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**Welcome remarks**

**by**

**Ms. Olga Algayerova**

**United Nations Under-Secretary-General**

**Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

**at the**

**CoP26 - Climate-neutral housing – Decarbonizing the housing stock in an inclusive and affordable way side event**

**4 November 2021,**

**13:15**

**Glasgow, Lomond Auditorium SEC**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests,  
Colleagues,

I am extremely proud to welcome you to the *Climate-neutral housing – Decarbonizing the housing stock in an inclusive and affordable way* side event today. I would like to thank Glasgow City Councillor, Ms. Susan Aitken for her continued support and appreciate the valuable partnership with Housing Europe and UN-Habitat in the #Housing2030 initiative.

Buildings have the largest potential for improving energy efficiency and mitigating greenhouse gas emissions. However, on a practical level, decarbonizing buildings is very costly.

In the UNECE region even before the recent increase in energy prices almost 42 million faced arrears on their utility bills; more than 52 million could not keep their home adequately warm; and these numbers are growing. There is a need in developing innovative housing construction and renovation programmes that promote carbon neutrality that are affordable for all. Such programmes are essential to meeting the related SDGs, the goals of the Paris Agreement as well as to ensure protection of the vulnerable groups in order to not to *leave anyone behind*.

In 2015, the 56 UNECE member States endorsed the **Geneva Charter on Sustainable Housing**. The Charter is based on four interconnected principles: Environmental protection; Economic effectiveness; Social inclusion and participation; and Cultural adequacy.

Based on the principles of the Charter, in 2021, the “**#Housing2030: Effective policies for affordable housing in the UNECE region**”

study was developed which focuses on solutions to the housing affordability crisis in the UNECE region. It addresses four topics:

- (1) Housing governance and regulation;
- (2) Access to finance and funding;
- (3) Access and availability of land for housing construction; and
- (4) Climate-neutral housing construction and renovation.**

Together with the study, an interactive web portal was launched and contains best practices, online trainings and publications.

We invite you all to share information your experiences and best practices on the web page [www.housing2030.org](http://www.housing2030.org).

Today we will discuss the **toolkit on affordable climate neutral housing**. We will also speak about the “**Place and Life in the ECE – A Regional Action Plan 2030**” which was endorsed just last month by UNECE Ministers responsible for housing and urban development. I believe it is a powerful document which provides us with clear priorities to make housing in the UNECE region more sustainable, energy-efficient and affordable for all.

The Regional Action Plan developed with the support of the Glasgow Urban Lab, a UNECE Centre of Excellence which is a partnership between The Glasgow School of Art and Glasgow City Council for capacity building on sustainable urban development.

Just yesterday we signed up 12 new centres of excellence in our network of the **High-Performance Building Initiative**. We would ask you to join – it is a great opportunity to deliver tangible results now and, in the future.

I wish us a dynamic and fruitful dialogue. Let us work together to make cities more sustainable, and a better place to live in. Thank you.