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Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Environmental Policy

Conference of European Statisticians

**Joint Task Force on Environmental
Statistics and Indicators**

Twelfth session

Geneva, 17-18 November 2016

**Report of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics
and Indicators on its Twelfth Session****I. Attendance**

1. Environmental experts and statisticians from the following countries attended the meeting: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.
2. Representatives of the European Environment Agency (EEA), Group on Earth Observations, Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the United Nations Development Programme in Georgia, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) also attended the meeting.
3. Furthermore, the University of Geneva, the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment and ZOI Environment Network participated in the meeting.

II. Organizational matters

4. The meeting was chaired by Ms. A. Yepbayeva (Kazakhstan).
5. The Joint Task Force adopted the agenda for its twelfth session, as contained in document ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2016/7, as well as the report of its eleventh session (ECE/CEP-CES/GE.1/2016/2), subject to corrections to the text suggested by Azerbaijan, Belarus and Ukraine, which will be issued as a corrigendum.
6. The following substantive topics were discussed at the meeting:

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- (a) Implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the eleventh session of the Joint Task Force;
- (b) Implementation of the recommendations for the production and online sharing of the selected environmental indicators;
- (c) Reviewing statistics and indicators on biodiversity;
- (d) Capacity-building for a Shared Environmental Information System;
- (e) Other business.

III. Decisions and recommendations for work

7. The Joint Task Force asked the secretariat to regularly inform the meeting about the progress of work of the new UNECE Task Force on improving waste statistics. The suggestion of the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians to involve the policy makers in the work of the Task Force was highly welcomed. The following countries expressed their interest in participating in the Task Force: Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation.

8. Following-up on the outcomes of the 11th session, the secretariat will prepare a proposal for the thirteenth session of the Joint Task Force for simple data validation rules. The secretariat will also present a proposal for revised UNECE waste tables.

9. It was agreed that the secretariat will prepare a proposal for revised production templates for the energy indicators in the UNECE online *Guidelines for the application of environmental indicators*. The revision should result in simplified tables, with less redundancy. The list of energy products should be fully consistent with the Standard International Energy Product Classification, better aligned with the IEA Energy Balances, and provide more detail on renewable energy.

10. A review should be carried out on how the revised energy templates could be incorporated into the SEIS reporting application.

11. The Joint Task Force encouraged all member countries to establish a process of coordination and data sharing among all relevant governmental agencies producing energy data. This will facilitate the improvement of data quality, filling of data gaps and improving the granularity of data (e.g. to get more detail on biomass and other renewable energy products).

12. It was suggested to further discuss the nexus energy / climate change / agriculture and forestry in upcoming meetings of the Joint Task Force.

13. A revision of the set of biodiversity indicators in the UNECE Guidelines is proposed. The revision should take into consideration better alignment with biodiversity-related SDG indicators. The experts of the European Environment Agency (and their European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity) and IUCN should be involved in that revision.

14. Future meetings of the Joint Task Force should explore the link between the biodiversity indicators, ecosystem-accounting and ecosystem services.

15. The Joint Task Force asked the secretariat to consider at future meetings the work on modernisation of statistics and the role of non-official data sources for production of environmental statistics and indicators. Topics to be considered include:

(a) Prerequisites for using non-official data sources, such as the existence of an agreed methodology. For example, the use of data produced by the civil society (e.g. hobby ornithologists);

(b) The role of big data and geospatial information.

16. The secretariat should further investigate how the WGEMA network of networks can be utilised as an instrument to improve streamlining of SEIS-related activities of UNEP, EEA, OECD, ECE, GEO and others.

17. It was recommended to present at forthcoming sessions of the Joint Task Force examples of environmental information systems and their products and services, and how these feed into environmental assessment and policy making. The Joint Task Force asked to be informed about the progress with the projects presented at the meeting, such as the UNEP Live Indicator Reporting Information System (IRIS), the EEA project on SEIS in the EU Eastern Partnership countries, etc.

IV. Next meeting of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators

18. The next meeting of the Joint Task Force will be held from 29-30 June 2017 in Geneva.

V. Adoption of the report of the meeting

19. The present report was adopted during the closing session.

20. A summary of the discussion in the substantive sessions of the meeting will be presented in an annex to this report, to be prepared by the secretariat after the meeting.