



What UNECE does for you

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 4 – 10 October 2006

UNECE works for your future energy resources



Interview with Clark Talkington, Secretary of the UNECE Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Harmonization of Fossil Energy and Mineral Resources

to petroleum (oil and natural gas) and uranium, and was renamed the UNFC for Fossil Energy and Mineral Resources. ECOSOC in its resolution 2004/233 invited the Member States of the United Nations, international organizations and the UN regional commissions to consider taking appropriate measures for ensuring

the subject of great debate, and often misunderstanding.

Simply put, the “Resource” refers to all quantities of petroleum, natural gas, coal, or other mineral in the ground, even if not economically or technically recoverable.

“Recoverable resources” are those

Why do we need to harmonize fossil energy and mineral resources?

Clark Talkington: Establishing a complete picture of the current and future energy supply base is necessary for effective resources management. Accurate and consistent estimates of fossil energy and mineral reserves and resources are the foundation for such assessments. A number of different standards have evolved over time in response to local needs. They are by their very nature not built to serve the needs that arise in a globalized economy. As a result, there is growing interest in developing common and universally applicable standards for estimating and reporting energy and mineral reserves and resources.

In the 1990s, the UNECE took the initiative to develop a simple, user-friendly and uniform system for classifying and reporting reserves and resources of solid fuels and mineral commodities in response to the interest of member countries in developing a standard reporting system.

The result of these efforts was the creation of the United Nations Framework Classification for Reserves and Resources of Solid Fuels and Mineral Commodities (UNFC) that was endorsed by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1997. The UNFC for minerals has been applied in over 60 countries worldwide. In 2004, the Classification was extended to also apply



Gullfaks Field, Norway

Photo courtesy of Norwegian Petroleum Directorate

its worldwide application. This effort is being led by the UNECE Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Harmonization of Fossil Energy and Mineral Resources Terminology.

You mention the terms “reserves” and “resources.” Is there a difference?

There is a significant difference. The appropriate application of the terms is often an inexact science and can be

quantities anticipated to be recovered from the estimated resources. In fact, many classifications allow for “inferred” or “suggested” resources, whereby one may presume that the resource exists based on proximity to known resources or favourable geologic conditions.

“Reserve” on the other hand is the technically and economically recoverable portion of the Recoverable Resource.

