

Summary Report on Technical Workshop on the Preparation of Water Accounts in Latin America June 1-4, 2009

Introduction

1. The Technical Workshop on the Preparation of Water Accounts in Latin America was held June 1-4, 2009 in Santiago, Chile. The workshop had four objectives: (a) to increase understanding of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water (SEEA), that was adopted by the Statistical Commission as an interim international statistical standard in 2007; (b) to provide practical support for the production of the SEEA standard tables; (c) to share the experiences of countries in preparing the accounts; and (d) to determine what future actions are necessary to advance the implementation of SEEA in Latin American countries.
2. A total of 31 participants attended the workshop, consisting of 19 national officials representing 7 countries from the Latin American region, 10 representatives from international organizations (See Attachment 1 – List of Participants). In addition one official from Egypt participated along with a representative from the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in order to exchange experiences on water accounting between Latin America and the Middle East.
3. The workshop brought together the producers of water-related information from national statistical offices, water and environment ministries and central banks. The work of countries on water accounts and water information systems were presented, as well as the concepts, sources and methods for water accounting, and the strategies for addressing information gaps and data deficiencies (See Attachment 2 – Agenda). The presentations and papers are all available on the UNSD website¹. Workshop participants recognized and understood the importance of the SEEA for organizing hydrological and economic information to create an integrated information system to support decision making and to provide public confidence/transparency in the decisions.

¹ See: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/workshops/chile2009/iod.htm>

Conclusions

4. The importance of institutional arrangements and strong high level support were recognized as key factors for the ability of Latin American countries to fully implement the accounts. Key steps identified by countries and international agencies for implementing SEEAW were:

- The linking of the water accounts to the objectives of the national water plans or water policy goals of countries
- Identifying an institution to lead the implementation of environmental accounts at the national level
- Explaining the usefulness of water accounts to policy-makers and strategic planners
- Ensuring that effective institutional arrangements for the collection and integration of data are in place
- Developing water accounts in phases focusing on particular accounts
 - Physical-Supply use tables
 - Hybrid accounts
 - Asset account
- Building capacity in countries (e.g. training, learning by doing, sharing experiences with other countries)
- Sharing the experiences of countries and the development of materials to assist implementation (especially having translations of the SEEAW and the IRWS in Spanish)

Comments from participants

5. In the last session of the workshop participants were invited to share their views on the water accounts and statistics and in particular how they might be implemented in Latin America and in their countries or agencies. Several participants also took the opportunity to indicate their particular needs in terms of technical assistance and also what they could offer to support implementation in Latin America. These comments are found in Attachment 3. These comments represent the views of the participants and do not necessarily represent the views of the organisations they represent.

Attachment 1 – List of Participants

TALLER TÉCNICO SOBRE COMPILACIÓN DE CUENTAS DE AGUA EN AMÉRICA LATINA

Santiago, 1 al 4 de junio de 2009

Lista de participantes

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Attachment 2 – Agenda



UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
STATISTICS DIVISION

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
STATISTICS AND ECONOMIC PROJECTIONS DIVISION

**Technical Workshop on the Preparation of Water Accounts in Latin America
Santiago, Chile
1–4 June 2009**

Location: Conference Room Auditorium Fajnzylber, at ECLAC located on Avda. Dag Hammarskjöld 3477, Vitacura.

Agenda

Morning sessions will be from 9:00 to 12:30, afternoon sessions from 14:00 to 18:00. Lunch breaks will be from 12:30 to 14:00 every day. There will also be a coffee break during the morning and afternoon sessions.

Monday 1st of June 2009

8:30 Registration of participants (Auditorium Fajnzylber)

Session 1: Opening and introduction

09.00 Opening, welcome and objectives of workshop
09.20 Review of SEEA-Water and implementation around the world
10.20 Discussion and questions
10.30 *Coffee break*

Session 2: Physical supply and use tables

11.00 Physical supply and use tables
12.00 Discussion and questions
12:30 *Lunch*

Session 3: Country experiences with water statistics and accounts

- 14.00 Presentations
 - Dominican Republic
 - Guatemala Discussion and questions
 - Mexico
- 15.30 Discussion
- 16.00 *Coffee break*

Session 4: Practical session on Physical supply and use tables

- 16.30 Exercise
- 18.00 *Close of day*

Tuesday 2nd of June 2009

Session 5: Emission accounts and asset accounts

- 9.00 Emission accounts presentation
 - Discussion and questions
- 9.45 Asset accounts presentation
 - Discussion and questions
- 10.30 *Coffee break*

Session 6: Country experiences with water statistics and accounts

- 11.00
 - Brazil
 - Chile
 - Colombia

12:30 *Lunch*

14:00 Discussion and questions

Session 7: Practical session asset accounts and emission accounts exercises

- 14.30 Asset accounts exercise
- 16.00 *Coffee break*
- 16.30 Emission accounts exercise
- 18.00 *Close of day*

Wednesday 3rd of June 2009

Session 8: Country experiences and work of international agencies

- 09.00 - ESCWA
 - Egypt
 - Panama
 - CEMLA

10.30 *Coffee break*

Session 9: Hybrid accounts and water valuation

- 11.00 Hybrid accounts
 - Presentation
 - Questions

- 12.00 Valuation
 - Presentation
 - Questions

12.30 *Lunch*

14.00 Questions and discussion

Session 10: Practical session on physical and hybrid supply-use tables

14.30 Country compilation of physical and hybrid supply-use tables

16.00 *Coffee break*

16:30 Continuation of country compilation

17.00 Presentation of results of compilation exercise by countries

18.00 *Close of day*

Thursday 4th June 2009

Session 11: Application and implementation of the SEEAW

- 9.00 Policy applications of SEEA-Water
- Presentation
- Discussion
- 9.30 Developing an information strategy for water accounts and statistics
- Presentation
- Round table discussion
- 10.30 *Coffee break*
- 11.00 Planning the way forward in countries
- Exercise

12.30 *Lunch*

Session 12: Next steps and conclusions

- 14.00 Plenary
- 16.00 *Close of workshop*

Attachment 3 – Comments from workshop participants on the implementation of the SEEAW in Latin America.

6. In the last session of the workshop countries and international agencies were invited to share their views on the water accounts and statistics and in particular how they might be implemented in Latin America. Several participants also took the opportunity to indicate their particular needs in terms of technical assistance and also what they could offer to support implementation in Latin America. These comments are found in below and represent the views of the participants and do not necessarily represent the views of the organisations for which they work.

7. **Mr Clevelario Junior** from Brazil recognized the importance of the institutional arrangement and in particular to initiate the work to determine institutional roles and responsibilities. This could also involve undertaking a review of all the water related statistics produced. Once this is done the institutional arrangements can be identified and if necessary formalized for the purposes of producing the water accounts. At the regional level Brazil recognized the need for countries to exchange experiences and information on the production of water accounts with a particular emphasis on the problems encountered and how these were overcome. The need for training and technical assistance with water accounts was also stressed.

8. **Mr Rojas** from Chile also recognized the importance of defining institutional roles and responsibilities. At the regional level Chile invited the UN to play a role in the coordination and development of water accounting.

9. **Ms Roa Lozano** from Colombia said they would focus on reactivating and strengthening the inter-institutional committee on environmental accounts which should allow the definition of roles in the production and sharing of water information. A pilot water account will be carried out for the district of Bogota, for which there is funding for the period 2009-2012. Efforts will also be made to ensure the institutions participating in the development of the accounts allocate sufficient staff and financial resources to the project. In addition, steps will be taken to modify registries so that the information can be used more easily for water accounting. At the regional level, Colombia also stressed the importance of international cooperation and was interested to be part of a regional network or community to share experiences and best practices. Colombia also offered to share its own experience and the water accounting methodological materials they have translated into Spanish.

10. **Mr. Blondet Hernández** and **Mr Devers Espino** from the Dominican Republic (DR) said that they would focus on finalizing the standard tables and generating indicators for the pilot study in the eastern region. The results from this will be analyzed to generate recommendations for high level decision makers. At the regional level the DR

would benefit from the experiences of other countries in water accounting and would also be interested to share their own experiences.

11. **Mr Abd El Aziz Bhgat** from Egypt said he recognized the need to harmonize and standardize the definitions and concepts of water accounts and to have the SEEAW and related material in Arabic. Egypt also recognized the need to design questionnaires in such a way that the information can be used for the water accounts. The need to include academia in the development and use of the water accounts as well as for capacity building and training was also mentioned.

12. **Mr Carrera Campos** from Guatemala said that they would liaise with national organizations that have the data and expertise need to implement environmental accounting (water, forestry, land use, etc.). The strategy will be to focus on a limited number of accounts. At the regional level Guatemala would like to carry out some pilot trans-boundary water accounts (Guatemala-Mexico) with the help of the UN. Guatemala is interested in sharing its experience in the estimation of “green water”.

13. **Mr Martinez Lagunes** and **Mr Gonzalez Medrano** from Mexico expressed the importance for each country to establish a working group with the necessary human and financial resources to help populate the standard tables on an on-going basis. At the regional level Mexico considers the exchange of country experiences to be important and emphasized the need for international assistance in helping to harmonize the format and results of censuses and surveys whose results could be used for water accounting. Mexico offered to continue providing technical assistance to countries in compiling the tables from chapter 3.

14. **Ms Gondola De Villareal** from Panama informed that her country is placing priority on building national capacities in water accounting, involving all organizations and institutions working in water management. As part of this Panama is interested in re-activating and expanding the national water accounts committee to ensure effective institutional arrangements. Panama is requesting international technical assistance to revise and improve the water accounts system especially given the importance of water resources for the country’s economy. The shipping activity of the canal and hydroelectric sector among others are important economic activities. Moreover to advance it is important to hire more full time staff given that there is interest to carry out three types of accounts: water, forest and protected areas. Panama is also interested in collaborating with the UN and other countries in the region in the implementation of its water accounts.

15. **Mr Arita Chinchilla** from the Centre for Monetary in Latin America studies is interested in collaborating for the delivery of capacity building on water accounts.

16. **Ms Taboulchanas** from the Statistics and Economic Projections Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) will continue to support the development of the International Recommendations for Water Statistics (IRWS) and will support the translation of the SEEAW and IRWS into Spanish. In the

context of the establishment of a Working Group on Environmental Statistics under the auspices of the Statistical Conference of the Americas ECLAC will ensure that the conclusions of the workshop are communicated to the Working Group which has already incorporated water statistics and accounts in its work plan. Additionally ECLAC will actively look for funding to facilitate the realization of activities in water accounting including technical assistance missions, south-south cooperation, training and the systematization of country experiences. Finally ECLAC will explore the possibility to create an informal virtual networking space for the participants of the workshop to continue interacting and sharing information on water accounting and statistics.

17. **Mr Soto** from ECLAC said that the Sustainable Development Division will encourage inter institutional cooperation and use the accounts as a framework to standardize statistics and indicators. Interest was also expressed in analyzing the environmental impact in the emissions accounts.

18. **Ms Aboul Hosn** from ESCWA said that they would continue to advocate the use of the SEEAW and be ready to share their experiences with Latin America.

19. **Mr Vardon** from the United Nations Statistics Division said that they intended to continue to support the implementation of water accounts in Latin America.

Potential follow-up activities could include:

- Missions to countries to assist implementation of SEEAW and in particular to address particular problems with compilation and to begin to derive the policy relevant information from the accounts for possible presentation to high level decision makers. The formal procedure for obtaining assistance from UNSD (i.e. a formal letter to the Director of UNSD from the head of agency making the request) was explained during the workshop.
- A joint UNSD/ECLAC trial data collection based on water accounts for Latin American countries. ESCWA have also indicated that they will consider taking part in the trial.
- Consolidation of countries experiences, the results of pilot work and the trial data collection into the knowledge base that UNSD is developing.