

Committee on Environmental Policy

Agenda item 6. Environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting

Proposal to convert the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators to a Joint Working Group on Environmental Statistics and Indicators

Twenty-eighth session

1–3 November 2023

Palais des Nations, Geneva



Current situation (2009 - 2023)

Conversion into a standing body



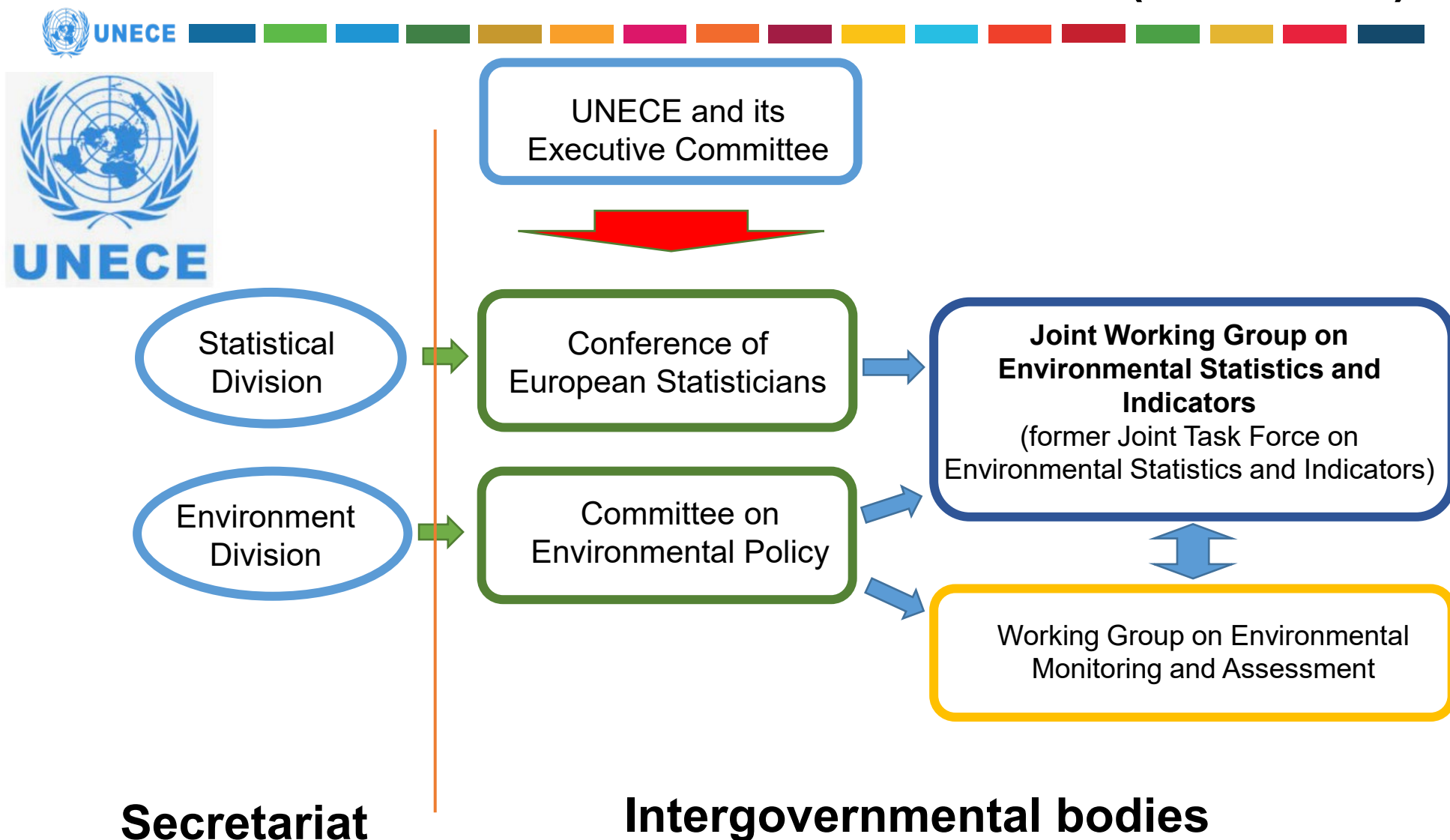
- **JTF has ad-hoc mandate** which needs to be renewed every two years
- **Its ad hoc nature results in lower priority** for conference services

Conversion into a standing body would reflect the reality of a long-term challenge – not a short-term one; **reduce the burden** of processing extensions; maintain interpretation and translation languages; set a clear five-year cycle of review (**it is not permanent**)

- **Tasks are increasing**, e.g. the 7th Pan-European Environmental Assessment and other reports reveal many knowledge gaps
- **Tackles emerging and frontier topics, increasing cross-cutting policy areas that require environmental statistics.**
- Unique body, because of **close cooperation between national statistical offices and environmental ministries/agencies**
- **More and more countries** (in addition to SEE and EECCA) are interested and actively participating in its work, e.g., Austria, Ireland, Luxembourg, Mexico, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland participated in 2022/2023

Extend coverage of topics; extend membership

Implementing the new mandate and terms of reference (2024-2028)



CES support to conversion into a Working Group open for all CES Member Countries



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- **Currently, there is no Working Group/Expert Group** open to all CES Member Countries on **Environment Statistics**.
- Such a group is needed, **similar to other existing groups**, related to economic and social statistics (on National Accounts, Consumer Price Indices, Population statistics, etc.).
- **Strengthen the recognition of environment statistics** as equally important as other statistical domains and **allow for long-term planning** and better **securing of resources** (e.g., within UNECE Secretariat: meeting rooms, interpretation, translation)
- **Collaboration between NSOs and Ministries of Environment (or agencies)** is crucial for the development of high-quality environment statistics
- **Converting the existing JTFESI instead of creating a new body** is resource efficient and avoids duplication of work

Terms of reference (1)



Objectives: Platform for experts from national statistical offices and ministries of environment (or responsible government agencies) for **improving environmental statistics to strengthen environmental reporting and to inform related policy themes**. Provide support to countries to:

- Correctly apply SEIS & open data methodologies in line with statistical standards
- Implement the SEEA and UN FDES
- Produce environmental statistics to inform environment-related policy areas
- Apply environmental indicators in the context of sustainable development, green & circular economy initiatives, climate change, the outcomes of the EfE Conferences and emerging policy themes
- Improve data quality and advise how to overcome data gaps
- Use new or alternative data sources (e.g., remote sensing, “big data” and citizen science)
- Communicate environmental data and policy-relevant information products.

Terms of reference (2)



Outputs include:

- Revised ***Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators*** (and continuous review)
- Improved availability of **harmonized and comparable statistics and indicators** for emerging themes across the region and CES members
- **Can establish thematic expert groups or task forces** to focus on specific issues
- **Strengthened capacity in EECCA and SEE countries** (in using new data sources, applying indicator methodologies, integrated statistics, implementation of SEEA etc.)

Organizational arrangements



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- The Joint Working Group shall:
 - **Meet at least annually**, be composed of experts from **statistical offices & environmental ministries or agencies** from countries of the ECE region & CES members
 - Elect its **Chair and up to two Vice-Chairs for a term of two years** (shall be eligible for re-election for one additional term)
 - **ToR shall be reviewed every 5 years**
 - **Joint secretariat** be provided by the ECE **Environment and Statistical Divisions**;
 - Work shall be **supported by EEA, UNEP and WHO**. It will be **coordinated with OECD**.
 - **Procedural change into a standing body does not imply additional costs: as is the case now, donors shall be asked to provide support for the activities of the Working Group**

Request to CEP



- Asking CEP to support:
 - **Conversion of the Joint Task Force into a standing body - Joint Working Group on Environmental Statistics and Indicators**
 - **Opening up the membership to all countries members of CEP and CES**
 - **Endorse the mandate and TOR of the Working Group, and ask the Secretariat to forward them to the UNECE EXCOM for approval**

Thank you !