

## **UNSD - Regional Commissions Coordination meeting**

### **Implementation programmes for the integrated economic and environmental statistics – 2008 SNA and supporting statistics, trade statistics and environmental economic accounting**

**25 February 2012, New York**

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

The meeting achieved its stated objective to foster coordination between UNSD and the United Nations Regional Commissions on their programmes on national accounts and supporting economic statistics. The meeting was seen as an important forum of collaboration to strengthen work programmes at the global, regional and national levels to ensure that the economic statistics programmes are implemented in a coordinated and effective manner.

Representatives from Caricom, ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA, Eurostat, SIAP and UNSD participated in the meeting.

#### **Agenda item 1 – Introduction**

The main expectation of participants was to review and exchange information on the implementation programmes for the integrated economic and environmental statistics at the global and regional levels. Participants valued this meeting as a consultative forum on cost the effective alignments of strategies and methods in advancing the global regional and national initiatives for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting economic statistics.

It was stressed that the global initiative is not only a national accounts programme but rather an implementation programme for economic statistics for which the political support has to be mobilised at national, (sub) regional and global level. For this purpose, the programme has to be unpacked and advocated in policy relevant components that resonate with economic policy agendas.

#### **Agenda items 2.1 and 2.2 – Implementation strategies for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics**

UNSD presented a proposed guide on a strategic approach to the development of a programme for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting economic statistics. Following a discussion on the presentation it was concluded that in some regions there is a need for a flexible guide to establish an economic statistics programmes at the country level. The proposed guide will be finalized in consultation with the Regional Commissions, taking into account lessons from countries that have already developed national action plans (particularly from the ECE region). The guide will be made available to support the preparation of national strategic plans for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting economic statistics in countries that have not yet developed such strategies. UNSD expressed interest in working with

the regional commissions to pilot the development of country plans in one country per region. UNSD will follow-up on options and modalities for this with each regional commission.

The strengthening of the global organization and governance of the SNA implementation were also discussed. Participants agreed that there is a need to scale up political engagement and support for national accounts implementation, and in a broader sense, for economic statistics development at the global, (sub) regional and national levels. The examples of the Global strategy for improving agricultural statistics and the ICP implementation programme were considered as models. The ISWGNA leadership role in the implementation process need to be enhanced and partnerships (e.g. with central banks and regional banks) need to be strengthened and more fully utilized to increased collaboration in the implementation process. It is proposed that the ISWGNA in conjunction with the CCSA explores the issue of strengthening the governance of SNA implementation both at the management and expert level.

Current issues such as (sub) regional integration were seen as motivating forces to better exploit increased advocacy to gain political support for SNA implementation and strengthening basic economic statistics to improve the availability and comparability of macroeconomic and sectoral statistics. For instance, by unpacking the economic statistics programmes for regional integration, the policy relevant aspects of issues such as harmonised price indices and interregional trade statistics could be stressed for regions that are pursuing a currency union.

The scarce availability of financial resources was seen as a problem in the development of realistic national implementation strategies and in providing support to the countries by the regional and international organizations. To support capacity development through inter-regional knowledge exchange, the role of development account programmes was emphasized.

There was agreement that the SNA implementation should be treated as an economic statistics development programme that should be coordinated with activities already ongoing in different domains of economic statistics, such as classifications, industrial/energy statistics and international trade.

Participants suggested that UNSD consider mobilizing support from ECOSOC as another mechanism to gather political support for the development of economic statistics in addition to the existing ECOSOC resolution on the 1993 SNA and similar mandates.

### **Agenda item 2.3 and 2.5 – Methodological work and other related work in economic statistics**

Participants agreed on the importance of access to information on the ongoing activities in methodological development and national accounts implementation work. It was agreed to use the DISA platform of ECE to exchange such information. ECE will write to all Regional Commissions to request inputs and will maintain the database on statistical activities of the regional commission and UNSD starting with the economic and environmental accounting and statistics domains.

It was agreed that the various methodological manuals currently developed by the Regional Commissions would benefit from having a global character to increase their utilization and applicability. UNSD will collaborate with the relevant Regional Commissions to explore wider consultations starting with the handbooks on input-output compilation, business registers, informal sector and global production.

#### **Agenda item 2.4 – Coordination of training and capacity building**

Participants agreed that coordination of training and capacity building initiatives could involve sharing of information on the ongoing and planned initiatives and modalities of regional training and making available learning resources such as training materials, manuals and handbooks produced by the regional commissions. The ECA will share with the participants a document describing a longer-term mechanism for creating centres of excellence. SIAP expressed interest to collaborate with UNSD and other regional commissions in the development of training curricula that would address identified gaps in meeting training needs and in designing and implementing appropriate training programmes. UNSD informed the meeting of the online knowledge-base on economic statistics and its intention of developing an up-to-date inventory of training information with inputs from regional commissions as well as from various ISWGNA organizations.

#### **Agenda item 2.6 – Activities of the ISWGNA and the AEG**

Participants expressed the need for a more continuous dialogue and exchange of information through regular coordination meetings at the management and technical level. It was agreed that UNSD also represent the Regional Commissions in the ISWGNA; it was therefore important that views were solicited prior to meetings and that information was shared on the outcomes of ISWGNA meetings.

#### **Agenda item 3 and 4 – Environmental-economic accounts and International trade statistics**

Participants expressed a strong interest and need to collaborate in advancing environmental-economic statistics and international trade statistics in the countries. ESCAP informed the meeting that it would seek the views of the Bureau of the ESCAP Committee on how to consider an environmental economic statistics programme for the Asia-Pacific region, taking into account recent developments in both environmental accounting and the framework for the development of environment statistics, possibly through inviting UNSD to submit a document for consideration by the Committee. ECA reported that the Statistical Commission for Africa established a Working Group on environment statistics called "African Group on Environment and Related Statistics."