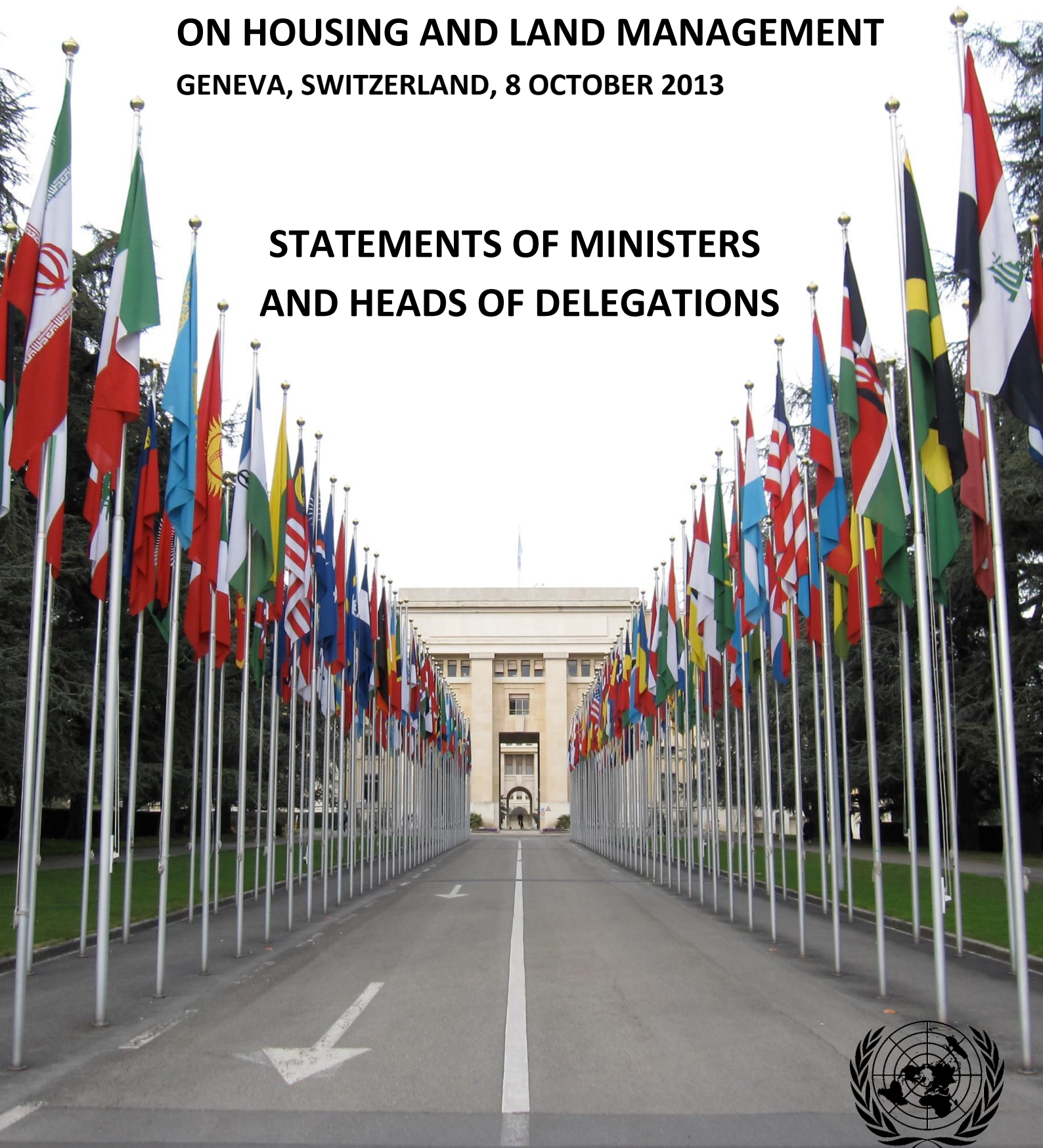


MINISTERIAL MEETING

ON HOUSING AND LAND MANAGEMENT

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, 8 OCTOBER 2013

STATEMENTS OF MINISTERS AND HEADS OF DELEGATIONS



United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

**Statements of Ministers
and Heads of Delegations
at the Ministerial Meeting on
Housing and Land Management,
Geneva, 8 October 2013**



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Foreword

Ministerial meetings on Housing and Land Management are organized by the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management every six years and aim to raise the awareness and the political commitment of governments in the region to the development and implementation of policies on housing, urban development, land administration and land management.

The Third Ministerial Meeting on Housing and Land Management was held on 8 October 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland. Its three main objectives were: first, to learn about the progress that UNECE member States have made in developing sustainable housing and land management systems; second, to learn about the needs of member States as they work to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow; and, third, to agree on a strategy that member States, the United Nations and all of our partners can implement to meet these needs.

The Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region for 2014-2020, adopted at the meeting, sets out a framework for the implementation of commitments to: encourage more energy-efficient housing; improve access to adequate, affordable, healthy and secure housing; encourage investment in housing; and encourage efficient land use in rural and urban areas.

The present report compiles the speeches made by ministers responsible for housing, spatial planning and land administration and heads of delegations of thirty countries of the UNECE region. The fruitful discussion at the Ministerial Meeting, as mirrored in this report, provided a great opportunity to examine the strengths and weaknesses of different institutions in different countries and to identify what works best in different situations. In addition, I trust that this discussion, together with the Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management, will guide the work and activities of UNECE member States for years to come.

Sven Alkalaj
Executive Secretary
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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Summary

Member State delegations discussed the challenges, progress made, and actions taken with regard to housing and land management in their countries at the Ministerial Meeting on Housing and Land Management on 8 October 2013.

The meeting consisted of three sessions that reflected the main areas of the Committee's work – housing, land management, and urban development.

At the first session on housing, delegations emphasized the importance of developing energy-efficient housing as part of an overall national energy strategy. This included setting standards for new residences as well as refurbishing existing residences. Many countries had state funds to support refurbishment but, even then, the most important source of potential funding for these initiatives remained the private sector.

It was noted that, in many cases, even when population growth was low, the demand for housing was increasing. This resulted from higher incomes, smaller household sizes and, sometimes, an influx of migrants or refugees. This increased demand often resulted in housing shortages and increased housing prices. Member States were meeting this challenge by attempting to encourage private sector investment in the housing sector.

At the same time, it was noted that growth in the housing stock had to be well-planned. The 2008 crisis had shown that an over-reliance on housing development to stimulate the economy combined with unsustainable financing methods could have very negative economic effects and, in some countries, there were still undesirably high levels of mortgage debt.

In a number of countries, the increase in demand described above, and resulting price increases, had created a serious problems of access to housing for the poor and other vulnerable groups. This challenge was being met with a combination of state-funded programmes and efforts to attract private sector investment in more affordable housing.

Member States also discussed informal settlements, which posed a major housing challenge in some areas of the ECE region. Informal settlements are largely unregulated, the resulting housing cannot be bought or sold in the formal housing market and the land in question cannot be used to its full potential as a resource for growth. To address this issue, several member States were pursuing regularization programmes in order to incorporate some of this informal housing into the formal economy.

In some countries with former centrally planned economies, it was noted that developing efficient management systems for multi-family dwellings and communal properties remained a challenge.

Some member States reported on the negative effects of natural disasters on citizens and homes, and noted the importance of developing disaster-resilient housing as well as improved land management and urban planning.

A number of delegations referred to their countries' cooperation with international organizations in order to improve their housing sector. These programmes included partnerships: with UNISDR to improve disaster preparedness; with the United Nations Development Programme to improve housing energy efficiency; and with the ECE to identify priority areas for improvement in housing and land management.

Member States also emphasized the importance of participation in the international community in order to exchange experiences; and noted the role of the ECE in coordinating policy discussions and advising member States.

At the second session on land management, member States reported significant changes to the structure and operation of land administration agencies in recent years. These organizations had increased the number of services and amount of data available online, often while streamlining their operations and reducing costs. The changing roles of the public and private sector in land registration and mapping were noted. This was, in part, due to the recent financial crisis, which had reduced Government budgets, leading, in some cases, to the outsourcing of some operations and services.

Several delegations reported changes in their formatting of geospatial reference data. In European Union countries, these changes were made to bring geospatial referencing in line with the requirements outlined in the Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (INSPIRE), established by directive 2007/2/EC of the European Parliament. In countries which recently established private-property ownership, these changes were made to standardize property boundaries and to create some of the basic data required for the regularization of informal settlements.

Member States also noted the importance of international cooperation and the importance of data interoperability between countries.

Finally, during the last session on urban development, member States noted that effective spatial planning was essential for improving citizens' quality of life and developing sustainable housing; nonetheless, different spatial-planning approaches might be necessary for different countries, based on their unique socioeconomic conditions.

Planning for housing was highlighted as an essential component of spatial planning. Member States discussed how spatial planning policy was used in their countries to encourage energy-efficient housing, the modernization of building stock and the provision of affordable housing.

Urban sprawl was highlighted by a number of delegations as a problem for city management and a cause of diminishing agricultural land. New spatial planning policies were being developed to meet this challenge.

Member States expressed support for the Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region 2014-2020 (ECE/HBP/2013/3). They also expressed appreciation for the work of the Committee in providing a platform to allow member States to discuss housing, land management and spatial planning.

The Ministerial Meeting adopted the strategy as a basis for its further work until 2020.



Statements of Ministers and Heads of Delegations

ALBANIA

Filoretta Kodra

**Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary,
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Albania to the United Nations Office and other international organizations**



Honourable Ministers,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and gentleman,

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to represent Albania today in this Ministerial meeting. This is a unique opportunity for us to exchange experiences and to inform on progress made and future challenges in housing, land administration and urban development.

But let me start my speech by saying that HOUSING MATTERS! For Albanians (but I am sure not only) housing is the most precious possession.

Unfortunately, affordable housing is still one of the enduring challenges of Albanian modern society. An adequate house, and not just a roof over one's head, is one of the fundamental human rights and a matter of social justice. Nevertheless, it is also a matter of economic productivity.

Albania has lost more than 8% of its population during the last 20 years, because of decreasing birth rates and emigration. It is due to the remittances of migrants that investments in housing during the same period contributed to increasing the housing stock by 41%. However planning policies did not support these investments, which led to informal settlements.

Our society is very proactive and entrepreneurial, young and full of energy, but we need to support this with policies, laws and regulations and offer opportunities, so that these energies are directed properly. It is estimated that the value of the "dead capital" invested in informal housing is around USD 7-9 billion and we cannot ignore this locked-up investment.

Addressing the problem of access to affordable and adequate housing is one of the major challenges of every government and the Albanian government has a strong commitment to address it. Since 2007, when the law on social housing was adopted by the Parliament in 2004, the government of Albania has provided the first social housing stock for 1,100 households and subsidized mortgage loans interest for more than 1,500 households.

Legalization of informal settlements also stands as a priority for the new government that took office on 23 September 2013. There are some 300,000 informal houses, which are eligible for legalization. The government is developing a detailed policy for addressing different categories of informality with a special attention to vulnerable groups.

The Albanian government is devoted to improve housing legislation with the aim of guaranteeing that housing as a human right, be supplied with adequate quality and energy efficiency and to be affordable for all, especially for those in need. This will be achieved through promoting public-private partnerships and creating an enabling environment for the private sector through urban planning instruments and an improved land administration system.

These are some of the reasons why Albania has supported the development of the ECE Strategy for sustainable housing and land management. The strategy that will be adopted today will be the basis for developing our national strategy.

There is much, much more to do, but I believe that working together we can ensure that people live in affordable and adequate housing, that poor and vulnerable groups living in informal settlements are integrated into social and economic life, that there is a future for the young generation and much more.

To this end we will establish a common platform for Urban and Housing dialogue in the Western Balkans, which will be used to promote good practices in the region and facilitate exchange of experience on pressing housing and urban development issues.

Thank you.

ARMENIA

Samvel Tadevosyan

Minister of Urban Development



Dear Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, Ministers and Heads of Delegations, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me to greet all participants of the Ministerial Meeting and express my special appreciation to the Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, which over the years has contributed significantly to the improvement and harmonization of housing policy, urban development, land use and spatial planning in member states in the region. Serving as a forum for exchange of views among the Member States, the Committee contributes to the harmonization of their actions and their fuller integration into the world economy.

Armenia is extremely interested in expanding and strengthening this cooperation, as well as developing initiatives in all aspects of the UN Commission, including that of urban development.

While presenting to your attention some information on housing policy, urban development and spatial planning in the Republic of Armenia after 2000, I think it is necessary to note that our problems are similar to those of countries with transitional economies but differ in their scale. This is due to the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in Spitak, high seismicity throughout the country, widespread hazardous geotechnical phenomena, as well as the geopolitical situation in the country.

In light of this, the main challenges in housing policy implementation in our country are:

- the presence of a large number of families in need of housing
- poor housing conditions and, as a result, a large number of multi-family housing needing rehabilitation using energy-saving and energy-efficient technologies
- management problems in existing housing.

The importance of resolving these problems needs clear identification of our housing policy's objectives, and choice of means of implementation, given the country's socio-economic situation.

In this regard, I would like to note the positive experience of cooperation with UNECE, whose analytical and normative work has played an important role in supporting the efforts of governments to achieve their goals. Based on the findings and recommendations of the 2002-3 UNECE review of Armenia's housing sector, we have improved housing policy legislation

aimed at exercising the constitutional right to housing.

In particular:

- We established the legal framework and created specific programs of state support to address the needs of particular categories of people in housing. Among the programs, the most significant is a recovery program in the earthquake zone, through which we managed to solve the problems of an overwhelming majority of earthquake victims. Thanks to the creation of favourable conditions, specifically the simplification of legal licensing procedures and agreements, the volume of housing construction funded by public and private investors has increased. During 2001-2012, we built 4.71 million square meters of residential buildings. In 2001 and 2005, the proportion of housing constructed with private funds was 71%; in 2006 and 2012 this figure reached 88.5%.
- With the assistance of international organizations, we developed and implemented pilot programs aimed at the development of social housing, and legislative solutions to the housing problems of financially disadvantaged people.
- We approved a five-year program for the management and extension of the multifamily housing fund, aimed at approaches to solve multifamily problems.
- Works for certification of residential buildings are currently being conducted, to enable the development and implementation of priority programs for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of residential buildings with third and fourth degree damage.
- We implemented projects for increasing energy efficiency in urban development based on the UNECE action plan.
- Since 2010, the State program "Affordable housing for young families" has been implemented. This program is based on specifying terms of mortgage lending, etc.

Also, in the framework of cooperation, the representatives of the Ministry participated in the UNECE working groups on:

- designing a key tool for development and efficient management of spatial planning
- designing a framework convention for sustainable housing

It should be noted that spatial planning and sustainable urban development are the Ministry's priorities. This is because of the urgent need for efficient land use for construction, the prevention of uncontrolled development, and the rehabilitation of areas of historical and architectural heritage, the problems of adaptation to climate change, and a number of other issues, which, because of the short time for this presentation, need to be discussed separately.

Summing up this presentation and taking into account the positive experience of cooperation with the UNECE, I propose the possibility of new country reviews of Armenia, which would reflect the recommendations of the strategic development of housing policy, sustainable urban development and spatial planning. I also think it worthwhile to develop draft national action plans on those topics.

It should be noted that it has been 10-11 years since our country's review and this period has

brought new challenges. There is a need to conduct new research to confront those challenges and solve the current problems.

Concerning spatial development and territorial planning, there is a lag in development and approval of planning documentation at the local level, which is legally part of the mandatory authority of local governments. Given that, these same authorities have the right to authorize construction; this situation can lead to insufficiently regulated works and therefore violate sustainability of housing.

In the field of housing policies and with the existing socio-economic situation in the country, we need to revise our approach to ensure affordable, environmentally friendly and safe housing through the introduction of new approaches and funding mechanisms, in particular models of public-private partnership.

In conclusion, I want to thank the UNECE Committee for having agreed to conduct joint UN-Habitat training workshops in the Republic of Armenia in 2014-2016. Appreciating the support and partnership initiatives of UNECE, we look forward to further strengthening our cooperation.

Thank you for your attention.

AZERBAIJAN

Rafiq Jalilov

Deputy Chair,

State Committee on Property Issues



Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to note that the Azerbaijan's delegation is very pleased with the fact that Economic Commission for Europe has organized such an important event.

We can say with full confidence that the past 10 years have been marked in the history of Azerbaijan as a period of social and economic renaissance of the country. During this period, Azerbaijan has seen significant progress in all areas. Our country has become one of the fastest developing countries in the world. The mere fact that the income of the population of Azerbaijan in the last 10 years has increased almost sevenfold is clear evidence of the stable economic development of the country. I want to note that over the past 10 years, there has not been a single area in the country that did not experience reforms, or did not see development.

One of these areas is the process of privatization and state property management, introduction of a state register and unified real estate cadastre, as well as an address register of the country.

In 2004, the country began a new stage of establishing the legislative framework in the area of state registration of rights to real estate: we adopted the law 'On State Registration of Real Estate' and other legal acts that were major steps toward introduction of state registration of property ownership by a unified registration body. I want to note that even during those times; different bodies were conducting the state registration of property ownership.

In 2009, to improve governance and increase efficiency in the areas of privatization of state property and state registration of rights to real estate, the State Committee on Property Issues has been created and the State Service of Real Estate Registry was moved to that committee. In addition, the State Committee also includes the centre of cadastral and technical inventory of real estate, whose main task is to create and maintain a unified state cadastre of real estate across the country while taking into account international best practices. Within the real estate registration project - implemented jointly with the World Bank - the work is being conducted to create a unified automated system of registration, inventory and real estate management, which will also contribute to the development of a real estate market.

Currently, 11 electronic services of the State Committee on Property Issues are integrated into a

portal of e-government of Azerbaijan. The number of services is constantly growing and their quality is improving.

Besides the above-mentioned, I would like to briefly note that with the support of the Norwegian government, Azerbaijan established last year an address register based on modern international experience. We are working on assigning objects addresses according to modern principles.

Within the framework of increasing functional and human capacity, and applying international experience to the areas of privatization and state property management, state registration and unified real estate cadastre, we broaden the geography of bilateral cooperation with the relevant agencies of other states. We also pay special attention to cooperation with international organizations. We actively participate in the activities of the Working group on land management of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. In March 2010, Baku hosted a seminar of the Working group on the topic of "Effective and Transparent Land management in UNECE Countries." In October 2011, an international scientific conference on the topic of "The Role of Unified Real Estate Cadastre and National Spatial Data Infrastructure to Effectively Manage the Estate" was organized. In May this year, there was a conference on the topic of "Heydar Aliyev and property reform in Azerbaijan" attended by representatives of the UNECE Secretariat. This year, the committee became a full member of the association "EuroGeographics."

According to the rating of "Doing Business-2012," Azerbaijan ranked 9th in real estate registration among 183 countries in the world, thanks to the reforms implemented in real estate registration in the country.

Despite these successes, there are also areas in need of serious improvements. Those are mainly the development of the private sector in conducting cadastral works, and broadening cooperation with the private sector, as well as developing the professional skills of employees . We are working on those issues

Dear colleagues, the Ministerial Meeting are one of the unique ways to share our experience in our region. I would like to thank the Secretariat for giving us this opportunity to meet and wish all my colleagues success in implementing the goals in their countries.

Thank you.

BELARUS

Dmitry Semenkevich

**Deputy Minister,
Ministry of Architecture and Construction**



Statement delivered by Ms. Alena Rakava, Deputy Head of Regional Planning and Urban Planning Department, Ministry of Architecture and Construction

Dear Deputy Executive Secretary of UNECE, participants of the Ministerial Conference, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very grateful to the organizers for inviting me to take part in the Ministerial Conference and I express my regrets that the leadership of the Ministry of Architecture and Construction of Belarus could not participate in this event. We are expecting the appointment of a new minister.

It is obvious that such an important event allows us to learn more about the achievements and challenges in urban planning, housing development and land management in the UNECE region and become familiar with examples of best practice.

Belarus, by its geopolitical location, is situated in the centre of the European continent and at the crossroads of major transportation routes from Western Europe to Eurasia, from the regions of the Black Sea coast to the Baltic Sea countries. In this regard, the country bears great responsibility in ensuring the sustainable development of the border regions, customs and service infrastructure, tourism, and security of energy transit, passengers and cargo.

Belarus initiated the formation of the concept of sustainable development of human settlements and territories of the Commonwealth of Independent States. In 1999, this work has been completed by the adoption of the intergovernmental document ‘Urban Planning Charter of the Commonwealth of Independent States’, which has been successfully implemented over the past years.

The distinctive feature of Belarus’ experience as a post-Soviet territory was that the Republic of Belarus maintained a system of project organization with automated project systems, advanced technological solutions and energy-efficient solutions. State urban planning policies are aimed at sustainable development of urban and rural settlements, social, industrial, engineering and transport infrastructure, and targeted at the protection and rational use of historical, cultural and natural values.

In Belarus, all settlements develop relatively evenly. Nevertheless, the absolute leaders in this process are the country’s capital and major cities. In order to support the development of small, medium-sized cities and rural settlements, we implemented a number of government programs.

Belarus also has a unique experience in improving the urban environment due to the annual

festivals, fairs and Days of Belarusian Written Language. Every year, one of the small or medium-sized cities conducts a national autumn festival and fair for rural workers, "Dozhinki." Thus, 16 cities have already received a new impetus for development.

Cultural activities stimulate local government, public, organizations and businesses to work to improve the urban environment. They also give cities a powerful impetus for further socio-economic development.

Belarus has entered the era of innovative transformation of cities. The essence of the new trend in spatial planning is to humanize cities. We have developed a new module of a residential area, which will be tested in one of the regional centres of Belarus.

One of the most visible and important indicators of social and economic policy is the provision of housing for the population, and housing construction. In 2010, Belarus ranked first among the CIS countries in housing construction (699 square meters per 1000 inhabitants) and second in housing supply (24.6 square meters per person).

Despite the global economic crisis in 2011, housing construction in Belarus has continued to be the focus of the country's leadership. Against the backdrop of the changed economic situation, the state switched to the new concept of state housing policy of the Republic of Belarus developed for the period until 2016.

The concept presents the new trends in housing construction: the creation of a rental-housing fund, development of individual housing construction on an industrial basis, housing construction on the state order, commercial housing construction, building energy-efficient housing, and a number of other innovations.

Belarus is open to studying international experience of positive changes in the field of urban planning and housing. I would like, therefore, to note the positive role of the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management. Under its guidance, we developed strategic documents, recommendations and national reviews on housing development in the countries of the region. Of particular note is the draft strategy for sustainable housing and land management in the UNECE region for 2014-2020.

We believe that the adoption of the Strategy at the Ministerial Conference on 8 October 2013 will allow countries in the UNECE region to combine their efforts to achieve the goals of sustainable urban planning, housing and land management.

We highly appreciate the attention the Secretariat gives to the Committee, and the development of cooperation with Belarus and other countries in transition. The country profile on the housing sector of Belarus (2008) was the first joint project in the housing sector. Together with UNECE and UN-HABITAT, we conducted a seminar on affordable housing with the participation of representatives of the CIS countries in March 2012 in Belarus. The seminar received a positive response among housing sector professionals.

Finally, let me once again express my gratitude to the organizers for the Ministerial Conference marking the World Habitat Day in Geneva, which brought together such different countries and organizations in achieving the goals of adequate housing for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world. Thank you for your attention.

BULGARIA

Desislava Terzieva

Minister of Regional Development



Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Honorable Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first express my pleasure of being here, today, at this Ministerial Meeting on Housing and Land Management and on behalf of the Government of Bulgaria and myself I would like to extend my sincere greetings to you.

Using this opportunity, I wish to thank the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe for organizing this Ministerial Meeting and especially its Secretariat, which provided valuable support and cooperation to make this event happen. I am confident that our deliberations today will contribute to the objectives and expected outcomes of the Ministerial Meeting, and will provide a major impetus for further progress in the work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

Bulgaria welcomes the present Review of progress made and future challenges in urban development as a timely opportunity to share national and regional experiences on such a highly relevant theme.

Allow me to draw your attention to some aspects of Bulgarian housing policy concerning measures supported by the European Union Funds. These are aimed at addressing challenges in the field of housing policy, and more particularly to the importance of implementation of energy efficiency measures for Bulgaria.

Low energy efficiency level is one of the most significant problems in housing policy in Bulgaria. The necessity to undertake effective measures to address the gap related to energy efficiency of residential buildings was identified a long time ago. Most of our housing stock has unacceptable energy efficiency, for example, the heating systems of residential buildings consume much more energy than it is necessary because of the rate of heat loss.

As an answer to these challenges and recognizing that one of the leading goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy is achieving higher energy efficiency levels, Bulgaria has an ambitious national goal to achieve 25 % higher energy efficiency rates before 2020. We strive to introduce complete and long-term approaches for addressing energy efficiency issues in residential buildings, as well as in the buildings in the public sector, using as much as possible the opportunities granted by the EU Cohesion Policy.

In this context, some of the necessary energy efficiency measures in the housing sector are financed with support from European Union Structural Funds and particularly under the European Regional Development Fund.

As a concrete example, let me mention the Project “Energy Renovation of Bulgarian Homes”, which has been implemented under the Operational Programme “Regional Development” (OPRD) 2007-2013. The project consists of measures for energy renovation that will contribute to higher energy efficiency classes for a number of multifamily residential buildings in 36 cities, all around the country. The scheme is implemented through a mechanism for financing energy efficiency measures in multifamily residential buildings, combining grants and other financial instruments.

There is a grant support amounting 50 million leva under the Operational Programme “Regional Development” 2007-2013, which can cover up to 75 % of the expenditure for energy efficiency renovation of multifamily residential buildings. In addition, a financial instrument of 12,47 million leva has been set up under the same programme for the period 2007-2013, providing low interest loans to associations of house owners, or to individual owners, in order to cover the remaining 25 % of expenditure for energy renovation. It is planned for about 180 multifamily residential buildings to be renovated before the end of 2015.

Moreover, one of the main focuses of the Operational Programme “Regions in Growth” for the period 2014-2020, is support for energy efficiency measures in multifamily residential buildings, as well as in administrative buildings in the public sector. In the next programming period, we intend considerable increase of energy efficiency in residential and public buildings, as about 20 % of the total amount available under the Programme will be allocated for these kind of interventions.

The indicative eligible energy efficiency measures planned for the period 2014-2020 include:~

- energy efficiency surveys
- surveys for establishing the technical characteristics of the buildings
- renovation of the common parts of the building and vertical technical installations
- thermal isolation
- replacement of woodwork
- local heating installations and connections to gas or heating distribution networks installations for utilization of renewable energy sources for household needs.

In addition to eligible measures under OPRD 2007-2013, in the next programming period we plan to grant support for constructive consolidation of buildings, therefore overcoming one of the main obstacles for energy renovation in the current period.

To conclude, we consider that these measures, together with substantial increase of the resources available for energy efficiency under Operational Program “Regions in Growth” 2014-2020, will greatly contribute to addressing energy efficiency challenges in the housing sector, as well as in municipal and state administrative buildings. They will also contribute to achieving our national goals in the field of energy efficiency.

Thank you for your kind attention.

CROATIA

Borka Bobovec

**Head of Sector,
Ministry of Construction and
Physical Planning**



Distinguished ministers, ladies and gentleman,

I would like to greet you on the behalf of the Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning of the Republic of Croatia and our Minister, Mrs Anka Mrak – Taritaš, who unfortunately could not be here today due to her other previously scheduled arrangements.

In November 2012, the Republic of Croatia sent a letter of intent to the UNECE, for nomination for a Country Profile of Croatia, but in April 2013, the Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning informed the UNECE Office of its current inability to provide the necessary funds from the budget of the Republic of Croatia.

Since 2000, the Republic of Croatia has organised the Programme of Subsidised Housing, with local communities, which provide land and municipal infrastructure, and with participation of the state through provision of subsidies of 25%. Approximately 6 500 housing units were built under this programme.

In addition to this programme in the period since 1997 the Republic of Croatia has, under the Programme of Housing Provision for Homeland War Victims, built and delivered approximately 6 100 housing units for this population.

In the Republic of Croatia, after the Homeland War, we also addressed the issue of housing provision to former tenancy holders who, during the war, had the status of displaced persons and refugees.

At present the problem in the housing sector consists of 20 000 unsold housing units. These are linked to disturbances in the real estate market since 2008.

In 2011, the Republic of Croatia, intending to solve the crisis in apartment sales, encouraged the purchase of apartments by subsidising loans, by giving guarantees to commercial banks for repayment of interest under housing loans if citizens are not able to repay due to subsequent loss of earnings.

The current situation with regard to further purchase of apartments on the market is aggravated due to the impossibility of young families purchasing and taking long-term loans. Therefore, the Republic of Croatia is preparing a housing rent model providing possibility of renting an appropriate apartment under more favourable terms than on the rental market.

Future development of the Country Profile would be a contribution to establishing a realistic picture of housing conditions, and realistic possibilities to regulate by government measures the housing sector and the housing construction sector on a sustainable basis.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Daniel Braun

**First Deputy Minister,
Ministry of Regional Development**



Mr Chairman,

Distinguished ministers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to thank the Committee on Housing and Land Management for organising this event at ministerial level, as sustainable housing is not always at the top of the agenda, and it gives us an opportunity to discuss and share our housing and urban experience and visions in relation to the whole region of the UNECE.

The Czech Republic is a somewhat urbanized country, where about 80% of our ten million inhabitants live in cities. This is in spite of the fact that there are more than six thousand self-governing municipalities, some of which are very small villages, inhabited by less than a hundred people. In cities, about one third of urban households live in large-panel prefabricated residential buildings built in the period from the 60's to the 80's. To improve the technical condition of these buildings, several state subsidy programmes aimed at energy efficiency measures have been launched since 2000, as there is enormous savings potential in this part of the housing sector.

Unlike other Central and Eastern European countries, the Czech Republic still has a significant housing rental sector. More than a quarter of all families live in private, municipal or cooperative rental flats. In 2012, a six-year long process of deregulation of formerly strictly controlled rents was completed. After January 2014, when the new Civil Code will enter into force, more efficient forms of protection of tenants will replace the existing old-fashioned legal provisions. Not only maintaining the existing rental sector, but also financial support for new rental flats for socially defined target groups are at centre of attention of the "Housing Policy 2020", which was approved by the Government two years ago.

In cities, besides the refurbished buildings, public spaces also play a great role in raising the quality of living. Therefore, the state subsidizes local authorities to improve the level of public spaces in large-panel developments in particular. The EU Cohesion Policy also contributes to these activities, and we plan to launch a pilot loan scheme for cities aimed at improving the quality of housing in these areas.

To conclude, I would like to stress that this Committee is the only open pan-European platform

dealing with housing issues from all relevant views – economic, social and environmental. I wish to stress the importance of assistance provided to less developed UNECE countries, which have a relatively short experience with a functioning housing market. We are convinced that the existence of this platform, where housing and urban issues and guidelines are discussed and where concrete projects are managed, is very important. This political challenge is also the reason why the Czech Republic has paid every year, since 2000, a voluntary financial contribution to the Trust Fund of this Committee to help develop activities aimed at least developed UNECE Member States. I sincerely hope that this tradition will continue.

Thank you for your attention.

ESTONIA

Siim-Valmar Kiisler

Minister for Regional Affairs



Dear Ministers, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to have this opportunity to share with you few of my thoughts on such a prominent meeting as this one.

LEAD-IN

Without a doubt, sustainable housing, land management, and urban development are remarkable challenges in most of countries. We all strive to provide the best possible living environment, not only for our citizens today but also for our children and grandchildren in the years to come.

PLANNING

In Estonia one of the most important ways to ensure that sustainable solutions are applied, is an open and participative spatial planning process. Spatial planning is exercised on every administrative level: national, regional, and local. In Estonia, unlike many other countries, we also prepare spatial plans on national level. The new National Spatial Plan Estonia 2030+ was enacted at the end of the summer 2012 and supports a number of UNECE objectives. For example, it supports the need to make the internal structure of cities and towns denser, and restore to active use any previously abandoned land.

VISIONS AND CHALLENGES

Estonia 2030+ aims to ensure that any settled location in Estonia is liveable and that Estonia tomorrow will be a nation with a cohesive spatial structure, a diverse living environment and good links to the external world. The National Spatial Plan deals with issues of settlement structure, technical infrastructure, transport, energy, and green infrastructure. It defines the principles for sustainable development and the main directions for nationwide spatial development, thus laying the groundwork for plans that are more precise and programmes, which can more directly improve the quality of the living environment.

So yes, we have a commonly agreed nationwide vision for spatial development, but there is no lack of challenges! How can a nation with a decreasing and ageing population, increasing urbanization and in need of the reinforcement of its international economic competitiveness ensure the improvement of its living environment? How can we ensure jobs and mobility within

functional daily activity spaces, sustainable and safe transport, and wider use of renewable energy, security of energy supply, cohesiveness of green network and balanced use of marine space?

SUMMING-UP

The answer lies in the planning activities of local communities, which follow the common aims, agreed during the process of working out the National Spatial Plan. We have the necessary legal, strategic and administrative instruments in place. We have a clear and widely accepted vision and appropriate objectives. However, policies and regulations can only go so far. What we need is a change in the thinking of our local communities. I strongly believe that our open and participative planning process, which takes into account the nationwide spatial objectives, is the key element for tackling these challenges and for reaching a wider consensus inside the communities about what we mean when we say “the best possible living environment”.

In the light of the afore mentioned, Estonia supports “Draft Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management”, which addresses all these and other important issues.

Thank You for Your attention!

FINLAND

Jouni Parkkonen

**Special Advisor
to Housing Minister**



Review of progress made and future challenges in housing in Finland

Finland's government programme states that the aims of housing policy are to ensure a socially and regionally balanced and stable housing market, to eliminate homelessness, and to increase the supply of moderately priced land for construction.

The central government supports both rented housing and home ownership. Subsidies in the form of interest subsidies, guarantees or grants are provided to promote the construction, renovation or acquisition of social rental housing. The government also finances the housing of special groups, such as older persons, persons with disabilities, students, and the homeless with a grant from 10% up to 50% of the housing investment depending on a project.

Actions of the government:

The 2012–2015 housing policy action plans covers housing policy for Finland as a whole. The primary focus is on increasing affordable housing production and improving the housing conditions of those in need of special support. We wish to promote sufficient housing production and the required supply of building plots, and to ensure smooth land use planning processes for residential land uses. Government housing finance instruments and legislation are used to increase the supply of affordable housing in growth centres, and to balance supply and demand on the housing market.

Part of the government's metropolitan policy includes the 'letter of intent' procedure for finding solutions to problems associated with land use, housing and traffic. These letters of intent are agreed between central government and municipalities in the Helsinki region (and some other growth centres). The aim of this agreement is to enhance cooperation between central government and local governments in land use, housing and traffic, and to coordinate the planning of these sectors.

The three-year development programme for residential areas 2013–2015 looks for cross-sectoral measures that prevent segregation of residential areas and create comfortable and safe living environments.

Separate programmes have been designed to solve the housing problems of special groups with challenging needs.

Homelessness is partly an outcome of the shortage of reasonably priced small rental dwellings. More than half of the homeless persons are concentrated in the Helsinki region. The Government's programme to reduce long-term homelessness aims to prevent homelessness and reduce the risk of long-term homelessness. Its ultimate goal is to eradicate long-term homelessness entirely by 2015.

The number of older people is increasing rapidly in Finland. The housing development programme for older people in the years 2013–2017 includes various measures that provide the necessary support to allow people to continue living at home, and reduce the percentage of institutional care. This mainly concerns improving dwellings and providing housing services. State renovation grants are awarded on social grounds for the repair of and renovation to older people's homes, and the homes of persons with disabilities. The Housing Finance and Development Centre (ARA) grant a lift subsidy for installing a lift in an existing block of flats. The amount granted is up to 50% of the construction costs.

According to a government resolution, persons with intellectual disabilities have the same right to housing as other residents and by 2020; no one will be living in an institution. Instead, the government is providing financing to build the necessary housing facilities. The housing programme for persons with intellectual disabilities outlines the measures taken in 2010–2015 in order to achieve this goal.

Housing challenges

We have still challenges in housing in Finland. On the supply side, rising prices, rental costs and the tenure type have led to a shortage in housing supply. Additionally, the private sector is producing less social housing than previously. On the demand side, low incomes, unemployment, and internal migration because of structural changes in society have contributed to a lack of affordable housing. In growth centres, more dwellings are needed, while in the depopulating areas some dwellings are left empty. In the Helsinki region, there is a shortage of small rental dwellings and affordable larger dwellings, both rental and owner-occupied ones, for those who are coming to work in the area.

The purpose of the Government's metropolitan policy is to strengthen the balanced development of the Helsinki region. The policy will focus on, for instance, the development of administrative structure, promoting competitiveness, comprehensive land use, housing and transport, immigration and social cohesion.

In the housing and construction sector, the key goals in recent and coming years are sustainability and energy efficiency. Finnish government policies emphasise the need to develop integrated, user-driven solutions for a sustainable, energy-efficient built environment. The strategic approach to this includes low-carbon and climate-resilient land-use planning that integrates buildings, their water and energy consumption and waste generated, with transport and communications solutions.

GEORGIA

David Jandieri

First Deputy Minister of Justice



First, let me express my respect and gratitude to the UNECE for the great opportunity they have given us. I do hope that the experience and knowledge we gain here will influence the development and improvement of housing and land management systems of our countries.

The Government of Georgia has implemented extensive reforms for economic development. With the fast-growing immovable property market, significant changes were made and innovative concepts implemented especially in Land Administration system. The reforms are significantly starting to improve economic development within the country resulting in a more dynamic land- as well as credit- market.

Currently, the estimated number of land parcels in Georgia is approximately 3200000, out of which only 40% (1280000) have been registered. 45% of all land parcels, i.e. 1440000 are agricultural land and 1760000 – non-agricultural. Only 30% (432000) of agricultural land parcels are registered, and 70% still remain unregistered. As for non-agricultural land (located mostly in cities), only 48% (848000) are registered. In order to deal with unregistered property issues the Georgian government has initiated different projects. The National Agency of State Property, operating under the umbrella of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, which is in charge of State-owned property management and privatization, has launched a state-owned property inventory process aimed at state-owned property identification and registration.

It can be said that in 90's, the large-scale reform of privatization in Georgia started spontaneously, without any methodological and material base, in conditions of lack of mandatory transparency and legal guarantees. Privatization was done very quickly. Land parcels were privatized without adjudication of land boundaries and cadastral plans. A number of works, researches and recommendations of international organizations and experts were dedicated to issues of privatization based on how many legislative acts have been adopted and which administrative measures have been taken.

The main way of gaining ownership of state-owned property, including land, is still at auction. However, there are two other ways of property right recognition on state-owned assets:

- ‘The Law on Recognition of Ownership Rights to Land in Legitimate Possession and Use by Physical Persons or Legal Entities of Private Law’ provides the basic principles and conditions for ownership rights legalization to land. The Law distinguishes two types of land: that in legitimate possession and use (for instance when a person has a document drawn up before 1999 that confirms permission for temporary use of the land), and land occupied without permission. Based on this law, a Presidential Decree provides

for a procedure for recognition of ownership rights via a commission of local self-governmental bodies. It also specifies the commission's composition and its members' legal capacity.

- Another Presidential Decree regulates the legalization of buildings or their parts (not land) built without permission or/and with violation of the design. This only covers buildings, which were built before 2007.

Several reports mention quality problems in registered information (this relates to the agricultural land), but there has not been much research to quantify the problem. The quality of cadastral data therefore needs to be improved. Challenges arise due to lack of regulation, insufficient skills of private surveyors, and cadastre standards.

For improvement of the cadastral information quality, the Continuously Operating Reference System (GEOCORS.) was established, which will enable the National Agency of Public Registry (NAPR), land administration authority, to have more accurate and reliable cadastral information and to introduce modern satellite positioning methods for cadastral surveying. The GEOCORS will provide a basis for the establishment of a national spatial data infrastructure and coordinate reference system, which is the one of the challenges of GoG.

For effective implementation of these activities and providing improved access to the data for a wide circle of users, the harmonization of the spatial data and infrastructure, providing interoperability of spatial data sets on a European level, is very important for Georgia. A national framework for interoperability has been identified as a prioritized issue in the government's action plan for e-governance. We are working on developing a national spatial data infrastructure (NSDI). For this matter, the draft of a Government decree has been elaborated, aiming to develop the production, maintenance and use of geospatial data.

Georgian policies state that development of agricultural land is strategically important, and NAPR must work on collection of proper data of all land and properties in Georgia, with a focus on agricultural land. The collection of land data, property and geographic information, especially on the agricultural areas of Georgia, must be completed. The quality of existing data is unreliable in many areas, leading in turn to problems in land management, and disputes. A unified information system containing accurate cadastral information is very important for sustainable development of such a system, which is necessary for social and economic development.

Land use and management, urban planning, forestation, and related activities are a significant part of a sound economic policy. The GoG has placed high importance on developing land-related policies, and has turned to international experience for policy advice. It demonstrates its commitment to continue the reforms and make modernization of the country irreversible. Completion of initial registration of all agricultural land will greatly support solution of the above issues, as a complete database with accurate data will be created, which is necessary for development of agrarian-, privatization-, tax- and other policies, for effective managerial decision-making and successful implementation of these policies.

Regarding the above-mentioned issues, Interagency Coordinating Council, with the guidance of Ministry of Justice of Georgia, is working in order to improve and develop the legal basis of land management of the country.

Thank you for your attention. I wish you successful and fruitful working days.

GERMANY

Peter Kreuzer

**Director,
State Survey and Geospatial Basic
Information**

Lower Saxony



Note on behalf of the Working Committee of the Surveying Authorities of the Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany (AdV).

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to bring to your attention the latest developments in land administration and real estate cadastre in Germany. I will try to highlight recent developments that, naturally, are influenced by European and international aspects.

The 'Third report on progress in the development of various fields of geoinformation in national, European and international context' of the Federal Government was published recently. Major aims are to further develop technical standards for maintenance and delivery of geospatial basic data, including the real estate cadastre, and to update the already existing cost- and licensing models.

The surveying profession provides the fundamentals for our uniform spatial reference in Germany. We are finalizing all field survey works for the German First Order Precise Levelling Network DHHN. Quality and consistency checks for the data and results will be finalized in 2013; calculation and documentation of results are expected for 2014. These works substantially contribute to more efficiency in surveying works that need to consider height (from site maps to complex buildings).

The German Satellite Positioning Service SAPOS will integrate data of the new European Global Navigation Satellite System GALILEO in addition to GPS and GLONASS data from 2014/15 on.

Moreover, AdV has been working on a strategy for the delivery of geospatial base or reference data for the complete area of Germany through standardised geo-services. The documentation modelling of geoinformation in Germany (GeoInfoDok) has been further developed.

The German Länder have been extremely busy finalising the migration of all cadastre data into the new ALKIS data model which is part of the AAA data model, including also data on spatial reference and topographic mapping. Eight Länder have already finalised these works and maintain their cadastre data according to the AAA data model specifications. Recently, product specifications for an ALKIS-WFS and ALKIS SHAPE were adopted.

The introduction of a new electronic land register in Germany requires close collaboration and harmonisation works with the Ministry of Justice. The production of three-dimensional building data in Germany is rapidly progressing. Product standards and the data description in AdV-

CityGML are adopted and already applied. Whereas the LoD 1 (block model) will be available for Germany shortly, LoD 2 with standardised roof forms will be produced within the next few years. A common web-based map service, the so-called WebAtlasDE, is integrated into the national and Länder geoportals at Federal and Länder level.

An important issue is the conformity of the AAA data model to the INSPIRE specifications. Mapping tables that serve the migration of AAA data to the INSPIRE data model have been established. Comparison tables for Annex I data are currently being tested by the Länder administrations. The conformity of the AAA model with INSPIRE still needs to be verified for Annex II and Annex III data. Technical web profiles for viewing and download services are currently being elaborated (WMS, WMTS, WFS).

The AdV is represented in international organisations dealing with issues relevant to AdV-tasks.

IRELAND

Jan O’Sullivan

Minister for Housing and Planning



Statement delivered by Mr. Terence Dunne, Principle Officer, Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

Few countries in the world have experienced an economic crisis as profound as Ireland in the past five years. While the crisis affected all countries to varying extents, the depth of the damage done to the Irish economy – and society – was in large part due to a housing bubble.

The success of the Irish economy in the 1990s and the early years of this century, based on an open trading economy, attractive investment climate, and a well-educated work force, was replaced by an over-reliance on the property sector. Poor regulation, cheap credit, and bad policy led the country to the brink of ruin and into an EU/IMF programme of financial assistance. It has been the job of this government to lead the country out of this programme, and we are on track to exit at the end of this year.

We have dealt with many of the problems caused by the crisis. The banking sector needed to be completely restructured and recapitalized. To deal with the large volume of bad loans, we established the National Asset Management Agency whose task it is to generate a return to the state and the taxpayer from those property-based loans. We have made real progress in dealing with the large volume of unfinished housing developments that were left when the property boom came to such a spectacular end. We have begun to deal – albeit more slowly – with the worryingly high levels of mortgage arrears. More generally, there are encouraging signs in the economy, our unemployment rate has begun to fall, tax returns are more positive, and we are starting to see a return to economic normality.

That is, however, only what we have had to do to deal with the circumstances we inherited. Many measures have been tough, and it has been a road of great pain and hardship for many of our people.

Our real task now is to pave the way for the future, and to ensure that we not only learn from the mistakes of the past, but also make the reforms and changes that are needed to ensure that housing is there to meet the needs of households and society. Planning – how we organise our spatial environment – should be used to ensure that our citizens, our environment and our economy could grow and flourish in harmony.

We have already made a radical change with a new housing policy statement that emphasizes choice, quality and fairness instead of prizing ownership over everything else. Our national spatial strategy is under review, and we have rationalized drastically the amount of development land available and put a stop to urban sprawl and unsustainable development patterns. We are bringing in a new independent planning regulator. We are seeking to recast the way we provide social and affordable housing, and to ensure that housing is provided in tandem with the necessary infrastructure – physical and social.

We have been through a lot in Ireland, and housing, land and property have deep resonances in our history. This last episode has brought us close to ruin, but in recovering and learning from it, we will emerge stronger and better.

ISRAEL

Uri Ariel

**Minister of Construction and
Housing**



Statement delivered by Ms. Tania Berg-Rafaeli, Counselor, Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations Office and other international organizations

Deputy Executive Secretary, Honorable Ministers, Chairman, Distinguished Colleagues:

I am privileged to represent the Israeli Minister of Construction and Housing, Mr. Uri Ariel at this important Ministerial Meeting. Minister Ariel regrets that he is unable to be here today, and sends his very best wishes for a productive discussion.

The Minister has asked me to confirm the State of Israel's sincere and unwavering commitment to the Committee on Housing and Land Management (CHLM) and to the adoption of the Strategy on Sustainable Housing and Land Management and proposed Action Plan for the period 2014-2020. The Israeli Ministry of Construction and Housing would be proud to assist the CHLM in collaborating with other UN programmes, such as UN-HABITAT, by tapping our government and academic resources to share good practices and expertise.

With the permission of this excellent forum, here is the Minister's statement:

Israeli housing policy has journeyed from a centralized to a market economy, regulated primarily by the release of planned government land to increase housing supply. In addition, we fund neighbourhood infrastructures such as roads, water and sewage pipes, parks, schools and other public institutions.

Israel's urban development policy is focused on efficient land management and environmental conservation, as a framework for provision of access to suitable housing that is affordable, safe, healthy, and ecologically sound. We strive to formulate policy tools and financial incentives for housing that is easily maintained, energy-efficient, sustainable, and appropriate to the distinctive needs of each of Israel's various population groups.

Sensitive to the weaker sectors of society, our Government promotes social cohesion and equity, by targeting deprived urban areas and minority enclaves for urban renewal. We provide public housing and housing supplements to underprivileged families and elderly persons. New immigrants are aided through a system of manageable mortgages and rental

subsidies.

Special planning legislation provides funding incentives to fortify older buildings against the possibility of earthquake and flood damage. As part and parcel of our national programme for disaster risk management, government budgets are allocated to build concrete sheltered casings to protect residences and public institutions from natural and human-generated disasters.

Government policies aim to leverage 'resilience' initiatives to harness available resources for improved city function.

Preparedness for climatic extremes requires re-evaluation of Israeli city structure and design, increased housing supply, and retrofit of existing stock. As such, planning for compact 'resilient' cities focuses on integrated communities, multi-faceted mobility, and a 'smart' connected 'proximity economy'. Neighbourhoods and inner-city areas benefit from a new regenerative relevance through densification and in-fill projects. These, and the use of sustainable infrastructure and building materials, promote affordable housing, savings on energy water, and home maintenance, conservation of natural resources, and lower carbon emissions.

Government investment in innovation and research has produced new regulations for building, and a building code that is constantly updated. Within the global atmosphere of financial constraint and conservation, one very important area of our research constitutes the search for financial mechanisms to fund the cost of neighbourhood regeneration and retrofit.

A major challenge ahead of us is the encouragement of private investment in the housing sector. Our need to address the possibility of a more developed rental market must find a balance between economic viability and affordability, while preserving the principles of accessibility, social equity, and inclusion. In this regard, we welcome recommendations from the Real Estate Advisory Group.

In addition, we need to agree on common inter-ministerial criteria for monitoring the rise and fall of real estate prices, for efficient analysis of market capabilities. In our view, such criterion should also be agreed within the framework of ECE countries.

In conclusion, it is hoped that by working together to serve shared interests in pursuance of a common purpose, countries of the ECE can initiate and guide affordable housing development. Using an agreed set of tools and models for building and spatial design, can advance creative adaptation of existing urban structures to changing environmental conditions. The result should combine reasonable pricing of construction and maintenance of housing with sustainable life-style alternatives.

I wish to express my appreciation of this convention of Ministers and sustainable development experts, and to thank the UNECE Secretariat for making it possible.

As Minister of Construction and Housing, I look forward to the successful achievement of the worthy objectives, targets of the CHLM and to continued and fruitful exchanges of ideas on sustainable housing.

Thank you.

KYRGYZSTAN

Erlan Saparbaev

Chairman, State Registration Service under the Government



First, I would like to thank the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management, secretariat and experts who arranged and carried out review of the housing sector of Kyrgyzstan in 2008. This document is undoubtedly useful for our country.

Since the moment the review took place, the Kyrgyz Republic has undertaken significant steps towards improving the system of cadastre and registration of immovable property.

The procedure of registration and processing transactions with immovable property has been significantly streamlined, and registration time reduced due to:

- Automation of the registration process and implementation of electronic service
- Reduction of number of documents provided
- Cancellation of mandatory notary certification of real estate transactions
- Currently, registration time is 1 day

The Kyrgyz Land Information System is operational, allowing data provision online. Data from the Kyrgyz Land Information System has become fundamental for the taxation system used by different state, municipal branches and private sector.

An important role in this area is undertaken by the single cadastre and real estate registration, concentrating registration and land cadastre.

The outcome of the reforms has been, according to the indicator “Property Registration” of the World Bank “Doing Business” rating, the Kyrgyz Republic ranks 11th among 183 countries.

LITHUANIA

Daiva Matoniene

**Vice Minister,
Ministry of Environment**



ENERGY EFFICIENCY THROUGH RENOVATION

The Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved our National Housing Strategy in 2004. One of the goals of this document is to ensure efficient use, maintenance, renovation and modernization of existing housing, as well as efficient use of energy.

To accelerate the insulation of multi-apartment buildings and the modernization of their energy systems, the Programme for the Modernisation of Multi-apartment Houses was also approved in 2004. The Program started at the end of 2005. The main task of the Program was to provide support to homeowners in multifamily buildings with implementation of energy efficiency measures.

In 2010, the Government developed an innovative financing scheme to increase energy efficiency in housing through the JESSICA Holding Fund. Originally, the Fund size was projected at EUR 227 million: (EUR 127 m from ERDF, as well as EUR 100 million from the National budget). The goal was sustainable urban development through the modernization of multi-apartment buildings. The overall aim of the scheme is to contribute to increased energy efficiency in the housing sector by offering long-term loan financing at preferential terms and conditions.

JESSICA loans (maturity up to 20 years at fixed annual interest rate of 3 per cent) are offered to owners of apartments or other premises in a multi-apartment buildings, provided they commit energy efficiency measures which would achieve at least 20 per cent energy savings. If this is met, the beneficiaries qualify for a subsidy which equals to 15 per cent of the loan principal.

At the end of 2011, the Lithuanian Parliament approved an additional incentive funded from Special Climate Change Programme, to complement the JESSICA programme in the form of an additional 15% investment cost rebate/grant in cases where energy consumption is reduced by at least 40%.

In the context of the scheme, the state provides 100% reimbursement of loan repayment instalments for low-income families, and 100% reimbursement for preparation and administration of paper work.

The Renovation process has been very slow due to difficulties in securing funding from commercial banks (316 buildings, 8 JESSICA). Starting in 2013 the Lithuanian Government

decided to speed up the renovation process and, building upon the existing National programme for energy efficiency, a new model for renovation of multi-apartment buildings has been developed. We expect that renovation of half a thousand buildings will start in 2013.

Furthermore, at the end of September we launched the second stage for renovation of 1700 buildings.

We make this process attractive to households by ensuring:

- The loan charge on paid by the project administrator, the resident does not feel the financial burden of debt
- Households are deprived of compensation for heating for 3 years, if they intentionally refuse to participate in the program
- Very good teamwork involving politicians, technical supporters, banks, municipalities, and residents, as they are strongly interested and involved in the process

The main idea of the new model is to strengthen the municipalities' role with the goal of no financial and administrative burden on households. The municipality selects the most energetically inefficient multifamily buildings, appoints the legal entity (administrator) which takes loans for the renovation process, and provides the technical supervision of the construction works.

Lithuania is one of the first countries in the European Union to use the JESSICA initiative (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas) for improving energy efficiency in multifamily buildings by supported implementation of energy efficiency measures.

We think that providing training and conducting awareness-raising campaigns for specialists is crucial for trust in the quality of upgrading.

Our practice shows that after modernization it is possible to reduce energy consumption by up to 70 %. Furthermore, by implementing the program environmental protection issues (reduction of CO₂ emission, urban environment, city regeneration plans, etc.) are also aided.

The challenges of increase of energy consumption from the built environment vary country by country. Energy use in buildings accounts for around 40% of total energy consumption and 36% of CO₂ emissions in Europe. Buildings consume energy to provide human well-being and comfort. This means that in the most EU member countries the main challenge is to renovate existing building stocks. We all have a lot of choice of measures that can be effective and attractive for our countries. I strongly believe therefore that cooperation is the main condition of success. I believe this is the guiding principle of the Europe Union itself. I know that some countries have solved their modernization problems and some are still struggling. By cooperating we can help each other; we have opportunity to share common lessons in supporting energy efficiency in buildings to meet EU 2020 and 2050 targets. This is an extremely important principle in a competitive world.

I sincerely wish this meeting to be as fruitful as possible for every one of us.

MALTA

Michael Farrugia

**Parliamentary Secretary,
Office of Prime Minister**



The Maltese Archipelago is made up of three islands, the largest being Malta, measuring around 316 square kilometres and, situated 80kms south of Sicily with a population of over 420,000 persons. Apart from this, we welcome around 1.2 million tourists every year, but in addition, and making our islands the most densely populated in Europe, in the last decade, we had an influx of hundreds of illegal immigrants.

The Maltese Government's Social Input created a boom in the construction industry in the 1970's and 80's by building numerous housing estates. This boom generally continued up to a few years ago, when developers unfortunately changed focus to obtaining quick and easy money. At present, we have around 70,000 dwellings uninhabited for reasons such as dilapidation, substandard conditions, inheritance etc., and the present Government is planning to give incentives to those prepared to make them habitable. We have also noted that property prices have dropped somewhat during the past few years due to these factors. We believe that our way forward must be focused on two principal objectives.

Firstly, we have already started reviewing our policies while at the same time drafting new policies to meet to our present needs. We have also opened a dialogue to start drafting a Local Plan Policy that reflects today's necessities.

Secondly, my Government has already embarked on a policy of Floor Area Ratio and Land Reclamation. This must have innovative ideas and designs together with an economic perspective. We are not prepared to give concessions for Land Reclamation simply to build modern luxury apartments and hotels.

Another objective that we also keep in mind is global warming. Since Malta is situated in the middle of the Mediterranean, enjoying quite a hot climate, we insist that our buildings must have thick outside walls, shading devices and double-glazing to protect from excessive heat. People have also learnt to utilize our flat rooftops by fitting PV Panels and are encouraged to use energy efficient technology.

It is imperative for us to safeguard our countryside and limited agricultural land. We always have to keep in mind that our population needs open space, sports facilities, parks and recreational areas. At the same time, we insist that new houses and apartments ought to be decent, affordable and healthy to live in.

These situations present a clear view of the challenges confronting urban areas in our country. For these and other reasons, the Maltese Government decided to be open to all those interested in planning and the environment. While improving the economy of our country, and standard of living of our citizens, we do not want to suffocate our towns and villages with still further useless buildings.

We have therefore invited the public to participate, and give their contributions prior to moving forward and legislating. We are committed to listen to the complaints, ideas, innovations and solutions from citizens, in order to have policies and law that controls planning and satisfies people's needs. We intend to draft the way forward by planning economic and environmentally sustainable development that suits, and does not hinder, our cultural heritage.

MONTENEGRO

Marko Čanović

**Deputy Minister for Housing,
Ministry for Sustainable
Development and Tourism**



The Government of Montenegro has been working to improve the vital social activities of housing and land management policy. This comprises planning and development of construction land, protection of natural wealth and national parks, and promoting the economic and social sustainable growth of the UNECE region.

Understanding that poor infrastructure and shortage of development projects may have adverse effects on the economy, and also considering the unfavourable economic circumstances which prevent our countries from developing their full potential, the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism has legalized informally constructed facilities and the introduced a social housing institute, as these represent our future priorities.

In the past, transition-period Montenegro faced numerous issues in the area of housing and land management. These included construction of large number of informal facilities in all parts of Montenegro, poor standing of the housing fund, lack of planning documents and records on construction facilities, and shortage of housing space for the citizens with unsolved housing issues.

In order to solve these issues, systemic changes had to make. Therefore, changes and amendments were made to the Law on Spatial Development and Construction of Structures, the Law on State Survey and Real Estate Cadaster, Law on Housing and Maintenance of Housing Units. In addition, the Social Housing Law was passed.

In September 2011, the Government of Montenegro adopted the National Housing Strategy for 2011-2020 which sets forth the strategic goals of housing development including, improvement of the legal and institutional framework, increase in availability of housing space, and supporting development of renting sector.

Our commitments in the housing sector are to increase the available housing fund, encourage housing construction, harmonize the legal and institutional framework with EU regulations, achieve better organized and more efficient management, , increase safety in the housing renting sector, enable public-private partnerships in the housing sector and define standards of human housing.

Private individuals own 87% of the housing fund. Only a small share is in public ownership, which limits the state's opportunities to ensure adequate housing. Apart from that, major features of the housing fund are its relative age profile (only about 30 % has been constructed over the

past 30 years) and the small share of apartments constructed out of non-solid material. Furthermore, in social housing, it should be noted that the need was partially solved by allowing informal construction to bridge the gap between housing need and housing availability. This greatly slowed down housing development by its poor quality of construction and poor quality of living resulting from inadequate utility infrastructure.

Adoption of the Social Housing Law, which came into force in July this year, was a huge step forward in this area. The Social Housing Law is harmonized with the social housing concept of European Union countries. The concept, policy and criteria of social housing are defined and regulated at the state level, while the elaboration and application of these policies is made at a local level, which means that housing construction supported by funds from the public sector should be realized at the local level.

With the aim of meeting the obligations undertaken by signing the Vienna Declaration and solving informal construction issues, this Ministry has undertaken a range of activities and measures to prevent informal construction. In 2008, the Criminal Code of Montenegro defined construction of structures without a building permit as a criminal act. This largely prevented further illegal construction. It was followed by the adoption of the Plan for Conversion of Informal Settlements into Formal and Regularization of Facilities, with a special focus on seismic challenges, and then by the four-year Action Plan.

In July last year, the Government of Montenegro proposed the Law on Legalization of Informal Facilities. This, among others, focuses on the safety and stability of facilities by examining their seismic and static safety during the legalization process. The aim of the Law is regularization and valorisation of space by accepting existing circumstances, i.e. legalization of informally constructed facilities but requiring them to meet standards of planning and conditions of construction in a seismically risky area.

It should be noted that the most valuable areas of Montenegro have been put at risk by illegal construction such as seashore and national parks, with a majority of illegal facilities being built for profit rather than homes.

The Project of Legalization of Informal Facilities encompasses activities to be implemented in all local governance units, with key system institutions being involved in their implementation as well. However, it requires active participation of citizens who own illegal facilities.

The Project has the following goals:

- bringing the illegal constructors into the system of state payers, which should result in increase of funds from taxes and contributions, primarily for the local community
- Cadastre of real estate as a fully reliable record
- Increase in the value of legalized real estate as well as the entire surrounding land
- Traffic accessibility and utility equipment of the land in settlements

Energy efficiency is one of the strategic policies of the State of Montenegro. Therefore, it is an essential element in housing as well. To this end, in cooperation with the UNDP Office in Montenegro, the Energy Efficiency Project has been launched as part of the legalization process. The fact is that majority of informal facilities have poor heating performance and high-energy

consumption. The Project is aimed at connecting the legalization process with an increased level of energy efficiency in households and business facilities. Finances generated from energy savings will aid financing of the legalization process.

Legalization of informal settlements in Montenegro is a unique opportunity not only to apply energy efficiency requirements, but also to integrate informal settlements into municipal and state spatial plans aimed at reduction of GHG gases within urban areas. Some preliminary research has been conducted to check this effect, developed jointly by a team consisting of representatives of the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism and UNDP. The results of energy surveys, which were later tested on a prototype, confirmed that legalization of informal settlements in Montenegro and application of energy efficiency measures in illegally built facilities is justified. It may bring significant economic benefits to the state and economy, and to the citizens and their way and quality of life. One cannot ignore the environmental impact of reduction of greenhouse gases. Considering this, the plan is to provide illegal constructors with the possibility of introducing energy efficiency measures during the process of legalization. The plan is to implement the Project through pilot projects for certain regions.

Within the Joint Regional Program on Durable Solutions for Refugees and Displaced Persons, which started back in 2005, Montenegro began implementation of the National Housing Project for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons. This Project is aimed at finding permanent housing solutions for refugees and persons displaced during the conflicts from 1991 to 1995 in the former Yugoslavia. Ninety (90) housing units and multi-purpose business facility in Podgorica, at location Konik II, will be constructed in the first Project stage.

The National Housing Program for Montenegro provides the funds for solving the housing issues of 6,063 persons (1,177 households) belonging to the most vulnerable categories: p(persons accommodated in informal collective centres and vulnerable persons in the private accommodation with the special emphasis on Camp Konik.

Additionally, over the past period, Montenegro, in cooperation with the Development Bank of the Council of Europe (CEB) successfully realized the Project "1,000 plus flats" thanks to which a large number of the Montenegrin citizens solved their housing issue. This Project was highly graded by CEB. The continuation of the Project is planned for the next year.

In the future, Montenegro will face challenges in creating and realizing innovative projects, which will improve housing in Montenegro within its constrained financial possibilities.

NETHERLANDS

Roderick van Schreven

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva



The Dutch housing market gives a mixed image. We are proud of our quality of housing and the possibility for every income level to have access to affordable housing. Still, we can see that in recent years, the development of the market has stalled and structural problems are evident.

Due to the crisis, the real estate market has stagnated and prices have fallen. Owners selling their house sometimes have residual debts. Stagnation in the housing market has a negative effect on the construction sector and its employment rates. We are lagging behind the natural level of construction, which will be a problem once the crisis is over.

In the rental sector, we see an imbalance between social subsidized housing and the private sector. In the Netherlands 75% of rental houses are owned by social housing corporations, and almost all of these houses have regulated rents and are intended for lower incomes. In Germany, this figure is 6 %. Out of the remaining 25% owned by the private sector, three quarters is considered to be low-priced and falls under government rent regulation. This means that middle class people that do not qualify for social housing are often dependent on the real estate market and have to buy.

Is buying possible, and supported by the government? Yes actively. You can buy a house with no personal contribution and get over 100 % financed by mortgage. When you combine this with the very favourable tax regulations where the interest rate is totally deductible from income tax, you can understand how the housing market was fuelled. A long time it was even not necessary to amortize your debt, you just paid the interest.

Did it work? Absolutely. In 1980 we had 42% of households as owners of their homes, now it is 59%, but this also led to increase in price. Between 1980 and 2007 the price of houses increased by 200% with total inflation at only 80%. The household mortgage debt in 1995 was over 50% of GDP and therefore comparable with Germany. In 2007, this debt has reached over 100% and in Germany, it is still only 60%. Therefore, you understand that this was good for the value of the house but not really sustainable policy in the long term. What do we see now? Since 2008, the prices have fallen by more than 20%. The good news is that although 13% of households in the owner-occupied sector have a mortgage higher than the value of their house, the default level is still very low.

Reforms are necessary and now. That is why the ministry of housing developed an elaborate,

comprehensive policy plan to rebalance the real estate market, and at the same time reform social housing policy.

Part of the reform is that mortgage debt will be decreased, so that house owners have a lower risk on residual debt, but this means less disposable income in the short term. The competition in the Dutch mortgage market will be increased by simplifying the financial constructions of the mortgages, and by attracting foreign mortgage providers.

In the rental sector there will be more room to charge rents based on the quality of house. In addition, social housing corporations are encouraged to sell part of their stock to private renters. For those who are not able to pay the rent, there are government subsidies to support them. Tax deductibility is reduced, and 100% mortgages are not on the menu anymore. By being open, transparent, and predictable about the policy measures, we try to enhance the trust of the public and investors.

Another important priority for the housing market is increasing the energy efficiency of houses. Much can be gained by decreasing household expenses on energy, and thereby stimulating employment in the construction sector. To reach this goal, the Dutch government has taken many policy measures. In addition, all-important stakeholders from the government, energy companies, consumers, environmental organizations and dozens of other organizations signed a broad agreement on sustainable energy and energy efficiency last September.

Since 2008, Dutch households are required to have an energy label for their house. We agreed with the social housing sector that in 2020 all two-and-a-half million houses would have an average energy certificate B, indicating good energy performance. For this, the government has made 400 million Euros available.

For the real estate sector, a revolving fund of 740 million Euros was created with contributions from the Dutch government and, mainly, private investors. Thanks to low interest rates in the fund, house owners can invest easier in energy efficient house.

Investments in the real estate sector benefit from low interest rates on mortgage loans as result of a very high level of security to ownership titles. We are proud of our cadastre agency, which makes the market more open, and so more competitive, and is a reference internationally.

To summarize we can look forward to success in the quality and volume of houses built. The real estate sector is extremely complex and when you start to change, for example, the mortgage deductibility, it has a direct effect on the construction of new houses or the value of existing ones. This government had the courage, or was obliged due to the crisis, to take a global approach and attack all existing imbalances at the same time, so putting into place a coherent and sustainable policy.

NORWAY

Liv Signe Navarsete

**Minister of Local Government
and Regional Development**



Executive Secretary, honourable ministers, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address the Committee at this Ministers Meeting of the seventy-third session.

Housing and land management affects every one of us, and the policy we make today will also affect future generations. It is therefore important that we develop a sustainable housing and land sector: economically, socially and environmentally. The Norwegian government has presented two White Papers to the Parliament on these topics the last year: one on building policy called “Quality buildings for a better society” and one on housing policy called “Building – prosper – live”.

Norway has been blessed with a stable and growing economy and low unemployment, so far. The quality of housing has increased immensely the last 20 years, with larger living spaces than ever before and the majority of the people owning their own home. We also have relatively low social inequality, compared to many European countries.

However, we are well aware of the challenges many European countries face today. Fear of a “housing bubble” is never far away from the Norwegian news headlines: housing prices are high (and still rising), especially in urban areas, and the building rate is relatively low. Low-income groups, especially young people and immigrants, have difficulty getting into the housing market. Low-income groups have been the main target for Norwegian housing policy the last ten to fifteen years.

We have just launched a new strategy targeting vulnerable groups, especially homeless people. This is a cooperative project between five ministries: the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Children, Equality and Inclusion, the Ministry of Health and Care Service, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, and the ministry I represent, the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development.

Like many European countries, Norway will also have an increasing elderly population. The number of people aged 67 years or above may be more than doubled by 2060, while the population of those over 80 years will have tripled by the same date.

They will be healthier and wealthier than previous generations, but will probably also have higher expectations of service delivery. Our housing stock is not adapted to these future needs, and we have therefore a special focus on accessible housing. The Planning and Building Act requires

accessibility/universal design in a larger number of homes, buildings and outdoor spaces. Accessible housing can also reduce the need for use of expensive nursing homes etc. In the future, we expect a decline in labour force participation in Norway; therefore, there will be fewer hands to take care of the increasing percentage of elderly.

We are also affected by climate change, and have had a policy for promoting energy efficiency in housing for several years. There have been relatively strict regulations for energy demand and energy supply in new houses, through the Planning and Building Act.

Most of the energy used in buildings comes from electricity, which in Norway is more or less completely based on hydropower, which means we have very low CO₂-emissions from buildings. Reducing energy demand is important for several other reasons however: improving energy security, lowering energy costs for the consumer, avoiding new energy production and liberating electricity for other purposes.

The housing situation in Norway is by most standards, very good. We know from earlier experience and the situation in Europe, that this situation can change rapidly - we hope we are prepared.

Thank you for your attention.

PORTUGAL

Miguel de Castro Neto

**Secretary of State, Spatial Planning
and Nature Conservation**



Vice-Minister for Tourism and Environmental Protection, Deputy chair of State Committee on Property Issues, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of my Minister who regrets not being able to participate in this important meeting, let me congratulate the Committee on Housing and Land Management for the initiative to once more reconvene a meeting of Ministers responsible for housing and land management.

Nowadays in my country, Portugal, all the subjects that we are discussing today are the purview of the same Ministry – the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Development and Energy.

Housing, spatial and urban development, land registry and governance are important issues both for sustainable development and for the quality of life of our citizens. This is even more so in these times of economic and financial crisis, when we are also facing so many other challenges to our societies: climate change impacts, demographic change, inefficient use and scarcity of resources, social exclusion and environmental degradation, to name but a few.

As my time is limited, allow me to focus on some actions we have been undertaking to improve housing and land management in Portugal, that are at the same time priorities and challenges.

First, we consider that “no city is an island”, meaning that a city belongs to a certain territory and cannot be considered in isolation from its surrounding hinterland, as well being part of a interlinked network. In addition, housing cannot be considered independently from its urban area and even from its larger territory or functional region. Housing needs adequate infrastructures, facilities, services and employment both in urban and rural areas. Considering this, we have to ensure that we give equal opportunities to people wherever they live.

Therefore, an integrated approach is needed to address these issues, and that means secure land tenure and adequate governance to guarantee vertical and horizontal coordination and consistency between different sectors and between levels of administration.

In relation to housing, last year we adopted a law to promote the market in rental housing over housing ownership, to stimulate the rental market in urban centres. This also contributes to regenerating urban centres, attracting people and businesses, and to avoiding continued urban sprawl in the peripheries. It has to be mentioned that while liberalizing the rental market, protective measures were created for the elderly and for those with lower incomes, in order to ensure affordable prices.

We are also promoting partnerships between the public and the private sector to increase the availability of social housing, but we believe that social housing should “not be forever” – it

should be considered as a transitional housing situation for people that really need it, not a permanent solution when income increases. At the same time, even for social housing, we promote urban regeneration over the development of new urban areas.

As for planning, we have reviewed our spatial planning system, starting with a spatial development Act whose main goals are simplifying the existing planning system, clarifying the obligations of the administrative and public sector, and limiting urban sprawl and dispersed construction while. At the same time, the Act makes the plans more flexible and dynamic, subjected to periodical assessments, so that they can more easily answer new needs, challenges or opportunities.

A new urban policy is also being prepared. We need sustainable, dynamic, competitive, attractive, healthier, more resilient, and inclusive cities. We need cities that use innovation to answer the challenges they face and that are capable of offering economic opportunities, equity and a good quality of life both to their inhabitants and to the people who work there.

At the same time, we are also working to modernize the land registry system, by making it a shared responsibility between the State and in society in general. For example, public institutions and owners are responsible for maintenance of the land registry whenever they promote changes to the property.

We are proposing the creation of a land registration market, meaning that the central administration department until now responsible for land registry (Directorate General of Territorial Development) will no longer have monopoly of its implementation and maintenance. Local authorities and other public institutions also contribute to the implementation of the land registry. The Direction-General for Spatial Development will be the national authority responsible for both the organization and maintenance of the information, management and use of the land registry information system, and for the overseeing and regulation of the sector.

The proposal also considers that wherever effective land registry does not exist, its implementation will be mandatory for several administrative procedures, such as planning approvals for development or building permits. The applicant or owner of the property will issue no permit or license without submission to the land registry. Whenever ownership of a property is unknown, there will be a time limit for land registration - after that period the State may reclaim ownership, according to general law.

We have been working on other priorities and challenges, however, and we are looking forward to the work presented yesterday by the United Nations Special Representative on Disaster Risk Reduction of a Plan on the Prevention and Minimizing of Hazards, that will be integrated with our planning system. Every spatial plan will have to consider the existing and potential hazards in its territory and propose the adequate actions to minimize them.

The same will happen with climate change adaptation. The proposals of the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy will also have to be integrated in the spatial plans.

We have a long way ahead of us to achieve our goals, not only in terms of adopting all these proposals, but especially because their implementation will not be easy.

This is no more than a summary of our challenges and priorities, but I am honoured to share them with you and I am happy to say that they fit well in the Strategy we were asked to adopt.

That is why we give our full support to the Strategy on Sustainable Housing and Land Administration in the ECE Region 2014-2020 and we will do our best to reach the proposed targets.

Thank you.

Anatolie Zolotcov

**Deputy Minister of Regional
Development and Construction**



I would like to present you the report for the research and development of the country profile of the Republic of Moldova.

"A study on housing and land management" was initiated by the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations (UNECE), at the request and with the support of the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction. The Agency for land relations and cadastre, has organized the mission of UNECE experts, in 4-11 august 2013, after a preliminary mission in December 2012).

During the mission, many of meetings were organized between UNECE experts and representatives of the Parliament of Republic of Moldova, ministries, agencies and other institutions. During the meetings the following topics were discussed:

- administrative decentralization, its goals and objectives
- the role of local public administration authorities in the current system, also financial decision-making
- documents elaborated by the authorities in the field of housing and land management

Meetings with international organizations and projects/programs financed by foreign partners also took place, such as:

- MOREEFF – the project on Financing Facility of Energy Efficiency in the residential sector of Moldova
- GIZ Moldova – the project on modernization of local public services
- The Project for support of local authorities in Moldova, financed by USAID
- The delegation of the European Union in the Republic of Moldova
- World Bank Program for water supply and sanitation
- Social Housing Construction Project Implementation, Unit II

Discussions were held about issues related to the work of these projects, goals, financing procedures, results of activity and their relevance to the housing and land management sector.

At the same time, at the request of experts, meetings were organized with representatives of commercial banks, where issues including lending activity of individuals for purchase and repair of housing, problematic loans, average rate of mortgage interests were discussed.

In addition, for interested experts, a trip was organized to the Bălți municipality and Călărași city, to discuss the Mayor's activities in housing and land management and problems in this field. One of the residential blocks was visited in Criuleni city; it was built as part of a housing construction project for socially vulnerable persons. The Development Bank of the Council of Europe financed 65% of the project, and local government had expressed a desire to participate in such projects for construction of social housing.

During the discussions, the focus was on:

- Management and maintenance of dwellings (legislation, institutional analysis and preparation of recommendations)
- Energy efficiency in housing
- Financing housing renovation
- Spatial planning

On the last day of the mission, at the round table the results were discussed.

During the organized meetings, experts obtained information on the present situation in the field, the problems and difficulties, and recommended that a "study on housing and land management" should be produced. It should contain recommendations by international experts, both at the legislative and normative level, as well as the institutional.

This study will be very useful for the Republic of Moldova and will contribute to the achievement of certain objectives, such as:

- Acceleration of the transfer of rights and responsibilities for construction and maintenance of housing stock from state to private sector
- Encouraging the establishment and activity of joint owners associations in condominiums
- Development of a legal framework, including the approval of a Housing Law, which will improve relations in the housing, under international standards. This draft Law is in the first reading in Parliament
- Improving a new draft law on condominiums, this will come as an addition to the law on housing, and will significantly improve the housing sector. This draft Law has been elaborated with the assistance of foreign experts employed by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and, at present, is in the process of completion
- Improving energy efficiency in the housing sector

We hope that the study will be prepared in accordance with the action plan and in November 2014, it will be launched in the Republic of Moldova.

We express our gratitude to the United Nations European Economic Commission, the Committee on Housing and Land Management and the Secretariat for helping us in organization of the Mission.

Thank you for attention!

SERBIA

Milan Miljevic

**State Secretary, Ministry of
Construction and Urban
Planning**



Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to make clear that the Republic of Serbia fully supports the adoption of the Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region for the period 2014-2020. I am convinced that this Strategy will contribute to our capacity to achieve sustainable results in this sector.

The biggest challenge in the housing sector in Serbia is illegal construction. One of the major causes of illegal construction is linked to land management, that is, the lack of updated spatial and urban plans and cadastral maps. There has been a fall in illegal construction since 2009 when the Law on Planning and Construction was adopted, declaring illegal construction a criminal offence.

The Law on Special Conditions for Registration of Ownership right to Structures Built Illegally has been passed, and the new Law on Legalization of Illegal Constructions will soon be passed by the Parliament. In all cities, unified cadastres have been established.

The economic situation in the world hasn't avoided Serbia, and has led to a decline in housing construction, mostly because of less favourable loan conditions for buyers.~

The non-profit housing sector is not yet sufficiently developed. This sector became an important issue during the refugee crisis in the nineties and was linked to donor-funded refugee housing projects. In the past 20 years, many housing programs for refugees have been implemented, through which tens of thousands of refugee households were integrated in Serbian society. There were therefore high expectations of the Sarajevo Donor Conference on providing funds for the implementation of the Regional Housing Project for Refugees, which should finally resolve 17000 housing solution for refugee families in the next five years.

In the last eight years Serbian Government has financed the development of urban plans on the local level, which have been positively affected the housing sector. The non-profit housing sector was developed and strengthened during the previous decade through implementation of the Settlement and Integration of Refugees Program. The government passed the Law on Social Housing as well as Strategy on Social Housing and establishing the Republic Housing Agency.

In the coming period two important housing projects will be implemented by CEB loan funds: the Local Social Housing Schemes, which, in accordance with the Law on Social Housing, will construct and relocate 1,700 apartments, and the Post-earthquake Housing Reconstruction

Programme in Kraljevo. The Regional Housing Project for Refugees will be also implemented, which will be financed by donation funds of Euro 150 million.

In the last few years, a number of projects for social inclusion of Roma have been implemented and activities to improve informal Roma settlements within these projects will be undertaken, financed by the IPA 2013.

Mr. Chairman,

In the area of energy efficiency, a regulation on energy efficiency of buildings was passed and the certificates for energy performance of buildings were introduced. The implementation of the EU project "Tabula", which carried out energy classifications of building stock, was very useful.

The Republic of Serbia, together with UNISDR, participated in the campaign 'Making cities resilient: My city is getting ready', which affected more than 50 towns and municipalities.

In the period 2010-2012 the Project of Strengthening of Local Land Management in Serbia was implemented, through which a number of new tools of land management were introduced and tested in 13 municipalities.

With the aim of recognizing and preserving traditional architectural values, a project entitled "Serbian Traditional House" was recently introduced.

The draft Law on Planning and Construction contains provisions that introduce new tools of land management, such as: urban relocation, land valuation, early participation, improving the quality of urban plans, improvement of the spatial information system and strengthening the role of the private sector. We expect this law will be adopted in the very near future.

Thank you for your attention!

SLOVAKIA

František Palko

**State Secretary,
Ministry of Transport, Construction
and Regional Development**



Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me start by thanking the Committee on Housing and Land management for organizing this high-level segment of its annual meeting. I am sure that it is useful to exchange our experiences and knowledge.

It is difficult to summarise in a short statement all the work done since 2000 in the housing sector in my country. For Slovakia it has been a challenging period – a period of formulating new housing policies, setting new legal and financial frameworks, and creating new instruments. This all was done to prepare conditions for stable development.

Slovakia, as one of the transitional countries, went through a massive privatization process of formerly public rental housing in the nineties. That process created more than seven hundred thousand new owners in multifamily residential buildings, which were in urgent need of general refurbishment. The direct role of the state and municipalities has decreased, and the largest responsibility was shifted to individual owners. This situation was challenging because of different owners' income levels, as well as lack of awareness, experience and skills in decision-making about common spaces and parts of residential buildings.

Privatisation also meant that less than 3% of housing stock has been left in the public rental sector. Therefore, there are two main priorities for our housing policy. The main one is refurbishment and reduction of energy consumption in existing housing stock. The other priority is to increase the proportion of the public rental sector, to make housing affordable for lower income families who cannot afford to be owners. To this end we have introduced, and are permanently improving and amending, legal, economic and institutional measures.

One of the most efficient instruments proved to be the State Housing Development Fund. Its main aim since its legal establishment has been to provide stable long-term loan financing for housing policy priorities – refurbishment and energy reduction of existing housing stock and new construction of public rental housing. It was created as a revolving fund, and nowadays two thirds of its yearly budget comes from own resources.

Another useful instrument, granted by the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development, are the subsidies for renewal of common structural parts of panel residential buildings, and to accompany low interest loans for public rental construction.

These measures helped us to initiate a successful process of housing modernization and enabled our municipalities to construct more than 35 thousand flats in the public rental sector in last 13 years.

To conclude, I would like to stress the importance of international exchange of experience. Slovakia was one of the first counties for which a Housing profile study had been commissioned by this Committee in 1998-99. Many of the recommendations have become a reality in Slovakia and contributed to positive development in the field of housing, though some of them still need to be implemented. In a similar way, regular in-depth discussions on different issues of interest by the Committee have helped us in formulating national strategies and policies. That is why I believe that this platform for discussing housing and urban development issues, represented by the Committee on housing and land management, will also in the future assist other countries in formulating their respective policies in these important areas.

This afternoon we will be discussing and adopting the Strategy on sustainable housing and land management. I am sure that, however different our challenges and policy responses might be, there are principles and values we all share.

Thank you for your attention.

SLOVENIA

Tanja Bogataj

**Director General,
Spatial Planning Directorate,
Ministry of Infrastructure and Spatial
Planning**



Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is not a coincidence that urban development policies have been increasingly brought forward in discussions at all levels in the past decade. Urban regions as a rule produce more GDP than the average per capita, the productivity level is in general higher, and an increased flow of capital and trade increases the flow of people, goods, services, and ideas. Cities and urban regions are therefore places where economic, social, and cultural development strongly interact, and as such represent territorial potential for competitiveness and growth. However, at the same time, they are places that generate many social and environmental problems. Cities and urban settlements comprise more than half of all the population in Slovenia and are spreading and competing for the same land with agricultural areas.

These are many challenges, which need to be addressed in an integrated way. This is where urban development policies can play a crucial role in achieving sustainable development.

So, what has changed over the past decade?

There is a need to adapt our urban development policies to address all of the new challenges, such as adaptation to climate change, energy efficiency and provision (including preventing energy poverty, developing innovative production, and distribution systems), an aging population, new migration, and increasing social exclusion. This is forcing us to also find new ways of governance, and work together to find new solutions in rapidly changing conditions. Moreover, in this time of economic crisis, there is a rising recognition that cities and their urban regions, as the motors of economic development, have to be looked at in order to bring benefit to expenditure, and to tackle social problems in an effective and efficient manner. Therefore, cities are places that can boost development, but have to tackle social and environmental problems in an interactive way. The focus of today is innovative cities, which are centres of excellence in research, learning and culture.

What is the challenge?

The main challenge is to achieve successful implementation of solutions. It is important to note a willingness to overcome a sectoral approach to achieve added value; to solve environmental challenges in a competitive way; to improve multilevel governance; and to increase capacity building in order to empower local communities to act as successful driving forces and to learn from one another. This is also one of the areas where we find the work of the ECE Committee on

Housing and land Management extremely valuable.

To address urban development challenges, in 2000, Slovenia adopted the Spatial Development Strategy (2004); amended Spatial Planning Law (2007) to adjust the planning procedures to current needs; adopted the Housing Act (2008); created rules for multi-dwelling buildings management; and prepared a new National Housing Program (2009) to mention just a few. Currently, we are also starting the procedures to revise, after a decade, the current Spatial Development Strategy in order to adopt solutions to new challenges. The new Strategy will also strengthen support for territorial competitiveness of urban center and their hinterland as the motors of regional development. We define 15 centers of national importance of which three have international significance. The role of urban centers as development centres however, demands an attractive working and living environment, well connected in traffic flows, and with high accessibility to services. Only attractive cities, which are adapted to current, needs can also be competitive.

With ever-increasing pressures on urban areas, housing plays especially important role for creating socio-economic integration in general. In this, only an integrated approach to housing can deliver long-lasting solutions for social integration, which is tightly connected to accessibility of jobs, public transport, education, health services, and other public and private services. Also important is the rational use of space. Therefore, we are also focusing urban development policies on the integrated renovation of underutilized or deprived housing, or other inner urban areas, which are also the most vulnerable for social and economic segregation.

The new National Housing Program (NHP) for 2014-2024 (which is in final draft stage) has the goal of creating suitable and effective housing policy to address the most urgent issues. This derives from the constitutional provision that the state shall create the possibility for citizens to obtain suitable housing, and is in accordance with the social, spatial, and development programs of the state.

When it comes to housing in Slovenia, the main weakness is the considerable shortage of rental dwellings. Housing prices in urban areas are high, the majority of housing stock is owner occupied (91%), and rental stock is under-supported and mainly leased illegally.

The National Housing Program 2014-2023 is bringing new aspects into our housing policy and is meant to improve the overall housing situation in our country. The program is focusing on four main goals:

- 1) A balanced supply of adequate housing
- 2) Accessibility of housing for all
- 3) Housing refurbishment
- 4) Greater mobility of residents

So, the main focus of the NHP is to assure enough rental dwellings by:

- filling up housing units that are currently formally vacant (with fiscal measures for owners and by improving the supervisory work),
- building new, publicly owned rental housing through public-private partnership
- refurbishment of existing housing stock so it can be re-activated

We estimate the NHP will be adopted in the first half of the year 2014 and the respective housing legislation will be amended in the following year. In developing our policy solutions, we have utilized many recommendations, deriving from the documents and other outcomes of the work of this Committee.

Therefore, it is a pleasure to be here today, when the adoption of the ECE Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region 2014-2020 is taking place. The Strategy represents the cooperation of countries in the ECE region, each with different backgrounds but with the same goals. We are confident that this will contribute to forming a more solid basis for sustainable development and cooperation with the common goal of a better quality of life. We are setting up a suitable framework that is helping to define policy measures to accomplish these goals, and allows us to achieve what we all want, namely solutions to the complex problems we all face: sustainable development, and most of all, a better quality of life.

Thank you very much.

SWEDEN

Roger Ekman

Senior Advisor, Lantmäteriet



During the last decade, Sweden has introduced three dimensional property formations, recognised ‘owned’ apartments as real property units and merged the land registry with the cadastral agency and the rest of the Lantmäteriet. Since activity in the housing sector is still not meeting needs, the government has initiated committees and elaborated a number of proposals in order to simplify and unify the planning and building permit procedures.

One important trend within Swedish public administration is to deepen the cooperation between different authorities and other actors. This will lead to increased efficiency and give better choice in meeting citizens’ needs

On one hand, most public data is open and free in Sweden, accessible for anyone. On the other hand, the issue of pricing is complicated since the information within the land administration sector is largely funded by fees. The ambition is to find a formula that handles this challenge, and increases the amount of data that is accessible free of charge.

Issues about rights in water areas are rising, concerning quality and quantity as well as development of resources. Since Sweden is well provided with fresh water this has not been debated that much, but we believe it will be in the future, and the same goes for the marine resources as well. To develop sustainable use of our water resources is one of our big challenges for the future.

SWITZERLAND

Ernst Hauri

Director, Federal Housing Office



Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me, on behalf of the Swiss government to thank the Committee on Housing and Spatial Planning of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Bureau and the Secretariat for organizing this ministerial meeting. I would also like to congratulate all the participants for developing the strategy on sustainable housing and land management for the period 2014 to 2020. We are convinced that this document will be a valuable tool for improving living conditions and housing for all the countries in the region.

In terms of living conditions and housing, Switzerland still enjoys an enviable position: living area is large compared to other countries, and units are well maintained and of excellent quality. The vast majority of the population is able to bear the costs of housing. The number of homeowners has increased recently, but is still modest by international standards (approx. 37%).

At the Ministerial Meeting in 2006, Switzerland reported that the housing shortage problem had been largely resolved and traditional activities relating to housing policy, for example encouraging affordable housing, were no longer so significant. However, the situation has changed dramatically since, so much so that housing policy and planning issues are once again priorities on the political agenda of the Confederation, cantons, cities and local councils.

The Swiss economy has managed to weather the international storm despite the difficulties experienced in the Eurozone. It has been, and remains dependent on, foreign labour. European workers have had easy access to the Swiss labour market since the 2007 introduction of free movement of persons for citizens of the Eurozone and EFTA states. Since then, Switzerland has recorded an annual population growth of over 1%. At the same time, interest rates have remained at historically low levels. Incomes have risen, and household size continues to shrink. The combination of these factors has resulted in an explosion in demand for housing.

The construction industry has been able to respond to this situation and Switzerland has not experienced so much building activity for decades. This has not prevented the price of homes available on the market from soaring, especially in attractive cities like Geneva. It is mainly households on a low or moderate income that have difficulty finding suitable housing. They are often forced to live on the outskirts of cities, where housing is cheaper. This means they are forced to travel greater distances to work, and developments in the housing market are contributing increasingly to congested trains and greater volumes of traffic on the roads during rush hour.

In May of this year, the Federal Council considered the situation in the housing market. It

reiterated that housing supply should remain primarily a task for the private sector. This principle has proven itself in a range of economic contexts. The Federal Council also decided to slightly expand existing federal support for the construction of non-profit housing. In addition, the Confederation launched a dialogue with the cantons and cities particularly affected by problems in the housing market, in order to find solutions to meet their specific needs.

The above is a summary of the current situation on the housing market and in housing policy. There will be many challenges to face in the field of housing and land management in the coming years. I would like to discuss three of these challenges here:

First, we must expect demand to remain high. It is therefore essential that we continue building new housing, without losing sight of the conflict of interest that this entails, as construction should not be at the expense of the countryside and agricultural land.

The public is highly committed to the protection of the landscape. For example, in March 2012 the Swiss people voted in favour of a popular initiative to limit the share of second homes to 20 per cent or less in all communes. In tourist areas, in which this proportion is frequently higher, it is in principle no longer possible to build holiday properties. Furthermore, the canton of Zurich voted in favour of an initiative calling for better protection of cultivated land. Under these conditions, any new housing can only be built in existing populated areas. This poses a huge challenge to the cities and communes, which must adapt the legal framework in order to facilitate urban densification.

The second of these challenges involves the refurbishment of existing buildings and homes as part of the federal energy strategy. In 2011, the Federal Council and Parliament took the decision to phase out nuclear power, a goal that can only be achieved by improving energy efficiency in buildings. Energy standards are already high for new housing, and will be further improved in the coming years. However, the number of new homes built each year barely amounts to 1% of the entire existing housing stock. Efforts must therefore focus on existing buildings that consume a lot of energy. This is why the Federal Council recently decided to increase funding for energy-efficient renovations. The programme will be funded via the CO2 tax, which will be increased for this purpose. Here, too, there is a conflict of interest to manage. From the energy perspective, these refurbishments are absolutely necessary; in terms of housing policy, we must ensure that the refurbished housing remains affordable for the general public.

The third challenge is to avoid excessive social segregation. Current market dynamics encourage the geographical distribution of the population in terms of purchasing power. This may lead to a growing imbalance in the composition of the population, especially in attractive areas where homes become too expensive for the average person. Long-term, this trend threatens efficient functioning of the communes, which form an important level of the state in Switzerland. This is why measures in the housing sector can and should contribute to encouraging social diversity and sustainable development in the communes.

These three examples demonstrate that even an economically prosperous country like Switzerland faces challenges in housing policy and planning that require action at all levels of government. These policy objectives largely overlap with those of the Committee's new strategy. It is therefore essential to continue the exchange of views on housing and land issues within the ECE.

Thank you for your attention.

TAJIKISTAN

Abduvali Komilov

**Director,
Agency of Construction and
Architecture under the Government**



Dear Ministers, representatives of ministries and participants of the meeting!

In facilitating the transition to market relations, the main goal of a housing policy is to create conditions for building affordable housing for financially challenged groups of the population. This would include half the population of Tajikistan.

As a mountainous country, Tajikistan has specific problems related to development of cities and villages, creating comfortable living environments and building affordable housing.

The rapid population growth (3-3.5% annually) and low availability level of housing in cities and villages demand a threefold increase in housing construction. Housing becomes unaffordable for financially challenged groups because the cost of housing construction becomes more expensive due to the rise in cost of building materials as well as other factors.

In general, there are the following problems in building affordable and comfortable housing in the republic that negatively influence on the improvement of housing conditions of the citizens of Tajikistan:

- the need for further improvement of current legislation regulating the development of housing to stimulate an increase in construction of affordable and comfortable houses
- the need to introduce a clearly structured legislation regulating all stages of construction of affordable and comfortable houses;
- limited ability to pay for housing construction, and general lack of affordability of affordable and comfortable houses;
- limited availability of financial mechanisms such as systems of housing construction savings, and limited rental housing;
- the lack of a comprehensive assessment of housing conditions in the regions, or an assessment of changes in housing, and the lack of information for banks, credit institutions and private investors regarding possible investments in the housing sector.

The most appropriate sources for financing an affordable housing program are the state budget, private investment and assistance from international organizations that have similar programs for affordable housing. These programs are aimed at ensuring a sustainable growth rate of construction of affordable houses through cheaper cost, increase in the duration of housing loans and reduction of initial mortgage payment and mortgage rates.

The priorities for a program on affordable housing construction should be:

1) lending from the national budget to local executive bodies for affordable housing construction, with low rates for up to 25 years

2) developing individual housing construction

3) enabling housing construction with private capital investments

4) reduction of construction costs per square meter of affordable housing by prevention of use of expensive materials, products and structures during construction

5) further development of effective and environmentally friendly construction materials and introduction of new technologies to increase their range and quality, with the result of reducing the volume of imports.

One of the main goals of our housing sector is a comprehensive solution to the problem of transition to sustainable development of the housing sector, to ensure the availability of housing and create safe and comfortable living conditions. To achieve this goal, we set the following objectives:

- increase construction of houses with necessary infrastructure
- bring existing housing in line with the quality standards ensuring comfortable living conditions
- construction of affordable and comfortable housing for people with different economic opportunities

Despite the volumes of square meters of available housing and other positive changes that have taken place in housing in Tajikistan, the demand for housing is still huge. Improvements in housing under construction, and qualitative characteristics of housing, do not yet correspond to the demand of the population.

It is worth noting that our country still lacks a normative document concerning indicators of healthy and environmentally friendly housing.

To conclude I would like to note that the convention on sustainable housing in our region could be a guide for joint cooperation, and it obliges each state to consider the above-mentioned issues more seriously. It also provides the basis for specific decisions and ensuring an effective investment policy in the housing sector. It will assist in the development of projects aimed at providing affordable, healthy and environmentally friendly housing, as well as rehabilitation and improvement of existing housing conditions.

Thank you for your attention!

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Yuri Osipov

**Advisor to Minister for Regional
Development**



The Russian Federation has not always been a leader in areas such as housing, real estate and housing service, but after the adoption of the law on 4 July 1991 "On privatization of housing in the Russian Federation," Russian citizens were able to become full owners of their homes.

There is no single European country with a similar number of owners. Currently, the Russian Federation holds an absolute record in housing privatization (83% of housing was privatized). Unfortunately, many owners do not know how to handle such a generous gift from the state, which is quite natural. Executive power has never faced this phenomenon before. The main challenge was to educate a so-called "inefficient owner" about the rules of property usage and maintenance.

A separate direction of the authorities' action is apartment buildings with common property, which often becomes a matter of contention and debate among citizens. That is why the state issued a series of legislative acts regulating this matter. During recent years, the Russian Federation has made a significant step towards the creation of an 'efficient owner'.

However, the authorities also concluded about the need to create rental housing, and these are some of the activities of the government of the Russian Federation in this direction.

The government decree № 2227- p of 30 November 2012 approved the state program "Providing the citizens of the Russian Federation with affordable and comfortable housing and utilities," which formulated the basic principles of the development of rental market and the stages of its formation.

In 2013, we identified the main directions in improving the legislation and we scheduled the launch of pilot projects to build non-for-profit rental housing of state and municipal housing fund. Furthermore, a draft of the federal law "On amendments to the housing code of the Russian Federation and certain legislative acts in the field of governing the relationships in non-for-profit rental housing" has been developed.

The draft of the federal law is aimed at solving the following tasks:

- Improving the general legislative regulation of rental housing, including the introduction of rental apartment buildings and the regulation of rental of premises in this building

- Classification of housing depending on the purpose of its use, and in connection with the introduction of a new type of housing (non-profit housing) and a new type of contract (non- profit rental)
- Legislative regulation of non -profit rental and a new type of contract for non -profit rental.
- To develop the rental-housing sector, we decided to allocate specific activities to stimulating housing construction, developing the sector of rental housing and other areas not related to mortgage lending.

Within the framework of developing affordable rental housing and developing a non- profit housing fund for people with low income, a loan product "Rental housing" has been created. This is designed taking into account the successful experience of other countries, and is adapted to economic opportunities in Russia. It should become one of the tools of support for the creation of rental housing. The product "Rental Housing" is aimed at creating housing intended for rent, in order to improve affordability of housing for all categories of the population, and stimulation/regulation of labour migration. This last can be used as a mechanism for attracting and retaining valuable workers, which this is one of the priorities of the Russian Federation because it ranks second in the world in the number of foreign workers. The product is also aimed at meeting housing needs of workers, developing a new segment of the housing market and solving social tasks.

Under the terms of the product "Rental Housing," a borrower is a commercial organization in the form of business partnership or specialized project company. The specialized project company should be created to acquire or build the housing, rent it out and maintaining it in good condition. It should not engage in other activities, and may not engage in business activities before the project starts. The compulsory condition is the availability of funds covering at least 30% of the cost of purchased housing.

The term of the mortgage within the product "Rental housing" is up to 20 years at an annual rate of 10-11% after the registration of the mortgage. The purpose of the mortgage is to buy all the apartments in the building (or a section of the building) by signing a sale contract or participating in joint construction.

Currently, pilot projects aimed at development of the rental-housing sector are being implemented in 16 constituencies of the Russian Federation.

There are seven constituencies (Chuvash Republic, Kemerovo region, Kirov region, Omsk region, Pskov region and the city of Moscow) with state-funded construction of apartment buildings to provide premises for non-profit rental to citizens in need of improved housing conditions and with a low level of income. There have been cases where people have waited 30 years for this improvement.

There are nine constituencies (Altai Republic, Republic of Tatarstan, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District, Belgorod region, Nizhny Novgorod region, Novosibirsk region, Orel region, Rostov region, Ryazan region, the city of Saint Petersburg) enabling construction of apartment buildings to provide rental housing to specialists working in developing enterprises that are necessary for a city.

In Nizhny Novgorod Region, for example, there is construction of rental housing for the

employees of open joint-stock company "Arzamas Instrument Plant." A republican state housing fund is being formed in the Chuvash Republic, and in the city of Kazan, one of the sections of an apartment building constructed to accommodate guests of Universiade 2013 will be allocated to rental housing.

The Russian Federation is interested in cooperation with the colleagues present here to share experiences and receive guidelines.

UKRAINE

Nataliia Oliinyk

**Director for Reformation Strategy
and Communal Services Development,
Ministry of Regional Development,
Construction and Municipal
Development**



Dear ladies and gentlemen! Dear participants of the Meeting!

Let me express my gratitude for inviting me to take part in the UNECE Ministerial Meeting on Housing and Land Management. Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion within the framework of discussion on achievements in housing sector.

First, I want to note that the housing sector in Ukraine is going through global changes and revolutionary transformations at the organizational, legal, and scientific and technological levels.

This is largely due to the Ukraine housing sector review conducted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. Supporting the achievements of the Committee on Housing and Land Management, I want to express my gratitude for the experience gained by Ukraine in the course of joint work and meetings. Housing in Ukraine is the largest industry in the economic sector; its performance largely influences socio-economic indicators of Ukrainian society.

Following the recommendations provided by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe during the review of the housing sector of Ukraine, the Ukrainian government is creating a legal framework which would encourage:

- an increase in housing construction
- development of construction technologies
- reduction of time and cost of planning and construction
- identification and simplification of administrative barriers in the construction industry
- improvement of national housing legislation and the legislation governing the rights and duties of citizens for management and maintenance of common property in apartment buildings and ensuring their implementation

The large-scale reform of the last decade has been carried out in connection with the adoption of the law "On Regulation of Urban Development" in February 2011. In response to its provision, three laws, 21 government resolutions, 15 ministry decrees and 8 normative acts were adopted.

Establishment of a legal framework in construction promotes the development of the construction industry, and the law creates this. The mechanism to ensure affordable housing for people is regulated by article 4 of the law "On Prevention of the Global Financial Crisis's Influence on the Development of the Housing Construction Industry," which gives a definition of affordable housing, and government support for its construction or purchase. It expands the circle of persons entitled to receive such support increases sources of financing for affordable housing, its

basic requirements and creates conditions to make it cheaper.

There were 14 amendments to 10 laws, 14 new government acts and 18 ministerial documents. State and relevant regional programs for ensuring affordable housing are being produced. The ministry is implementing five-stage housing programs:

- (1) reduction of the cost of mortgages
- (2) construction or purchase of affordable housing
- (3) housing construction for young people
- (4) concessional lending to rural developers ("own house")
- (5) housing for disabled veterans

The work of creating a Unified State Register of citizens in need of better housing conditions also continues, recognized during the review of the housing sector in Ukraine. The issue of housing construction is now under the permanent control of the government.

There has been an increase in the number of apartments built: from 66,000 in 2009 to 91,000 in the last year. Projected volume for the current year is 115,000 apartments, and we hope to build 120,000 apartments in 2015.

Priority areas of the ministry for the period to 2015 are the following:

- create a favourable investment climate and ensure harmonious development of the territories through deregulation of construction activities
- develop programs for construction of affordable housing
- develop internal market and create conditions for meeting the investment intentions of developers
- establish a regulatory framework integrated in the international regulatory environment of technical regulation

Based on these priorities and recommendations, provided from the results of housing sector review of Ukraine, a number of medium-terms tasks have been created. A key element of the reform of housing sector and improvement of housing services is de-monopolization (where possible) of the supply and demand of these services. Primarily the concern is de-monopolizing the services for on management and maintenance of an apartment building.

Currently, with the aim to de-monopolize supply and demand, the ministry has developed the following draft legislations: "On Particularities of Ownership in an Apartment Building" and "On Management of an Apartment Building."

In order to address all issues of concern during implementation of reforms in this field, the ministry has drafted legislation providing unification of terminology of types of activities and subjects that conduct these activities. It also unifies terms for types of goods and services produced in the housing services market, the classification of housing services and aims to create conditions for the transition of potentially competitive markets into truly competitive ones.

From now until 2015, we plan to hold activities aimed at transforming the field of management (service and maintenance) of apartment buildings into a successful commercial enterprise.

Once again, I want to address the Committee on Housing and Land Management with words of gratitude for the experience gained by Ukraine in the course of joint work and meetings. Ukraine has been given an opportunity to improve its citizens' living conditions and ensure the growth of sustainable, equitable human development. This is because of the comprehensive support of the United Nations in the development of political and legal documents, analytical and advisory activities, and undertakings to improve the capacity of national partners.

Ukraine is interested in further cooperation and implementation of the action plan that will be approved by the Committee

UNITED KINGDOM

Ed Lester

**Chief Land Registrar and Chief Executive,
Her Majesty Land Registry of England and Wales**



Challenges faced by England and Wales and the progress achieved in the area of housing and land management since 2000

Historical context: The Land Registry has experienced significant change in its organisation and structure since 2000. From approximately 8000 employees and 25 offices in 2000, we now have around 4,500 people at 14 offices, a reduction of around 45% in our staffing and over 50% in our estate.

Following the period of growth and prosperity in the housing market from 2000, we then entered the most turbulent period in the Land Registry's long history, with a slump in the property market and the global economic crisis in 2007/08. The following year saw a decline of 60% in our casework intakes and a fall in revenue of 36%, resulting in an operating deficit of over £73m. To get us back on track, we responded by embarking on a major transformation programme to ensure we became the smaller, leaner, more flexible, customer-focused and sustainable organisation we needed to be to deliver our objectives in a changing market. Offices were closed, 3500 people left the organisation, and some of our back office functions outsourced.

Coupled with the rationalisation of our organisational structure, we have continued to focus on operational efficiency, developing a closer relationship with our customers to deliver the products and services they need, streamlining and digitising our registration processes, and increasing the number of our services available electronically. We are now a key participant in the UK Government's economic growth agenda. Despite the continued relatively low level of activity in the housing market since 2008, our transformation programme and continued focus on increased efficiency whilst delivering a professional service to customers resulted in an operating surplus of nearly £109m in 2012/13.

We are now embarking on our 5-year Business Strategy and our vision is to be recognised as a world leader in the digital delivery of land registration services and the management and reuse of land and property data.

Current activity in the housing market: England and Wales are currently experiencing a surge in activity in the property market, with a resultant increase in volumes of registration applications received by us. This surge is because of policies put in place by the current coalition government and the statement from the Governor of the Bank of England that interest rates in the UK will remain low until 2016. The annual change in house prices overall stands at 1.3% for the last 12 months, with London showing an annual price increase of 7.1%. A great deal of funds have also

flowed in from the Eurozone and beyond fuelling house prices in the capital.

Objective for the next 5 years – Transforming the Land Registry into a digital organisation, to e-enable as much of our business as possible.

We have created a Target Operating Model, which will develop and deliver a new corporate structure, functional design: a new delivery model as well as a new financial model. This Target Operating Model is a 5 year model, but the main and most significant management action will take place during the first 24 – 30 months.

Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE region for the period 2014-2020

Adopted by the Ministerial Meeting on Housing and Land Management on 8 October 2013 in Geneva

I. Vision, objectives and targets

1. In line with the Committee's mandate and mission, the following vision, objectives and targets by the year 2020 have been developed to guide the Committee's work in support of member States efforts to achieve sustainable housing and land management.
2. Vision: By 2020, the ECE region continues to be in the forefront of promoting sustainable housing and land management. Green, inclusive, compact and resilient cities are a priority in national policies and in regional cooperation. Investment in the housing sector is encouraged by transparent and efficient land use, property registration and a sound financial system. The housing sector offers a range of options, including for those with special needs and other vulnerable population groups.

A. Sustainable housing and real estate markets

1. Environmental dimension

(a) Objective (A)

To reduce energy use in the housing sector as compared to 2012 and continue the downward trend

Targets: By the year 2020

- A1. Policies and legal frameworks are in place to support and stimulate retrofitting of the existing residential housing stock in order to reduce its ecological footprint and make it more energy-efficient, making use of traditional knowledge and local building materials when possible.
- A2. Energy performance requirements and legislation are in place for the issuance of energy performance certificates for new and existing residential buildings.

(b) Objective (B)

To reduce the impact of the residential sector on the environment, taking into account the life cycle of buildings

Targets: By the year 2020

- B1. The life-cycle approach is integrated into housing and building legislation
- B2. All new housing construction is designed and built according to the life-cycle approach

(c) Objective (C)

To improve the resilience of buildings to natural and human-generated disasters

Target: By the year 2020

- C1. Building regulations are reviewed and adapted to better respond to seismicity and the effects of climate change and climate variability

2. Social dimension

(d) Objective (D)

To improve the overall access of all to adequate, affordable, good-quality, healthy and secure housing and utility services, with particular attention to young people and vulnerable groups

Targets: By the year 2020

- D1. Investments in social and/or affordable housing are increased, as appropriate
- D2. Policies are established for supporting access to affordable and secure housing, especially for socially and economically vulnerable groups
- D3. Policy instruments are in place which ensure an adequate contribution of new residential construction to social and affordable housing
- D4. Strategies are in place and investments provided for reducing the gaps between urban and rural areas in the provision of infrastructure and services
- D5. Regulations are in place to ensure the legal security of tenure for all, regardless of the type of tenure, including rules and procedures with regard to evictions, and based on international standards and guidance¹

(e) Objective (E)

To improve the access of persons with disabilities to barrier-free housing

Targets: By the year 2020

- E1. Universal design² criteria are included in national standards systems
- E2. New buildings apply universal design criteria
- E3. Existing public housing is adapted, to the extent possible, to universal design criteria

3. Economic and financial dimension

(f) Objective (F)

To support and encourage private investment in the housing sector;

Targets: By the year 2020

¹ See the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, general comment 7, “The Right to Adequate Housing: Forced Evictions” (available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/comments.htm>), and “Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-Based Evictions and Displacement”, Annex 1 to A/HRC/4/18 (available at <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G07/106/28/PDF/G0710628.pdf?OpenElement>).

² "Universal design" means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. (Article 2 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, available at <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>)

- F1. Policies are approved that stimulate employment through investments in the green economy and innovation in technology in the field of housing and urban planning
- F2. Appropriate financial regulations and valuation of the risk of real estate assets backing financial products are supported and encouraged

(g) Objective (G)

To ensure efficient management of the housing stock

Targets: By the year 2020

- G1. Legislation is in place to establish, regulate and manage condominium housing, including appropriate aspects of establishing and operating condominiums
- G2. Instruments and incentives are in place to support public, private and community partnerships in order to increase investments in sustainable housing and retrofitting projects

(h) Objective (H)

To contribute to well-functioning efficient, equitable and transparent housing and land markets which respond to different types of housing demand

Targets: By the year 2020

- H1. Easy, clear and transparent procedures, as well as appropriate institutions are established for ensuring efficient housing and land markets
- H2. Legislation and flexible tools are approved, which provide opportunities for the use of instruments that promote and stimulate public private partnerships for housing development
- H3. Policies that support a functional non-profit housing sector are in place

B. Sustainable urban development

(i) Objectives (I)

To balance the competing demand for and limited supply of available land, minimise the loss of rural land and increase the efficient use of urban land

Targets: By the year 2020

- I1. Strategic directions/policies for the sustainable spatial development of the entire territory are developed with the participation of all stakeholders
- I2. Territorial plans and/or other instruments to enforce regulations are developed, at least for the following:
 - Areas prone to natural and human generated disasters
 - Attractive areas for private investments
 - Ecologically sensitive areas and heritage sites
 - Inner-city densification, urban regeneration, mixed-use development, re-use or redevelopment of blight areas and brownfield sites.

C. Sustainable land administration and management

(j) Objective (J)

To have in place an efficient, accessible and transparent land administration system, which provides all with security of tenure and real property rights, facilitates real estate investments and transactions and ensures effective and transparent property valuation, land-use planning and sustainable land development

Targets: By the year 2020

- J1. Efficient, accessible, transparent and non-discriminatory land registration systems with adequate appeal mechanisms that cover all the national territory are in place that ensure security of tenure and property rights and reduce: conflicts over land and housing claims; insecurity in real property transactions; and corruption related to real property registration
- J2. Policies are in place that ensure security of tenure
- J3. Policies are in place to provide secure tenure solutions for those living in informal settlements

(k) Objective (K)

To set up, or improve the performance of those organizations, such as land registries, cadastre agencies, courts and other public authorities, which are essential for a well-functioning, land administration system

Targets: By the year 2020

- K1. Up-to-date data are easily accessible to all users
- K2. Mechanisms and policies are in place to facilitate data-sharing among public authorities through a national spatial data infrastructure
- K3. Information related to land administration is publicly accessible through electronic databases

D. Cross-cutting themes

(l) Objective (L)

To ensure investment in innovation and research, with particular attention to energy savings, social innovation, green, compact, inclusive and smart cities

Targets: By the year 2020

- L1. Investment in research and innovation is encouraged, specifically in the areas of energy saving, social innovation and green economy in the housing sector
- L2. Implementation of innovative projects in the above areas is reported by member States in order to share experiences and best practices with others

(m) Objective (M)

To support good governance, effective public participation and the rule of law in the areas of housing, urban planning and management and land administration

Targets: By the year 2020

- M1. Legal and administrative measures are in place which ensure consultation with and the participation of all stakeholders in transparent and opened decision-making processes
- M2. Policies are in place for building or improving the capacities of the public sector in housing and land management at national, regional and local levels
- M3. Horizontal and vertical coordination and cooperation between different levels of public administration are strengthened

(n) Objective (N)

To ensure that specific provisions on non-discriminatory processes are duly reflected in existing housing, urban planning and land management legislation

Target: By the year 2020

- N1. Laws that ensure equal treatment and non-discrimination, especially for women and minority groups, are part of national legislation on housing; urban planning and management; and land administration and procedures to ensure their implementation and enforcement are established

(o) Objective (O)

To intensify the regional and international exchange of experience and cooperation in the areas of housing, urban planning and land management

Targets: By the year 2020

- O1. Exchanges of experience and knowledge between countries are intensified
- O2. Cooperation, networks and synergies between international organizations are strengthened

II. Activities

To assist member States in achieving these targets, the Committee will implement this Strategy based upon an Action Plan that will be developed to cover the period from 2014 to 2020 and the activities to be included in the programme of work. The Committee will build on its own strengths by:

- Providing member States with country-specific policy guidance and recommendations on challenges related to housing and land management in the ECE region.
- Issuing in-depth assessments and flagship reports, including a series of Country Profiles on the housing and land administration sectors.
- Providing a platform for dialogue between Governments to facilitate the exchange of experience and the sharing of good practices by creating regional networks of experts, organizing workshops, and managing study trips.
- Promoting capacity development through high-quality training courses, advisory services and publications.
- Harmonising methodologies and definitions in the area of housing and land management at the regional and international level and supporting the development of common terms, language definitions and standards.

Cooperating with relevant United Nations programmes, agencies and bodies and other stakeholders to ensure consistency and complementarity and allow collaboration on housing and land-related issues.

