

**Welcome remarks from Mr. Christian Friis Bach,  
Executive Secretary, UNECE**

**Expert Group on Resource Classification, Eighth Session, 25-28 April**

**Welcome Address: 26 April (15:00 hrs), Salle XII**

Welcome to the eighth session of the Expert Group on Resource Classification.

As you may know we have our Commission session here this week which is why I could not join you this morning.

All of us who are gathered here this week to focus on resource classification are faced with an imperative to prepare for the next 15 years. To deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is our task.

You are more than 200 experts from over 60 countries who have come together here today. You have a role in making clean and affordable energy accessible to all. Some of you have a mandate to assure the supply of the critical raw materials that farmers need for food production or physicians need to obtain essential medicines. Others of you may be engaged in ensuring environmental protection and safety.

We can accomplish these tasks only if we change our narrative on resources. The old story of producing volumes at least cost was unbalanced. There was insufficient appreciation of the impact of the activities on people and the planet, which is why we produce more “waste” than useful things, be it CO<sub>2</sub> or other wastes. In the era of the SDGs, our aim should be to create value and minimize “waste”.

One in five people lacks access to modern electricity today.

About 2.6 billion people in the developing world do not get electricity full time.

3 billion people rely on wood, coal, charcoal or animal waste for cooking and heating.

Should the global population reach 9.6 billion by 2050, the equivalent of almost three planets could be required to provide the natural resources needed to sustain current lifestyles with current consumption patterns. These are challenges that we must meet.

As the great Chinese General Sun Tzu said, “never fight a war you cannot win”. But we know that this is a struggle we can win if we all work together. We are aware that as the world’s economies shifts to less energy-intensive industries and as countries implement policies for improving energy efficiency, almost all regions are showing a reduction in the carbon intensity of GDP. Global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per unit of value added showed a steady decline between 1990 and 2013, a decrease of about 30 per cent.

By extension, reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per unit of GDP is something we can do. This is also the case with all the other SDG targets. They are all within our reach.

While celebrating 70 years of UNECE, I take great pride in the continued development of UNFC, one of our flagship products. I find the recent developments in UNFC very promising and affirmative in tackling the challenges the world faces in attaining the SDGs. The credit for making UNFC the futuristic resource management tool goes to each one of you. Each one of you has put in your best efforts to make UNFC an instrument that is “fit-for-purpose”.

UNFC applies to traditional energy and mineral sectors. However, the recent breakthroughs have been its expansion to renewable energy, to injection projects for geological storage and to managing anthropogenic resources. UNFC now touches all facets of resource management, be it proactive waste management, social and environmental issues, or competencies in human resources.

The comprehensive and robust system you have developed is a tool that can help address tomorrow’s challenges. It can help international bodies in policy analyses, governments in their

natural resource management, businesses in process management and financial agencies in efficient capital allocation.

Several national and international systems are now aligned with UNFC, and several more will come in the future, the first of which I note is with China on both solid minerals and petroleum. What the United Nations now wants to see is for this alignment to be taken to the next levels.

Having a universal classification system whereby all resources – energy and minerals – can be presented comparably is of great value both for natural resource management and for investment decisions.

For this to happen, this expert group must continue to be the platform where all of you can come and strengthen our systems together. This is an open, inclusive and highly focused international group, enthusiastically available to accomplish these tasks. We now seek increased collaboration with our long-standing partners, within the spirit of win-win, without losing sight even for a moment of our commitment to the 2030 Agenda.

I am encouraged by UNFC's wider application in Russian Federation, the Nordic countries, the entire African region and by many other countries. Some international organizations engage continuously with the EGRC, and the numbers are growing.

Today, I welcome the participation of the African Union, the African Mineral Development Centre (AMDC), International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) and International Energy Forum (IEF) as the latest additions to this group. I do not forget the scores of other international organizations, UNECE and non-UNECE government bodies, companies, professional associations, academia, civil society organizations and individual experts who are present today and with whom we have longstanding relationships.

What you are delivering through UNFC is an exceptional and invaluable public service. The efforts put in by you personally, and by your respective governments, organizations and companies are immeasurable. UNECE is committed to finding additional resources to support this activity.

UNFC's work has become very vast, covering many areas. As many as 12 sub-groups with well over 150 experts are active throughout the year in developing different aspects of UNFC. I urge each one of you here who is a newcomer or who has not yet actively engaged with UNFC to not leave this meeting before joining the sub-groups in your area of interest.

As I mentioned, the world is facing great challenges. We are fighting against extreme poverty, hunger and deprivation. To meet these challenges sustainably, energy and minerals have to be produced in a responsible manner. While I wish you a productive meeting, I also request you to remain vigilant and responsive to the task of realizing the 2030 Agenda.

Thank you.

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