System of
Environmental
Economic
Accounting

Area A: Coordination

The Committee:

•Thanked André Loranger of Statistics Canada for his leadership during his time as chair of the Area A Working Group on Coordination;

•Emphasized the importance of UNCEEA members in reaching out to their representatives to the UN Statistical Commission and to the IAEG-SDGs, to drive uptake and mainstreaming of the SEEA in the SDGs, other policy relevant initiatives such as those on biodiversity, climate change and circular economy;

Proposed Area A Work Plan

•Noted the work done and planned on the evaluation and dissemination of SEEA training materials on the SEEA website;

•Welcomed the initiative to compare the Terms of Reference of SEEA expert groups, including those under the Committee, in order to streamline work and harness synergies;

•Emphasized the need to be opportunistic in mainstreaming of the SEEA and noted the importance of Committee members in reaching out to line ministries and relevant groups in mainstreaming the SEEA;

•Welcomed the progress made and future plans for the SEEA website.

SEEA

Area A: Coordination, continued

The Committee:

Sustainable Development Goals

•Welcomed the opportunity to provide input to the chapter on the SEEA in the upcoming report of the Interlinkages Working Group of the IAEG-SDGs;

Biodiversity

•Welcomed the contributions and submissions of the Committee to the development of the post-2020 biodiversity framework and to the 'Nature-Based Solutions' coalition for the UN Climate Action Summit;

•Welcomed the proposal to collaborate with the Informal Advisory Group to ensure that the SEEA is represented in the long-term strategic approach to mainstreaming biodiversity;

•Underscored the need to use the accounts to communicate the drivers of biodiversity decline, the impacts on biodiversity and the policy uses of the accounts.

SEEA

Area B1: Methodology - Central Framework

The Committee:

Potential revision of the SEEA CF

•Requested the Bureau to further explore the potential for a revision, including a thorough evaluation of resources required, the need for integration of the SEEA CF with methodological documents (e.g. SEEA-Water, SEEA AFF etc), possible integration with the revised SEEA EEA, lessons learnt from country implementation, advances in the research agenda and the possible revision of the SNA;

•Agreed that revision options beyond those presented during the meeting should be explored;

•Acknowledged the need to strengthen current programmes and initiatives for SEEA CF implementation in countries.

SEEA

Area B1: Methodology - Central Framework

The Committee:

Statistical Framework for Measuring Sustainability of Tourism

•Welcomed the work done in developing the Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (SF-MST) and expressed appreciation for the Working Group on MST on making the development of the SF-MST an inclusive process, bringing together different stakeholders;

•Agreed with the plan to finalize the SF-MST, namely:
- •Submission to SEEA CF TC for comment in June-September 2019
- •Global Consultation in September 2019
- •Revision of the SF-MST based on global consultation
- •Submission to the UNCEEA for endorsement in advance of the UN Statistical Commission in 2020

•Welcomed the proposals to use MST for the derivation of SDG indicators 8.9.3 and 12.b, including using the global assessment of SEEA implementation to inform these indicators.

London Group

- • Welcomed the work plan for 2019-2021 and the role of the London Group in furthering the SEEA CF, the revision of the SEEA EEA, exploring policy applications and facilitating the exchange of country experiences.

SEEA

Area B2: Methodology – Ecosystem Accounting

The Committee:

Revision process

•Welcomed the progress made on the SEEA EEA Revision and thanked the working group area leads and experts for their work and input into the revision;

•Acknowledged the comprehensiveness, transparency and broad engagement of the revision process;

•Agreed with the detailed plan to complete the revision and the role of the extended Technical Committee as the editorial board of the SEEA EEA;

•Recognized the progress made in advancing the methodology and encouraged the Committee to take a pragmatic approach to addressing the issues with the objective of reaching agreements on methodologies;

•Supported the development of the revised SEEA EEA as an agreed methodological document that demonstrates the weight and significance of the work done;

•Recognized the aspiration to drop "experimental" from the title and decided to address the question of the status of the document and how it is presented to the UNSC, during the Fifteenth Session of the UNCEEA in 2020, after the chapters of the revised SEEA EEA are available.

SEEA

Area B2: Methodology – Ecosystem Accounting, continued

The Committee:

Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services

•Noted the broad efforts made in implementing the SEEA and Welcomed the progress made by the partner countries on the EU-funded Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services Project

•Acknowledged the importance of the methodological documents on biophysical modeling, scenario analysis and valuation being drafted, requested the SEEA Technical Committee to review these documents and requested that the documents be submitted to the UNCEEA for formal endorsement.

SEEA

Area C: Global SEEA databases

The Committee:

Principles for the creation and maintenance of the global SEEA databases on the SEEA website

•Expressed its support for the development of principles for the creation and maintenance of the global SEEA databases on the SEEA website;

•Agreed to follow the specific procedure established for the global data flows of the SDG indicators in terms of obtaining countries' consent before dissemination of official and estimated accounts and indicators;

•Emphasized that global SEEA databases will comprise nationally disseminated accounts where they exist and report estimates only in cases where countries do not disseminate accounts;

•Agreed to the need for transparency in the methodology and compilation in global SEEA databases, particularly in terms of formal endorsement of the methodology by the SEEA Technical Committee and the UNCEEA;

•Requested the OECD to revise the document on the basis of the comments received and to submit the document for endorsement by the UNCEEA before disseminating it as a formal document;

SEEA

Area C: Global SEEA databases – Continued

The Committee:

Dissemination of SEEA Global Databases on the SEEA Website

•Supported the proposed step-by-step process for disseminating SEEA global databases for the priority areas on the SEEA website;

•Emphasized that dissemination of databases on the SEEA website would not place additional burden on countries;

•Stressed the importance that any indicators disseminated should be based on official country data, where available, and that estimated indicators be disseminated only in cases where countries do not disseminate accounts;

•Requested that the core tables and accounts be reviewed again by the SEEA Technical Committee, and the templates be shared explicitly with countries as the objectives for data compilation;

•Noted the importance of displaying policy-relevant indicators for each priority area, to be determined in collaboration with the SEEA Technical Committee and relevant experts and users;

SEEA

Area C: Global SEEA databases – Continued

The Committee:

Progress made on priority accounts

•Noted the plans for country testing of estimated energy accounts by UNSD;

•Welcomed the progress made by OECD in advancing the methodology for estimated air emission accounts and the cooperation between OECD and ICAO, requested OECD to verify whether the ICAO database can be shared with international agencies and/or countries and agreed to liaise with the UN Global Working Group on Big Data to explore whether the data of the UN Global Platform on airlines and maritime transport could be used for estimating air emissions;

•Acknowledged that the FAO database of global land cover data represents progress towards global SEEA land accounts, agreed to share the minutes of the recent SEEA Central Framework Technical Committee on the methodology and agreed that the development of a global land cover database should not wait upon the completion of a new ecosystem type classification under the SEEA-EEA revision and requested that an evaluation of the various input data be undertaken by the SEEA CF Technical Committee in collaboration with relevant experts.

•Requested the Bureau to develop a strategy to promote data collection at the country level of the priority areas, based on an analysis of the drivers for compilation of the accounts, including the SDGs, post-2020 biodiversity agenda, climate change, circular economy, UN Economists Network and business accounting;

•Requested the custodian agencies to provide more information regarding the timelines for the development of the databases, as possible.

SEEA

Area C: Global SEEA databases – Continued

The Committee:

Water

• Noted the prioritization of water accounts by developing countries, as well as the opportunity for global SEEA water databases to provide data for the relevant SDG indicators;

• Agreed with the stepwise approach proposed for the compilation of data on water accounts, and encouraged the UNCEEA Bureau to take this approach as a starting point for the development of global databases on water, starting with the identification of a custodian agency to jumpstart progress;

• Acknowledged the potential use of Earth observation, including satellite data and in-situ data, as a way to develop global databases to jump start compilation of the accounts in countries, while noting that satellite data may be more useful as a supporting tool in certain countries;

• Agreed to discuss water accounts in greater detail at the Bureau level, to ensure that progress is made;

DSDs

• Noted and commended the finalization of the SEEA DSDs for the five priority areas;

• Clarified that while SDMX transmission is currently most often used for dissemination between international organizations, the objective is to use SDMX for exchange of data by countries as well.

SEEA

Area D: Capacity Building

The Committee:

•Agreed with the proposed roadmap to the 2020 Global Assessment and the establishment of SEEA focal points;

•Noted the progress made in reaching the 2020 implementation targets while emphasizing that more must be done to reach the goal of 100 countries implementing the SEEA CF and 50 countries implementing the SEEA EEA and recommended reaching out to the 32 countries that indicated they were planning accounts;

•Recognized that critical regional gaps remain in terms of SEEA implementation, particularly in the Africa region and recommended that priority in implementation should be given to the region;

•Emphasized the importance of South-South collaboration, with more experienced countries providing guidance and support to less experienced countries in a similar region, as well as the provision of technical assistance by developed countries.

SEEA

Area E: Communications
The Committee:

•Expressed appreciation for the collection of case studies and encouraged the development of communication materials showcasing these case studies;

•Welcomed ongoing work by the Green Growth Knowledge Platform on natural capital use case studies and future collaboration to expand the evidence base of SEEA case studies to demonstrate policy impact;

•Acknowledged the usefulness of collecting case studies that relate to all areas of environmental-economic accounting;

•Welcomed the case studies and lessons learnt presented by the WAVES programme and encouraged the Committee to build on the work done to develop common narratives;

•Underscored the need for compilers to systematically engage with policy makers and other users of the accounts in order to better understand user needs and tailor dissemination;

•Recognized the need to pay special attention to the terms used when communicating the accounts, in order to ensure precision, while at the same time maintaining flexibility to tailor communication to specific audiences;

•Agreed on the usefulness of a SEEA tagline and encouraged UNCEEA members to submit proposals to the ABS that concisely and accurately communicate the purpose of the SEEA, in order to formulate a proposal to the UNCEEA.

SEEA

Business Accounting

The Committee:

•Agreed that it should play a role in aligning business accounting and reporting with the SEEA, with the way forward being developed as part of the roadmap being prepared during the first business accounting workshop under the E.U.-funded NCAVES project;

•Emphasized the importance of moving towards standardized business accounts aligned with the SEEA, which would result in better quality data to feed into the accounts;

•Underscored the need for the statistical community to better understand the data needs of businesses in terms of decision making, accounting and reporting on the environment;

•Welcomed the CEO Water Mandate initiative under the UN Global Compact and its goal of moving towards a common water accounting framework and recommended alignment with the SEEA;

•Welcomed the request of the Committee on Business and Trade Statistics to collaborate and harness synergies on their work stream focusing on the link between business statistics and wellbeing/sustainability.

SEEA

Review of UNCEEA Membership

The Committee:

•Agreed on the importance of the Committee playing a leading strategic role in the field of environmental-economic accounting and agreed on the importance of annual Committee meetings to drive forward the work programme of the Committee, communicate the progress of the working groups to all Committee members and prepare for the UN Statistical Commission;

•Recognized the need to accommodate new members, ensure regional representation and have a suitable balance between countries and international organizations;

•Acknowledged the importance of NSOs in terms of forming the core UNCEEA membership, as well as the need to bring in expertise from non-NSOs for UNCEEA meetings as necessary;

•Recognized the importance of communicating the conclusions of the Committee to all stakeholders, regardless of whether or not they are a member of the Committee;

•Agreed to consider holding WebEx's and preparatory meetings in advance of UNCEEA meetings, as well as shorter presentations during meetings;

•Requested the Bureau of the UNCEEA to come up with a proposal on membership and working methods of the UNCEEA, taking into account the increased number of countries implementing the SEEA and the growing relevance of the SEEA EEA.

SEEA

THANK YOU

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