The System of Environmental and Economic Accounting (SEEA)

Workshop on Environment Statistics

(Addis Ababa, 16-20 July 2007)

United Nations Statistics Division
SEEA

SEEA-2003 jointly published by UN, the European Commission, IMF, OECD and the World Bank

SEEA-2003 represents a major step forward in the harmonization of concepts and methods in environmental-economic accounting

SEEA to become a statistical standard by 2010 as recommended by the UN Statistical Commission
SEEA

- Satellite system of the *System of National Accounts* (1993 SNA)
- Brings together economic and environmental information in a common framework to measure the contribution of the environment to the economy and the impact of the economy on the environment
Satellite accounts

- Information systems that, while maintaining consistency with the SNA, are more flexible and expand the analytical capacity of national accounts
- Systems which describe in depth aspects that are hidden in the accounts
- Enlarge the boundaries of the SNA
- Include complementary elements (e.g. physical information, etc.)
Why an accounting approach?

- Encourages the adoption of standards
- Introduces accounting concepts to environmental statistics
- Improves both economic and environmental statistics by encouraging consistency
- Implicitly defines ownership and hence responsibility for environmental impacts
- Encourages the development of comprehensive data sets
- Facilitates international comparisons
Strengths of the accounting approach

- Organised body of information facilitates integrated economic-environmental analysis (complements sustainable development indicators, modelling)
- Comprehensive and consistent, routinely produced
- Provides a system into which monetary valuations of environmental costs can be incorporated