

9th meeting of the Expert Group on Environment Statistics (25-28 October 2022)

Opening remarks, Stefan Schweinfest, Director, UNSD

(Tuesday, 25 October - 8 am)

- It gives me great pleasure in warmly welcoming everyone to the 9th meeting of the Expert Group on Environment Statistics (EGES) that is being held virtually for the third year in a row. We do hope that next year we will be able to organize the meeting again physically in New York.
- I note that there are 39 countries participating in the meeting with representation from all the regions.
 - ECE – 16 countries
 - ESCAP – 7 countries
 - ECA – 7 countries
 - ESCWA – 3 countries
 - ECLAC – 6 countries
- I also note that there are 26 agencies participating, including all UN regional commissions, as well as several independent consultants.
- Firstly, I would like to thank you for all your excellent contributions towards the development of the Global Set of Climate Change Statistics and Indicators. We acknowledge that this work has taken some time, but as with the SDG indicator process, it was extremely important to have a transparent and inclusive process. In this regard we are grateful for your commitment in reviewing several drafts, for all your various substantive inputs via the Expert Group process and bilateral consultations, and for contributing extensively to the Global Consultation on the draft Global Set in 2021. Your responses to the Global Consultation, of which we received 86 from countries and 26 from agencies, have valuably contributed to the finalization of the Global Set and its successful adoption at the fifty-third session of the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2022¹ as the framework to be used by countries when preparing their own sets of climate change statistics and indicators.

¹ (see decision 53/116 in the final report, <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/53rd-session/documents/2022-41-FinalReport-E.pdf>)

- As you know, the Global Set will assist in initiating the development of a national set that will help the country to implement more successful climate change policies and will also contribute to the reporting requirements under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In this regard, I would like to express our appreciation to UNFCCC, who we have been working very closely with to develop the Global Set whose adoption and implementation will support the reporting requirements of countries under the Enhanced Transparency Framework and the Global Stocktake of the Paris Agreement, as well as climate-related SDG indicators.
- I would also like to thank the Chair of the EGES, Ms. Ruth Minja, Director for Population Census and Social Statistics Directorate, National Bureau of Statistics of Tanzania. I know that you have just conducted your Population and Housing Census and have included climate change questions in a dedicated Environment Section in the census, which is highly remarkable demonstrating the way countries should endeavour to add environment and climate change questions to censuses and surveys. We very much appreciate your dedication and commitment to the work of the EGES despite your being so busy with the conduct and analysis of the census.
- I understand that the main objectives of the EGES are to support the work on environment statistics and climate change statistics led by UNSD. Given that the Global Set was successfully adopted by the Statistical Commission, it is now the time to move towards its implementation. We will hear from experts in this meeting how some countries have taken the Global Set work further, including Luxembourg, Mauritius, Nepal and Suriname, in applying the Global Set and, in some cases, publishing climate change statistics reports. The meeting will also be discussing some thematic areas related to climate change statistics such as in the fields of climate change and health being led by the United Kingdom, and climate and gender, being advanced by the Social Statistics and the Environment Statistics Sections of UNSD, along with UN-Women. From the UNSD side, our main tools for implementation of the Global Set, namely the self-assessment for climate change statistics (currently referred to as the CISAT) and the implementation guidelines – both of which were sent out to you in advance – are of great importance to be discussed at this meeting with the idea of

timely finalization so that countries may soon start to use them. We hope that they can be finalized by the end of the year.

- I know that this 9th EGES meeting is also covering other topics, such as environment statistics data collection and methodological work related to the implementation of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES), as well as capacity development activities in both environment and climate change statistics.

- Given the very dynamic nature of environment statistics and climate change statistics, the Global Set, as with most global indicator processes such as the SDG indicator framework, the review of the Global Set and further methodological development have already started. The structure of the Global Set has proven useful, not only for capacity building and application in countries, but also for supporting methodological development in several topics, including health, gender and disasters. As recommended by the Statistical Commission an update of the progress of work will be presented in 2 to 3 years.
 - Some of the Next steps include the following:
- Our main effort is currently focused on developing strong implementation support recommendations, among which – clarifying the mechanisms of how to enable NSOs to fulfill their legal mandate in the area of climate change statistics while supporting the ongoing reporting to UNFCCC by the national focal points. We already see evidence from various countries that showcase good practices, with units, staff, national programmes and publications dedicated to climate change statistics which demonstrates progress in this novel statistical area.
- Beyond the continuous engagement with UNFCCC, UNSD is also seeking ways to improve international coordination of implementation efforts via consultations and collaboration with various agencies, including UNEP, UNDRR, FAO, OECD, Paris21, Regional Commissions, regional organizations such as COMESA, CARICOM and the Pacific Community. For example, recent collaboration with Paris21 aims to develop an assessment framework for Climate Change Data Ecosystems which is closely linked to the self-assessment for climate change statistics.
- I wish you a successful meeting.

Annex A (experts participating in this EGES)

39 countries

ECE region (16)

Armenia
Czech Republic
Estonia
Finland
Hungary
Ireland
Italy
Kyrgyzstan
Luxembourg
Netherlands
Norway
Russian Federation
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
United Kingdom

ESCAP region (7)

Australia
Bangladesh
India
Japan
Nepal
New Zealand
Philippines

ECA region (7)

Botswana
Cabo Verde
Mauritius
Togo
Uganda
United Republic of Tanzania
Zimbabwe

ESCWA region (3)

Jordan
State of Palestine
United Arab Emirates

ECLAC region (6)

Belize

Brazil
Chile
Grenada
Mexico
Suriname

26 Agencies

African Development Bank
European Environment Agency
Eurostat
CARICOM
Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS)
ESCAP
ECLAC
ECA
ECE
ESCWA
FAO
Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC-STAT)
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
OECD
Pacific Community (SPC)
Paris21
UNEP
UNITAR
UN-HABITAT
UNFCCC
UN Officer for Disaster Reduction (UNDRR)
UNSD – Environment Statistics and Geospatial Information Branch; Demographic and Social Statistics
Branch
UN-Women
WHO

+ 5 independent consultants