems; and track progress of the regional environmental initiatives.

Southern Neighbourhood

In the Southern neighbourhood, thanks to efforts of national authorities from Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia, the "Horizon 2020 Mediterranean report - Toward Shared Environmental Information Systems", was recently launched at the Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate Change, 13th May in Athens. The report is a part of the mid-term review of the Horizon 2020 Initiative, which aims to reduce pollution in the Mediterranean Sea. It focuses on three main environmental topics: wastewater and sanitation, municipal solid waste and industrial emissions. The report has been coordinated by the EEA and the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan with financial support from the European Commission under the ENPI-SEIS project.

Key findings of the report indicate that the progress in **urban wastewater management** is difficult to assess as the data available does not provide sound evidence and trends at the regional level. The **municipal solid waste** generation continues to grow (+15% over the last 10 years), mostly due to population and economic growth. Southern Mediterranean countries produce half as much waste as the EU countries (270 kg/per capita/year compared to 520 kg/per capita/year in the EU27).

Analysis on **industrial emissions and nutrients** confirms continued high pressure from land-based sources of pollution. While pollution from heavy metals in sea water decreases, local marine pollution from cities, industries and tourist resorts remains large with significant presence of macro waste on beaches and in the sea. The report can be downloaded from the EEA website: http://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/reducing-pollution-in-the-southern-mediterranean

In support of the production of the H2020 data and indicators, regional workshops on water statistics and accounts (Vienna, 1-3 April) and municipal waste statistics and indicators (Amman, 12-13 May) were organized in the region. The water workshop used the UNSD Guidelines for the Implementation of Water Accounts and Statistics as main training material, allowing countries to share their experience and progress in implementing water accounts. Each country further elaborated its road-map towards the institutionalization of water accounts and statistics, putting emphasis on the partners involved and sharing of responsibilities.

Eastern Partnership

In recent months, national workshops were conducted in each of the countries of the East region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) as a joint effort between the Ministries of Environment and the national statistics agencies to discuss coordination and responsibilities for the production and sharing of datasets underpinning a core set of indicators covering the areas of air and climate change, surface water quality and municipal waste.

Four countries: Armenia, Belarus, Georgia and Moldova, have demonstrated concrete steps in aligning their national water monitoring systems with the Water Information System for Europe "State of the Environment" (WISE SoE) tools and methodologies. Their pilot results were presented at a regional workshop organized jointly with the UNECE on 13 May 2014. This exercise aimed at sharing good practices in establishing national water information systems in the field of surface water protection.

In the area of waste management, country-level summaries and recommendations on how existing municipal solid waste data in the ENPI-East countries can be used to develop waste indicators are presented in a recent analysis carried out in the framework of the ENPI-SEIS project. In addition, the report provides a comparison between the countries.

A synthesis report summarizing the approaches and lessons learned in implementing SEIS in the countries of the East region will be available by the end of the project in March 2015.

For more information, please consult the news section on the project website:

http://enpi-seis.ew.eea.europa.eu/enpi-seis-revision/news.

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EEA Environmental Indicators Supporting European Policies

(Contributed by Roberta Pignatelli)

Environmental indicators are a key tool for the European Environment Agency (EEA), in response to its mandate of providing, harmonising and sharing environmental information in Europe and beyond. A significant part of the Agency's activities consists of producing, using and disseminating environmental indicators in order to support all phases of environmental policy making, from the design of policy frameworks to target setting, and from policy monitoring and evaluations to communication to policy-makers and the public.

The Europe 2020 strategy[2], i.e. the European Union's ten-year growth strategy to create the conditions for a smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive growth, includes among its targets, a target on climate change and energy[3], while one of the strategy's "flagship initiatives" aims at a resource-efficient Europe[4]. Numerical knowledge features centrally in the strategy and in the relevant roadmaps, meaning that the choices made on knowledge actions today should ideally have relevance several decades from now.

The European environment policy until 2020 will be guided by the 7th Environment Action Programme (7th EAP)[5], entitled "Living well, within the limits of our planet". It was entered into force in January this year and sets out a vision of where it wants the Union to be by 2050. The implementation of this programme will require improved knowledge, including a more detailed understanding of the interplay between economic, social and environmental factors in the transition to an inclusive green economy. Indicators and environmental accounting are important tools in improving this understanding.

The role of indicators and environmental accounting in supporting policy and decision making has been recently highlighted by two EEA reports published in June, the "Digest of EEA indicators 2014"[6] and "Progress on resource efficiency and decoupling in the EU -27"[7]. The Digest is a reference document placing EEA indicators in the context of the wider landscape of European environmental indicators with contributions from organizations such as the OECD and Eurostat. The report highlights the way that indicators can provide insights on progress towards environmental priorities, giving special attention to emerging policy demands on systemic challenges such as climate change impacts, resource efficiency and ecosystem resilience. The other report demonstrates how the global environmental impact of production and consumption in the EU can be explored using environmental accounting methods. Drawing on Eurostat data for 2000-2007, and referring to specific policy objectives in the European Union environmental legislation, the report demonstrates how "input/output-based analysis" can support policy makers in their decisions and choices.

Continuing the series of environmental indicator reports exploring Europe's progress and implications of the shift to a green economy that began in 2012, the 2013 report on "Natural resources and human well-being in a green-economy"[8] explores the links between resource use and human well-being, taking basic human needs (for food, energy, water and housing) as the entry points for analysis. By analysing environmental pressures associated with current resource use patterns and related well-being impacts, the report identifies possible levers for effecting change in an integrated manner.

At the institutional level, policy demands for environmental data, accounting and indicators has been the focus of the series of joint workshops by the EEA Management Board (MB) and the Eurostat Directors' Meeting on Environmental Statistics and Accounts (DIMESA) since 2009. The last workshop, on "Developing the knowledge base for the 7th Environmental Action Programme to 2020", held in Luxembourg on 18 June, bringing together statisticians, scientists, analysts and policymakers, aimed at clarifying the knowledge demand for the 7th EAP and related environmental and climate-related policies and to present the regular, established supply coming from statistics, environmental monitoring and reporting alongside emerging knowledge developments. The workshop focused on numerical knowledge[9] that needs to be regularly produced in the form of related data, accounts and indicators. The workshop marked an important opportunity for all knowledge stakeholders to work together towards a common roadmap and its implementation. There have already been several valuable discussions between the European Union organizations in preparation for the workshop and these will continue, thus encouraging similar discussions at country level.

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[2] http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htlm
[3] Climate change and energy: sustainability - greenhouse gas emissions 20% (or even 30%, if the conditions are right) lower than 1990, 20% of energy from renewables, 20% increase in energy efficiency.
[4] http://ec.europa.eu/resource-efficient-europe/pdf/resource_efficient_europe_en.pdf
[5] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/newprg/
[6] http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/digest-of-eea-indicators-2014
[7] http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/progress-on-resource-efficiency-and
[8] http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/environmental-indicator-report-2013
[9] Numerical knowledge is information in a numerical format from source such as statistical questionnaires, administrative databases, environmental monitoring programmes and reporting obligations, earth-observation data, citizen-based monitoring schemes, etc.

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Botswana: Production of Environment Statistics through the UN Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013)

(Contributed by Ditshupo Gaobotse, Environment Statistics Unit, Statistics Botswana)

Statistics Botswana, through its Environment Statistics Unit (ESU), produced its first report on environment statistics in the year 2000. The areas covered in the report include climate, land, water, forestry, energy, agriculture, wildlife and mining. The 1984 Framework for Development of Environment Statistics (FDES) developed by the United Nations Statistics Division was used to compile the statistics. The FDES provided the necessary guidance on what sort of data to collect and analyse, and how to organize the statistics. In the process, ESU learnt of the challenges inherent in the production of environment statistics due to its multi-disciplinary nature and it being sourced from a variety of data producers.

In subsequent years the ESU produced the following reports: Energy Statistics (2002 & 2004), Wildlife Statistics (2004), Water Statistics (2008), Environment Statistics (2006 & 2012), Climate Change Digest (2010), and Natural Disasters Digest (2011). The latest report was published in 2013 covering human settlements and environmental health. It was the first time that the ESU compiled statistics on human settlements and it is for this reason that it proved interesting, but also challenging as there was no previous work to benchmark from. The report extensively used data from the national population and housing censuses as well as data from the health ministry and other sources. Currently the Unit is working on water, climate and wildlife statistics reports (2014).

In compiling these latest statistical reports ESU used the revised FDES 2013. The FDES 2013 is found to be well structured, flexible and easy to use. Its strength lies in the way it organizes statistics into components, sub-components, statistical topics and individual statistics. It also assisted us in identifying the main sources of data.

Furthermore, in 2013 ESU embarked on an initiative to start the collection and compilation of waste data. The initial focus was on district (municipal) waste collection and disposal. Other entities like industries and tourism facilities will be addressed after consultation with relevant authorities. In this regard it is intended that consultations with local authorities and the Department of Waste Management and Pollution Control will be held in 2014 to discuss the way forward on waste management data in the country.

The National Institute of Statistics and Census "Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos" (INEC) of Ecuador Launched the Integrated System of Environmental Statistics Based on The Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics

(Contributed by Jenny Argüello, INEC Ecuador)

The Ecuador National Statistics Office (INEC), as the governing body of statistics and committed to the environment, have been generating statistics in the environmental sector for over three years now. However, data are less useful if they are not disseminated and used, which is why INEC has developed the Integrated System of Environmental Statistics (SIEA), in order to facilitate access to environmental statistics in a clear, simple, educational and timely way.

Ecuador's Integrated Environmental Statistics System was created based on the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) with technical assistance from the Environmental Statistics Section of UNSD. The system is a tool that collects environmental information from different statistical operations generated by INEC and other institutions. By working together with other public institutions, this application also collects data from the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fisheries, the National Electricity Council, the National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology, the Department of Environment of Quito and the Central Bank of Ecuador.

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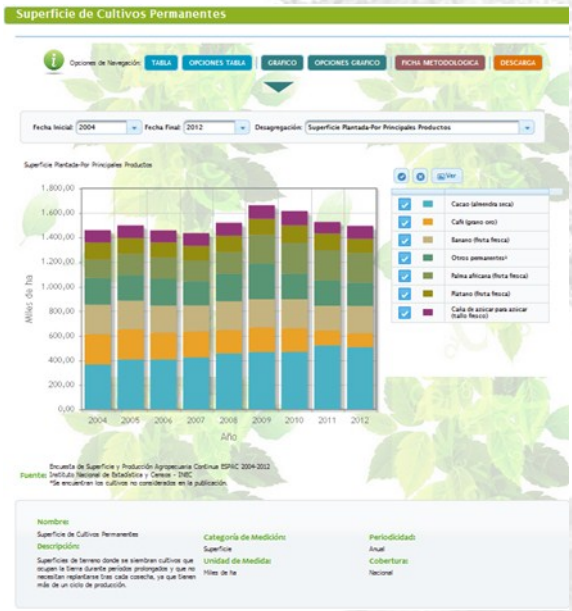
Furthermore, the system is currently structured into two parts: The first part presents 123 statistics, according to the classification given by the FDES 2013 and the second part shows 29 environmental indicators structured according to the goals of the National Plan for Good Living. The system can be accessed from the following website: http://www.ecuadorencifras.gob.ec/sistema-integrado-de-estadisticas-ambientales-siea/.



The system is aimed at experts, advisors, researchers, public and private organizations and students interested in accessing statistics about the state of the environment and its changes in Ecuador. Additionally, it allows the statistics to be viewed in an organized, dynamic and understandable way by the user. Each statistic/indicator can be portrayed in a graph that is pre-determined, but the different aspects are available from a breakdown menu in order to adjust the representation to the user's needs and preferences. The system also provides additional information such as description, measurement category, unit of measure, frequency and coverage for each of the statistics and the indicators. This application will be constantly updated and future environmental information produced in the country will be integrated.

On 2 June, the National Institute of Statistics and Census in Ecuador made the Integrated System of Environmental Statistics based on the FDES 2013 available to the general public through its website application. Furthermore, an event was held at the University of the Americas where officials, representatives of different public institutions and an expert from the Environment Statistics Section of UNSD, along with the academic community of the University comprised of students, professors and directors participated.

In order to develop and strengthen the Integrated System of Environmental Statistics of Ecuador, expert technical assistance was received both remotely and also through a technical assistance mission performed by UNSD (Environment Statistics Section) in Quito during the week of 2-6 June 2014.

During this technical assistance, statistics and indicators that are loaded in the system were reviewed, the development and methodologies to produce environmental indicators was discussed, and the basic sources of data with particular attention to the census and different surveys carried out by INEC and analyzed the robustness of the data were discussed. The nature of environment statistics systems and the scope of national environmental information systems were also addressed.

Finally, an information meeting took place about the initiation and the next steps of the project aimed at technically assisting developing countries to construct green economy indicators, in which Ecuador will participate as a pilot country. Due to this technical assistance visit, INEC was able to strengthen the technical capacity of staff and improve several aspects of the national system of environment statistics.

Brazilian Experience from Pilot Exercise on the Core Set of Environment Statistics

(Contributed by Denise Kronemberger, Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estadistica)

In 2012, IBGE – the Brazilian Geography and Statistics Office agreed to participate in the Pilot exercise on the core set of environment statistics of FDES – Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics, developed by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). Templates (gap analysis and topic level assessment) were intended to provide UNSD with detailed information on the availability of the Draft Core Set of Environment Statistics at a national level. Questionnaires were sent to IBGE by e-mail in Excel and Word file formats. About 20 experts participated in the exercise over two months. Some experts in the Ministry of Environment collaborated with IBGE in filling in some parts of the questionnaires. The allocation of people in different themes (topics of FDES) was made according to their expertise. At the end of the process the on-line survey was filled.

The exercise was important to know which statistics proposed in the FDES are available in Brazil and which institutions produce them. Brazil has 49% of the environment statistics suggested by the FDES and about 19% are similar, that means they are collected nationally, but the statistics are not exactly the same as what is in the template. Environmental statistics are scattered in many

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Brazilian institutions. The National Statistics Office (IBGE) produces about 34% of environment statistics topic within the FDES. Other institutions (public and private) also produce environment statistics in Brazil. They are: Ministry of Environment (MMA), Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA), Chico Mendes Institute (ICMBio), Ministry of Science and Technology (MCT), Health Ministry (MS), National Water Agency (ANA), National Institute for Space Research (INPE), Horus Institute, SOS Mata Atlântica Foundation, and state environmental offices among others.

Approximately half of the statistics suggested in the FDES are classified as 'high priority' for Brazil. The criteria used to assess the relevance were: availability of the statistics, national environmental policies objectives and international/national reporting requirements. Regarding the relevance of the 61 topics in the FDES, 44 were relevant to Brazil, 14 were classified as having 'average relevance' and only 3 were classified as having 'little relevance'.

The exercise was also important to help identify areas with largest gaps among the draft core set and what is currently being collected by the country. These largest gaps are in components 6 and 4, respectively statistics on 'environment protection, management and engagement' and 'extreme events and disasters'. Brazil does not have 49% of component 6 statistics and does not have 45% of total component 4. On the other hand, components 1 (environmental conditions and quality) and 5 (human settlements and environmental health) have a majority of the statistics (58.3% and 57.1%, respectively) suggested in the FDES.

During the exercise, the main reasons why statistics within the FDES' topics were not satisfactory were identified, for example methodological/technical difficulty in data collection and resource constraints. In addition, gaps in time series (atmosphere, climate and weather), statistics that do not cover the whole country (soil, forests, marine water quality), and a lack of periodicity of updates (ecosystems, soil quality, noise) were noted. The challenges to develop environment statistics in Brazil are: the need to organize a System of Environment Statistics to support the implementation frameworks such as FDES, SEEA, among others; the dispersion of data; lack of standardization of data; accessibility of data; and availability of time series and spatial scope.

IBGE has been collecting environment statistics from IBGE and other institutions to produce sustainable development indicators (SDIs) since 2002. Brazilian SDIs are based on the recommendations of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) of the United Nations with adaptations, when necessary, and new indicators. They are organized into 4 dimensions: environmental, social, economic and institutional. They are in accordance with contemporary issues such as the use of natural resources, environmental quality, human needs, life quality and social justice, macroeconomic and financial performance, and energy use, as well as the institutional capacity and efforts in order to implement sustainable development. The indicators are displayed in methodological sheets that show graphs, maps and text with descriptions of the indicators, the variables and sources used to build them, their importance to sustainable development and a brief analysis, as well as methodological comments, in specifics cases. At the end, the publication contains a glossary and a relationship matrix indicator. The indicators cover a time series and comprise, whenever possible, the whole country and the Federation Units, allowing the monitoring of phenomena throughout time and their occurrence in the territory.

There are also other initiatives related to environmental statistics and accounting. At this moment the most important is the Environmental Economic Accounting for water. IBGE and the National Water Agency – ANA are also implementing environmental accounting of water based on UNSD Statistical Standards. The first phase of the SEEA Water in Brazil consists of the Physical Account of Water Assets. Water resources data collection is the result of the integration of multiple institutional partners in a complex process of information appropriation (over 50 state water resources and environment institutions).

Suriname - Sixth Environmental Statistics Compendium Workshop

(Contributed by Anjali DeAbreu-Kisoensingh, General Bureau of Statistics, Suriname)

This one day workshop was organized by the General Bureau of Statistics (GBS) in Paramaribo, Suriname, in collaboration with Conservation International Suriname on 12 June 2014. The intention was to present the draft of the sixth environment statistics

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publication to the relevant data providers. The objectives were to:

1. Give the participants the opportunity to present their comments on the draft publication.
2. Ensure the commitments on data availability and data provision, improve data quality and continuous cooperation.
3. Discuss the data gaps and potential data sources of indicators not yet covered.
4. Introduce the list of indicators from the CARICOM Core List, The Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) and the MDG's Goal 7.
5. Use the findings of the workshop to finalize the publication.

A total of 52 relevant organizations (inter alia: line ministries, large enterprises, unions and institutions), which are supposed to cover certain environmental areas or make a substantive contribution to the pertinent workshop, were invited. In total 73 participants of the different organizations, including guests and 9 members of the press registered.

At the opening, speeches were delivered by the following officials: Mr. Armstrong Alexis, The Deputy Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); Mr. John Goedschalk, Director of Conservation International Suriname (CIS); Mr. Iwan Sno, Director of the General Bureau of Statistics (GBS); and Mrs. Henna Uiterloo, Permanent Secretary for Environment on behalf of the Minister of the Ministry of Labour, Technological Development and Environment. Brief remarks – which were well received by those present – were sent by Dr. Philomen Harrison from the CARICOM Secretariat and Ms. Reena Shah from the UNSD about the importance of the Environmental Indicators and also about the work of GBS and its partners regarding the environment.

As regards the substantive components, 5 presentations were made by:

1. Conservation International Suriname (CIS) – "The role of Capital Accounting in Development";
2. The National Institute for Environment and Development in Suriname (NIMOS) – "Environment statistics, What does NIMOS do with these statistics";
3. The Ministry of Labour, Technological Development and Environment – "Environment Policy and Environment data";
4. Green Heritage Fund Suriname (GHFS) – "The History of the development of the Environment statistics publications and the introduction of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013)"; and
5. General Bureau of Statistics -"Overview of the CARICOM core Indicators and the content of the pertinent draft oublication.

The draft publication covers the main sectors, divided into 13 chapters that can have an impact on the environment in Suriname, namely: Demographic and Socio-economic Background, Climate and Natural Disasters, Tourism, Transport, Environment and Health, Water, Energy and Minerals, Forestry, Coastal and Marine Resources, Land use and Agriculture, Biodiversity, Air and Waste.

The data presented refer to the latest available years. For time series, data are given for the years 2009 up to 2012 and where available also for 2013. Information for previous years will have to be found in the first five publications. "Selected Environmental Statistics, November 2002", "Environmental Statistics, May 2006", "Environmental Statistics, December 2008", "Environmental Statistics, July 2010" and "Environmental Statistics, October 2012".

The workshop raised awareness and understanding of international concepts and definitions, as well as best practices in the field of environment statistics. It helped to collect additional information on indicators/variables and also to share experiences and knowledge about methods for dealing with the problem of data gaps. The findings of the workshop will be used to finalize the Sixth Suriname Environmental Statistics Publication, expected to be published in late July 2014 or early August 2014.

To continue collecting good quality data for environment statistics in Suriname it is of utmost importance that there is a Steering Committee, which will be installed later in 2014. Three people have already reiterated their willingness to participate and draft Terms of Reference are being developed.

Participants also noted that attention should be paid to the collection of environment statistics that would be conducive to compiling integrated environmental and economic accounts for Suriname in the future.

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Comments and contributions for inclusion in future issues should be sent to:

ENVSTATS

DC2-1418

2 United Nations Plaza, New York, New York 10017

Fax: (1-212) 963 0623

E-mail: envstats@un.org