

Note that these minutes only mean to capture the main discussion topics and action items from the meeting and do not represent a full view of the discussion. However, the meeting was recorded and if you would like the recording contact Ralf Heidrich.

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## I. Introduction

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The expert consultation was held virtually on Wednesday 23 September 2020 2:00 PM- 5:00 PM and on Thursday 24 September 2020 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM (East Africa Time). The purpose of the meeting was to present the final methodology adopted for the Measuring Progress report, detailed publication outline and to discuss experts' contribution and support for the development of the publication.

The following people attended the meeting (alphabetical by first name): Abdelmenam Mohamed, UNEP; Adrien Comte, CIRED; Alison Fairbrass, University College London; Ana Vukoje, UNEP; Anne Bowser, Wilson Center; Arman Bidarbakht Nia, United Nations ESCAP; Bianca Wernecke, South African Medical Research Council; Bob Chen, Colombia University; Brennan VanDyke, UNEP; Caradee Wright, South African Medical Research Council; Carolina Soto-Navarro, UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre; Charles Sebukeera, UNEP; Dany Ghafari, UNEP; Diana Ngina, UNEP; Fraisl Dilek, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA); Hayden Dahmm, SDSN Thematic Research Network on Data and Statistics (TReNDS); Hilary Allison, UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre; Huadong Guo, Chinese Academy of Sciences; Huang Lei, Aerospace Information Research Institute, CAS; Ivonne Lobos Alva, Stockholm Environment Institute; Jie Liu, Aerospace Information Research Institute, CAS; Jillian Campbell, The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); Jinhua Zhang, UNEP; Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); Katia Karousakis, OECD; Liping Li, Chinese Academy of Sciences; Ludgarde Coppens, UNEP; Maurice Otieno, Individual Environmental Consultant; Mito Tsukamoto, ILO; Myriam Linster, OECD Environment Directorate; Neil Burgess, UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre; Nga Vū Thị Thanh, Department of Environment and Sustainable Development; Institute of Strategy, Policy on Natural Resources and Environment (ISPONRE); Noelle Kumpel, Birdlife International; Oskar Lecuyer, Agence Française de Développement; Paul Ekins, University College London; Pierre Boileau, UNEP; Ralf Heidrich, UNEP; Ruth Onkangi; See Linda, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA); Stefano Pagiola, World Bank; Steven Ramage, Group on Earth Observations; Therese El Gemayel, UNEP; Thierry De Oliveira, UNEP; Wang Meng, Chinese Academy of Sciences; Wondwosen Asnake Kibret, UNEP; Xiaosong Li, Chinese Academy of Sciences

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## II. Minutes

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The Measuring Progress report aims to provide a relevant analysis which is useful for the UN Environment Assembly 5 in February 2021 and Convention on Biological Diversity CoP in 2021. Additionally, a 3<sup>rd</sup> Measuring Progress report which will have a focus on strong sustainability and will be prepared for the Stockholm [+50 conference in 2022](#) – the 3<sup>rd</sup> version will focus on an analysis of global sustainability gaps using a Sustainability Gap Index approach.

During the first day, Alison Fairbrass (University College London) presented the final adopted methodology for the report, along with presenting part of the obtained results. In addition, Therese El Gemayel (UNEP) presented the draft report outline and was approved with the experts attending the meeting.

The discussions of the first day sessions revolved around:

- The report needs to include a section that presents the difference between correlation and causality and clearly define which approach is used in the development of this publication.
- The focus of this report on the direct drivers of change, rather than indirect drivers, due to the complexity of the causal relationships between components of the DPSIR framework.
- The publication includes a section on positive outlier countries whose underlying data suggests that, in respect to some indicators they are outperforming other countries in terms of their responses and state of their environment. Experts suggested using the mean of several years of data to offset data variability, rather than visual assessment and to have an investigative perspective to understand the actual situation of outlier countries. In addition, shed a light on the physical specifications and limitations of countries, in terms of territory size or population.
- Experts stressed on the investigative nature of outlier countries (whether positive or negative outliers) to understand and be able to validate the data based on actual facts, rather than inaccurate data.
- The discussion also focused on the reason why only 30 indicators were included in the analysis, which is the result of unavailability of data to analyse potential synergies between other pairs of indicators. Data gaps was emphasized further with the absence of indicators from Goal 13 (climate change). It is imperative to highlight the impact of data gaps and shortages on the outcomes of the report and to identify where investments in sound data collection and data systems need to be done.
- It was agreed to define nature in the publication in the context of the SDGs only, rather than defining nature in general.
- The need to ensure the complimentary role of the publication instead of overlapping with other assessments.
- Experts suggested to emphasize on the use of indicators and their sub-indicators for the analysis.
- Given the current situation, the context of the COVID-19 pandemic should not be ignored in the report, perhaps by considering where impacts will be captured by the SDG indicators.
- It was agreed to include additional case studies from different regions, based on the availability of information and experts' commitments.

The second day meeting included one session focusing on the role of experts in the development of this publication, experts' contributions based on their expertise and presentation of the proposed timeline and delivery of sections.