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Environment statistics

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report was prepared in accordance with chapter V, paragraph 4, of the report of the Statistical Commission on its forty-fourth session. The report summarizes progress made in the implementation of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics since its endorsement by the Commission at its forty-fourth session, and the plans for 2014-2015. It covers the main areas identified in the plan of action for implementing the Framework, including the establishment of the Expert Group on Environment Statistics and its work programme, the development of methodological and training material, training and capacity-building, advocacy and networking. The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2014/1.



I. Introduction

1. At its forty-fourth session, held from 26 February to 1 March 2013, the Statistical Commission:

(a) Expressed its appreciation for the work done by the Statistics Division and recognized the significant contribution of the Expert Group on the Revision of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics, as well as that of participating countries and organizations, in the revision and consultation process;

(b) Commended the timeliness of the revised Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics with regard to the important role of high-quality environment statistics in analysis and informed policymaking and decision-making in support of sustainable development;

(c) Endorsed the revised Framework as the framework for strengthening environment statistics programmes in countries, and recognized it as a useful tool in the context of sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda;

(d) Also endorsed the action plan and the establishment of an Expert Group on Environment Statistics, noted the interest of several countries in participating in the Expert Group, and requested that the terms of reference of the Expert Group be developed, including a timetable and reporting mechanism;

(e) Stressed the importance of strong coordination between the implementation of the revised Framework and that of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting Central Framework;

(f) Emphasized the need for supporting the revised Framework with detailed methodological guidance and training material that build upon existing methodological resources, where available, and that are coordinated with ongoing methodological work in related fields of statistics;

(g) Recognized the urgency of publishing the revised Framework in the official languages of the United Nations;

(h) Stressed the need of countries at the early stages of the development of their environment statistics programmes for increased technical assistance and capacity-building, and called upon international organizations for support in that regard (see [E/2013/24](#), chap. I.C, decision 44/105).

2. The present report summarizes progress made since the endorsement of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics. Section II.A of the report describes the status of the publication of the Framework; and sections II.B, II.C and II.D provide a summary of the methodological work, training and capacity-building, and advocacy activities, respectively, carried out in 2013. Section II.E provides information on the establishment of the Expert Group on Environment Statistics. Plans for 2014-2015 are outlined in section III.

II. Activities carried out in 2013

A. Status of the publication of the Framework

3. Following the editing of the comments received from the global consultation and a final peer review, the Framework will be submitted for official editing,

translation and printing in January 2014. At the same time, it will be published as a white-cover pre-edited publication and posted on the web. The final, officially edited English-language version of the Framework is expected to be published in the second half of 2014. The Statistics Division will seek collaboration with the regional commissions, countries and partner organizations to facilitate a speedy translation into the five other official languages of the United Nations.

B. Methodological work

4. Following the endorsement of the Framework, work started on the development of an environment statistics self-assessment tool based on the template used for the pilot testing of the Basic and Core Sets of Environment Statistics. The self-assessment tool has been used successfully in regional and national training workshops, as well as in country projects. The self-assessment tool is currently being refined on the basis of the experience gained in its use and will be presented to the Expert Group on Environment Statistics in March 2014 for review and discussion.

5. Correspondence tables are being developed by the Statistics Division between the Basic and Core Sets of Environment Statistics contained in the Framework and the environmental indicator lists used by international and intergovernmental organizations and the specialized agencies (including, but not limited to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Eurostat and the European Environment Agency). Similar correspondence tables are being worked out for the environmental indicator sets used by subregional groups of countries (e.g., the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Eastern European, Caucasus and Central Asian (EECCA) countries).

6. A correspondence analysis has been carried out between the Basic and Core Sets of Environment Statistics, the OECD/Eurostat Joint Questionnaire on the State of the Environment and the Statistics Division/United Nations Environment Programme Questionnaire on Environment Statistics in the areas of waste and water. This type of analysis has been extended to statistics and indicators included in the reporting systems of multilateral environmental agreements, starting with those required under the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal.¹

7. Preparations for the development of methodological guidance for the Framework's Core Set of Environment Statistics have started with the drafting of templates and the elaboration of examples for the methodology sheets. A matrix of the Framework's statistical topics and environmental themes has been developed for the purpose of identifying the methodological fields, and work on establishing an inventory of existing methodological resources is ongoing. The results of this work will be presented to and discussed by the Expert Group on Environment Statistics in March 2014.

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1673, No. 28911.

C. Training and capacity-building

8. As part of the programme of implementation of the Framework, a training workshop was held for the Arab countries in Amman, jointly with the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, and an expert group meeting was organized jointly with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. National workshops were held in collaboration with the national statistical offices of, and the participation of national stakeholders in, Colombia and the Philippines. National workshops were or are being organized by the national statistical offices or environmental agencies in Bangladesh, Nigeria and the United Arab Emirates. The Framework was used on several occasions when national environment statistics programmes or national environmental indicator lists were being reviewed.

D. Advocacy

9. A brochure describing the Framework and its use has been prepared in the six official languages of the United Nations and distributed to national statistical offices. The brochure has also been widely distributed at international, regional, subregional and national conferences, seminars and meetings. Several presentations on the Framework were made by the Statistics Division and by international and national experts at similar forums throughout 2013.

E. Expert Group on Environment Statistics

10. The Expert Group on Environment Statistics, established to assist the Statistics Division in future methodological work and other aspects of the application of the revised Framework in countries, will be convened in December 2013 with reconfirmed members of the Expert Group on the Revision of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics and new members who expressed their interest in engaging in future work on environment statistics. The terms of reference and work programme of the Expert Group are currently being developed and will be discussed by the Expert Group in January 2014. The first meeting of the Expert Group is scheduled to be held in New York from 26 to 28 March 2014.

III. Plans for 2014-2015

11. In 2014-2015, work on the application of the Framework will focus on the following streams:

(a) Conclusion of the inventory and analysis of existing methodological resources;

(b) Preparation of detailed methodological guidance for the compilation of the Core Set of Environment Statistics based on existing methodological resources and ongoing methodological work in environment statistics;

(c) Conclusion and documentation of the analysis of the correspondence between the Basic and Core Sets of Environment Statistics and the indicator lists commonly used by international, intergovernmental, regional and subregional

organizations, including the mapping of the means by which those indicators can be derived from the Basic and Core Sets;

(d) Revision and finalization of the self-assessment tool and training material, which will facilitate the national-level application of the Framework;

(e) Development and implementation of a coordinated programme using multiple sources of funding to satisfy the training and capacity-building requirements for the application of the Framework in countries.

These activities will be carried out in close collaboration with the Expert Group on Environment Statistics.

IV. Actions required from the Statistical Commission

12. The Statistical Commission is requested to take note of this report.
