

# SYSTEM OF ENVIROMENTAL- ECONOMIC ACCOUNTING (SEEA)

VANUATU NATIONAL STATISTICS OFFICE.

# INTRODUCTION.

- ▶ The Vanuatu National Statistics Office (VNSO), in consultation with national stakeholders, has published a strategy for development of statistics. The Strategy outlines a number of areas where environment statistics are of interest and need to be compiled including: biodiversity; extractive industries; chemical use; water resources; conservation areas; waste management; and emissions.

# BACKGROUND

- ▶ After SEEA workshop in October, 2016, we agreed to work on Land Account and Water Account .
- ▶ However, across environmental sectors, basic data are being compiled by many ministries/departments and the Utilities Regulatory Authority (URA). For example, fisheries, water, land and energy data appear reasonably in place. There is currently no central data repository for environment and spatial data (digital maps). The Vanuatu National Strategy for the Development of Statistics notes that institutional arrangements for coordination have improved since the creation of the Statistical Leadership and Coordination section in the VNSO, but still fall short of ensuring overall level required for the production of official statistics.

# NATIONAL STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM (NSDS)

- ▶ The availability and accessibility of good quality statistical information is an integral part of the policy design and evaluation process; the development of research agendas; and the decision making processes of governments, organisations and communities. As policy and research agendas change, so too does the demand for statistical information.
- ▶ Vanuatu National Strategy for the Development of Statistics, has been developed by the stakeholders in the Vanuatu National Statistical System. It is based on a shared understanding of the key policy issue imperatives and agreement on the areas of priority for statistical data development. It outlines data development actions aimed at improving the statistical information base relevant to these priority areas. This project has been guided by the Paris21 funded technical assistance team working with sectoral task forces for economic, social and demographic and primary sector, environment and climate change statistics.
- ▶ The report does provide the information on:
  - ▶ Current state of the Vanuatu Statistical System (VSS)
  - ▶ Strategies for the VSS
  - ▶ Statistical production strategies
  - ▶ Financing
  - ▶ Sustainability

# Why Land and Water Account

- ▶ Impacts of climate change include water shortages, coastal inundation and erosion of coastlines, relocation of government infrastructure, community relocation, and decreased production of food crops which illustrates the importance of mainstreaming for policy interventions and statistical indicators. VNSO provided training and technical assistance for a UNDP funded pilot survey which included sections relating to climate change resilience, traditional knowledge and disaster preparedness. This could form the basis of a statistical series for climate change and disaster risk reduction after review against the national policy.
- ▶ Statistical data is used by the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) in its work relating to preparedness, response and reconstruction for emergencies at the community level. The NDMO has used the Census data to assess populations at risk and in providing materials and food during emergencies in addition to its own statistical information about risk assessments; however it does not have all the information it requires in a centralised, easily accessible platform.
- ▶ Though NSDS have so much priority to look at, the decision of taking on board the Land and Water account is because of this:
  - ▶ 1. Population is keep increasing and most households depend on substance farming for own consumption as well as small business.
  - ▶ 2. Due to rural -urban drift, water is taken into consideration, ( what will people do if there is not enough water to supply)

# DATA QUALITY

- ▶ The VSS does not have systems in place to regularly consult users, monitor the relevance and utility of existing statistics in meeting their needs as well as considering emerging needs and priorities. This is currently done on an ad hoc basis, when major surveys or policy reviews are conducted and based on feedback received on releases.
- ▶ It is anticipated that the bi-annual meetings of the Statistics Advisory Council to discuss statistical priorities will meet this need; along with the more specialised consultations done by agencies as policies and strategies are developed and reviewed.
- ▶ The Annual Development Report is produced on an annual basis and is the main monitoring and evaluation document used by government and donor agencies for the national development strategy. The report is compiled by the PMO with statistical information provided by the VNSO and agencies in the VSS. There are numerous data gaps because agencies do not include the required information in their annual reports, despite the endorsement from agencies that this will be done: the statistical data and information required are not routinely collected, and updating and data management systems are weak.

## *Continued...*

- ▶ Vanuatu's most recent National Assessment Report for the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA) and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI) contains no statistical information about the environment. There is considerable demand from stakeholders for information about the environment, and a satellite national account for the environment, but Vanuatu lacks the technical equipment and capacity for sustainable statistical data collection and analysis across the country.

- ▶ The VNSO is using the environmental and related socio-economic indicators recommended by the UNSD as the basis for discussion about its environment statistics. It is envisaged that the final environment policy along with the national sustainable development strategy, to be released in late 2015, will incorporate a much stronger emphasis on statistical indicators. Areas included in the VNSO framework include biodiversity, extractive industries, green growth, chemical use, water resources, conservation areas, waste management, emissions, and erosion. Data



# CHALLENGES

The primary challenges in implementing environment statistics include:

- data is spread across many different sectors and located in many different databases;
- some of the databases are project based, and thus not routinely updated (this would reduce the ability to compile consistent time series);
- there are limited staff resources dedicated to environment statistics and technical expertise required for compiling SEEA accounts is not yet developed in Vanuatu (VNSO is beginning its efforts on environmental statistics and accounting); and
- improving data sharing will take strong commitment and investment over time.

# RECOMENDATION

- ▶ VNSO needs more staff training particular in SEEA field.
- ▶ We need another to have another mission of the ESCAP team to VNSO to revisit the stakeholders and solve the issue of limited access for data sharing.
- ▶ Since VNSO is per mandate, SEEA should be address importantly to the statistics advisory council to coordinate the gathering of users and producers of statistics together and promote further data and information sharing.
- ▶ Enforce the SEEA committee which was proposed during the Oct,2016 workshop in Port Vila.