

**Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation
National Statistical Office**

**Dated 24th Pausha, Saka 1942
14th January, 2021**

NCAVES India Forum 2021

1. In 2017, the European Union initiated a project, “Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services” (NCAVES) in 2017 to help nations advance the knowledge on environmental-economic accounting, in particular ecosystem accounting, that can help in ensuring sustainable economic growth. The NCAVES Project is being implemented in five countries – India, Brazil, China, Mexico and South Africa - by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Secretariat of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD).
2. The Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation has taken up several initiatives under the NCAVES Project during the past three years. With a view to disseminate the activities taken up by the Ministry under the Project and to highlight the uses to which natural capital accounts can be put, especially in the areas of decision making and policy analysis, the Ministry is conducting NCAVES India Forum (in a virtual format), in collaboration with United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), European Union and UN Environment.
3. Three live sessions of NCAVES India Forum 2021 are scheduled to be held on January 14, 21 and 28, 2021. The first session of the event held today was dedicated to the discussions on the efforts made by India and the international agencies in the domain of natural capital accounting and valuation of the ecosystem services. The session witnessed a remarkable participation from all over the globe. The recordings of the live event are available on web-portal – <http://ncavesindiaforum.in>.
4. The event started with Dr. Kshatrapati Shivaji, Secretary, MoSPI stressing on the fact that MoSPI, as the focal point for national statistical system, has to play a crucial role in coordinating and harmonizing the data systems in the country and the Ministry is geared up to redefine its roles and responsibilities in line with the national priorities and to strengthen India’s national statistical system to provide timely inputs for policy and stronger dissemination practices for public. He also highlighted that the adoption of the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA) is one of the initiatives taken up by the Ministry in line with this vision.
5. The Hon’ble Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) of Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation and Ministry of Planning, Rao Inderjit Singh, in his address, emphasized that the Ministry strives for timely generation & dissemination of data for evidence-based policy-making and that the adoption of the latest frameworks in place for environment statistics and environment accounts is part of its continuous endeavour to be in sync with changing policy paradigm.
6. Mr. Ugo Astuto, Ambassador of the European Union to India, complimented MOSPI on its efforts and stressed upon the fact that the Natural Capital Accounting is important especially in view of the requirement to have science-based data driven policy to address the issues related to environment like climate change and biodiversity. He also stated that since Natural Capital Accounting has been in vogue since the late 1980’s, with an explicit SEEA strategy in place, there was a lot of scope for sharing

of best practices and peer-learning and that the European Union would continue to support India in its future endeavours in this domain.

7. During the Session, a report on the activities taken up by MOSPI under the NCAVES Project was released. The report gives gist of the compilations made by MOSPI on various environmental goods and services, as released by the Ministry in its publications, EnviStats India. The report also highlights some of the pilot exercises undertaken by the Ministry as part of the NCAVES Project.

8. Presentations on linking environment with economic growth and sustainable development were made by Bert Kroese, Chair, UN Committee of Experts on Environment Economic Accounting and Gemma Van Halderen, Director, UNESCAP. Their focus was basically on the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA). They underscored the importance of using a conceptual framework that integrates scientific and economic data with traditional accounting principles. They also pointed out that SEEA can help in assessing the sustainability of economic growth by accounting for the changes in the stocks and flows of natural resources and the environment.

9. The panel discussion, with Stefan Schweinfest, Director, UNSD, Susan Gardner, Director, UNEP, Karin Erika Kemper, Director, World Bank and Dr. Shailja Sharma, Director General (Statistics) as panelists, was the highlight of the Day. The discussion was moderated by the Mr. Pravin Srivastava, ex-Chief Statistician of India. The panelists shared their rich experiences and complimented MOSPI for the achievements made under the NCAVES Project in the past three years. They also stressed that it had become imminent, especially for developing countries like India, to ensure that mechanisms are set up for systematic considerations of the environment in all economic decisions. Dr. Sharma gave insights into MoSPI's future course of action planned for the implementation of the SEEA framework and described in detail about the efforts taken by the Ministry in alignment with the global objectives. The panelists were unanimous in their expectations that MOSPI could soon become the front-runner in the field of environment accounting.

10. The second day of the event on January 21, 2021 will feature the address of Hon'ble Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Prakash Javadekar on the future of environmental governance in India. The second day will also witness participation from Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Ms. Elizabeth Mrema, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and Mr. Elliott Harris, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Chief Economist, United Nations.

11. Through the forum, the Ministry targets to showcase Government's efforts in making environment a key dimension in our policy paradigm and welcomes active participation of all stakeholders in the NCAVES India Forum 2021.
