



Economic Commission for Europe**Committee on Sustainable Energy****Twenty-eighth session**

Geneva, 25-27 September 2019

Item 5(c) of the provisional agenda

Sustainable resource management:**Groups of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems and Gas and Expert Group on Resource Management:
Mandates and work plans****An overview of the United Nations Framework Classification
for Resources Update****Note by the secretariat****I. Introduction**

1. The Expert Group on Resource Management, which is responsible for the development and deployment of the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC), at its tenth session, Geneva, Switzerland, 29 April - 2 May 2019, recommended that the language in UNFC be revisited to be inclusive of the full spectrum of the various sectors and stakeholders of UNFC, and be fully aligned with the requirements of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda). The system now applies to minerals, petroleum, renewable energy, injection projects for geological storage, anthropogenic resources and work on groundwater resources is progressing. Modifications have been made to improve UNFC since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2016, notably by adding guidance on social, environmental and other related aspects.

2. The Expert Group further recommended that the updated and harmonized text of UNFC be prepared in time for submission to the Committee on Sustainable Energy at its twenty-eighth session, 25-27 September 2019. The Expert Group tasked the Bureau, in close cooperation with all the sub-groups of the Expert Group, to undertake this updating and harmonization of the language in UNFC. The updated UNFC should be distributed to the Expert Group for information prior to submission to the Committee.

3. The Expert Group at its tenth session also recommended to engage with new stakeholders (statistics users, developing countries, renewable energy sectors, etc.) to clarify specific requirements of a classification system to meet their needs and to build consensus on the value of UNFC. The Expert Group requested the Bureau of the Expert Group ensure this engagement and outreach and to do so before end-2019.

4. The Expert Group further recommended to simplify and update the UNFC category and subcategory definitions in order to build a framework that will be of greater value for the expanded system United Nations Resource Management System (UNRMS), and to provide efficient, digital tools to aid the understanding and use of UNFC. UNRMS is proposed as a sustainable resource management system with UNFC at the core, and in addition include

more standards and guidelines on aspects such as social and environmental aspects, competent person requirements and commercial aspects. The Expert Group requested the Bureau, in close cooperation with all the sub-groups of the Expert Group, to prepare a first draft by end-January 2020. The Expert Group noted the need to ensure that any update of the UNFC category and subcategory definitions should be closely aligned and linked to the development of UNRMS. Both UNFC and UNRMS are closely aligned to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's (ECE) nexus work on sustainable use of natural resources.

II. Updated UNFC

5. UNFC is a tool to communicate the availability of resources and maturity of projects to make use of these resources. The objective is achieved by providing generic principles and harmonized terminology for classifying these projects and potential projects and their associated resources. Deriving its vision from the global requirements, UNFC is designed as a system to facilitate the supply of energy and raw materials required for sustainable development. The emerging challenges in these sectors are the sustainable, socially conscious, environmentally-friendly, carbon neutral and efficient development, production and use of energy and raw materials that are required for a growing population of the planet.

6. Further, UNFC is an internationally applicable scheme for the classification of energy and raw material resource projects at all stages of development, as well as national and regional level assessments, and is currently the only classification in the world to do so. UNFC reflects conditions in the economic, environmental and social domain, including markets and government framework conditions, social and environmental considerations, technological and industrial maturity of the projects and the ever-present uncertainties and is aligned to the requirements of the 2030 Agenda. It provides a single framework on which to build international energy and raw material studies and policies, support government resource management policies, plan industrial processes innovation and allocate capital efficiently.

7. A generic principle-based system, UNFC classifies quantities according to the three fundamental criteria of:

- (a) social, environmental and economic viability (E);
- (b) field project status and feasibility (F), and;
- (c) general level of knowledge / confidence in the estimates (G).

8. The updated UNFC, as contained in ECE/ENERGY/125 and ECE Energy Series 61, incorporates language that is inclusive of the full spectrum of the various commodities and stakeholders of UNFC. There will be no substantive change in the application of UNFC as a result of this revision.

III. Recommendations

9. The Committee on Sustainable Energy is invited to take note of the updated UNFC as contained in in ECE/ENERGY/125 and ECE Energy Series 61.

10. Noting that the Expert Group on Resource Management at its tenth session recommended to simplify and update the UNFC category and subcategory definitions in order to build a framework that will be of greater value for the United Nations Resource Management System (UNRMS), the Committee on Sustainable Energy is invited to request the Expert Group to simplify and update the UNFC category and sub-category definitions as soon as possible and to issue the updated document as an ECE Energy Series publication and to do so in all UN languages to facilitate its global application and deployment.