

Welcome remarks
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Executive Secretary, UNECE

Expert Group on Resource Management, Tenth Session
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Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. Welcome to this tenth session of the Expert Group on Resource Management.

This is the second time I have had the privilege to address you. I am pleased to see that this Expert Group is meeting under a new name, with a reinvigorated purpose, that responds to a request from our member States. The **broadened focus**, not only **on resource classification** but **also on resource management** addresses the needs of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the policy guidance that frames our efforts towards achieving the SDGs.

I would like to acknowledge that the Expert Group has been very active. This is reflected in the broad uptake of the UN Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC). Moreover, as a Group, you have not been content with the status quo. You have been innovative in moving beyond classification and are working on developing a UN Resource Management System (or UNRMS). The UNRMS is fully in line with the 2030 Agenda. **I wholly support your ambitions to develop the UNRMS as a universal standard and as a tool kit for sustainable management of resources.**

I am also encouraged that the European Union, African Union and many resource-rich countries such as the Russian Federation, Ukraine, China, and Mexico are making UNFC the fulcrum for their new sustainable resource management paradigm.

The 2030 Agenda is a lofty vision. To deliver on all 169 targets requires perseverance. **More than anything, we need standards.** Standards ensure that human and societal development aligns with environmental objectives and sustainability. They make sure that the right levers are pulled, and in the right direction.

Resources are essential for attaining the 2030 Agenda. But our record of resource production and use is littered with many unsustainable practices. Most of these are value-eroding, and could be the result of having a fragmented view of a vast interconnected system.

Moving forward, **we need new strategies, new standards and new tools, so that we can ensure resources are available when required.** And all without threatening the future of the planet and the well-being of its present and future inhabitants. Sometimes we need to “un-learn” what we have learned, and “re-learn” from a new perspective. It has been said: “if a factory is torn down, but the rationale that produced it is left standing, then that rationale will simply produce another factory of the same nature”.

The world cannot afford sub-optimal resource management. **The standards we have been using need modernization.** We cannot allow resource production and use to follow the linear models of the past. These approaches were marked by inefficiencies, waste and “short-termism” and they continue to slow progress.

We must learn that the long game will be characterized by maximum efficiency and zero waste. This approach will enlarge our resource base.

Your work to develop a resource management system needs to be attuned to this requirement. You are engaged in an activity whose boundaries are extensive and all-encompassing. It will inaugurate a new era in sustainable resource production and use.

UNECE and the UN are committed to this goal. “Sustainable use of natural resources” is one of the four interconnected areas in UNECE, that we call nexus themes, and on which we collaborate across sectoral lines to advance multiple SDGs in a holistic manner. (The others being “Sustainable and Smart Cities”, “Sustainable Mobility and Smart Connectivity”, and “Measuring and Monitoring the SDGs”.) The work of this group is at the heart of sustainable use of natural resources.

As members of the Expert Group, you all contribute your time voluntarily. I know you do so because you are inspired by the goals of our work and because you are passionate about making a difference. **I feel this passion in the room and I thank you for your commitment and dedication.**

This year, the annual meeting has again assembled a large number of participants representing governments, international organizations, industry, professional societies, NGOs, civil society and academia. **I warmly welcome each one of you**, and wish you every success as you work on UNFC and UNRMS.

I look forward to learning about the outcomes of your discussions and the decisions you make to ensure the development and global adoption of the UN Resource Management System.

Thank you.
