



VITAL SPACES

NEWSLETTER OF THE
UNECE HOUSING AND LAND MANAGEMENT UNIT

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| NEWSLETTER |

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What do we do to address the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic?

"Housing has become the front-line defence against the coronavirus. Home has rarely been more of a life or death situation," underlined Leilani Farha, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, in a [press-release](#) on 18 March 2020 when Governments throughout the world requested people to "stay home". This is based on the assumption that one's home provides protection against contracting and spreading the virus and could therefore keep people safe and healthy, which is not always the case. According to Leilani Farha, "approximately 1.8 billion people worldwide live in homelessness, informal settlements and grossly inadequate housing, often in overcrowded conditions, lacking access to water and sanitation – making them particularly vulnerable to contracting the virus, as they are often suffering from multiple health issues". This shows clearly that there are multiple challenges related to adequate and affordable housing everywhere and the UNECE region is no exception.

In response to the challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the UNECE Housing and Land Management Unit has adjusted its activities to support access to affordable and adequate housing, as called for in the [Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing](#), and to address the economic and social consequences of the pandemic.

The highlights of our response

- ❖ The COVID-19 pandemic has put housing affordability, quality, and adequacy especially for vulnerable groups under the spotlight. With the goal of promoting housing affordability, UNECE, together with partners Housing Europe, UN-Habitat and others, initiated the study "[#Housing2030 - Improving Housing Affordability in the](#)



FORUM OF MAYORS

6 OCTOBER 2020 | PALAIS DES NATIONS | GENEVA | SWITZERLAND



Join us on

6 October 2020

Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

#MayorsAction

"City Action for A Resilient Future: Strengthening Local Government Preparedness and Response to Emergencies and the Impacts of Disasters and Climate Change"

www.unece.org/housing/forumofmayors2020

UNECE region". The study will facilitate the exchange of good practices between governments, homeowner associations and other stakeholders in the UNECE region on policies and practices supporting access to affordable and adequate housing for all. Please read about the study at <https://www.unece.org/housing/affordablehousing.html>

- ❖ Under the "United for Smart Sustainable Cities" (U4SSC) Initiative coordinated by ITU, UNECE and UN-Habitat and supported by other 14 UN agencies, UNECE is engaged in the U4SSC Thematic Group on City Platforms led by the city government of Valencia which will facilitate an exchange of city solutions to respond to COVID-19. Information on the U4SSC and its activities is available at <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/ssc/united/Pages/default.aspx>
- ❖ Activities of our technical assistance projects were adjusted to support post-pandemic economic recovery in countries with economies in transition. Two projects* under the UN Development Account Programme 12th tranche include support to national and city governments in Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Montenegro in addressing social and economic consequences of the pandemic. The former will be implemented jointly by the five UN Regional Economic Commissions and UN-Habitat starting this spring with Almaty, Kazakhstan as the pilot city. The latter is implemented jointly by the UNECE Housing and Land Management Unit with other UNECE divisions through the UNECE Cities Nexus, and UN-Habitat. For the period 2020-2030, activities will continue along this line and will advise on how to generate financing for infrastructure investments and other projects to promote more resilient economic and social development.

* "Inter-regional cooperation for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda" and "Smart Sustainable Cities for the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda in selected countries in the UNECE Region"

- ❖ The UNECE Working Party on Land Administration published at the end of 2019 the [“Guidelines for the formalization of informal constructions”](#) based on a study developed jointly with the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG). Under the present circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the “stay at home” and “social distancing” response measures, people living in informal settlements suffer more as they often do not have access to healthcare and basic water, electricity and transport infrastructure, which makes them more vulnerable to the pandemic. The Housing and Land Management Unit together with the City Government of Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan is working to develop the proper planning and development of urban infrastructure of the city’s informal settlements through innovative financing approach.

Adjusted title of the Forum of Mayors 2020 - “City Action for A Resilient Future: Strengthening Local Government Preparedness and Response to Emergencies and the Impacts of Disasters and Climate Change”



The title of the Forum, as initially agreed by the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, was “Climate Action in Cities”. The Steering Committee of the Forum on 8 April 2020 underlined that the spread of COVID-19 raised significant concerns at the global level in particular with regard to long-term economic and social impacts on cities. Thus, the Steering Committee agreed to adjust the theme of the Forum of Mayors 2020 to cover city resilience to emergencies and disasters. The adjusted title serves to reflect the challenges of local governments in addressing health emergencies, which city governments are currently focused on doing in light of the COVID-19 situation. During the Forum, local governments will have the opportunity to discuss and exchange experiences on how to adapt, prepare and respond to emergencies, as well as to the effects of climate change and disasters. The Forum of Mayors will kick-off a week of meetings in Geneva dedicated to urban development, housing and land management.

Register to participate in the Forum by 25 September 2020 at <https://www.unece.org/housing/forumofmayors2020.html>

81st session of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (7 and 8 October 2020)

The session will continue the week of urban development, housing and land management meetings at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. After reporting back from the Forum of Mayors, discussions will focus on housing affordability, smart sustainable cities, activities of the Working Party on Land Administration, and others. Information on the Committee session is available at www.unece.org/housing/cudhlm81. Registration is open until 25 September 2020.

Revised calendar of key meetings and events

The planning of 2020 meetings was revised in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. Several events were postponed, others were cancelled and more changes are expected depending on the reopening of countries from the quarantine.

We have listed below our meetings with their revised dates. To participate in the online events, kindly contact the secretariat for the registration link. Please visit the [Housing and Land Management Unit website](#) for more information and updates.

May 2020

- ❖ European Workshop “Access and Availability of Land for Housing Construction”, 20 May 2020 – online, WebEx, please visit our website to register
- ❖ Presentation of findings of the Smart Sustainable City Profile of Grodno and a capacity-building workshop on financing Smart Sustainable City Projects, date tbc – online, WebEx

June 2020

- ❖ Meeting of the Bureau of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, 4 June 2020, online, WebEx
- ❖ National workshop on evidence-based policies for housing, June 2020, (dates tbc), Tirana, Albania
- ❖ Mission for the preparation of the Smart Sustainable City Profile Almaty, 4-7 June 2020 (dates tbc), Almaty, Kazakhstan
- ❖ Workshop to present Smart Sustainable City Profile Nur-Sultan, 7-12 June 2020, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, possibly online

August 2020

- ❖ Workshop under the UNECE project “Improved sustainable urban development in 17 Norwegian cities”, 29 August-6 September 2020, Trondheim, Norway
- ❖ Working Party on Land Administration consultation on future scenarios for land administration, planned to be organized as part of the Annual Meeting 2020 of FIG-Commission-7, 30 August - 5 September 2020, Bern, Switzerland

September 2020

- ❖ Workshop on the development of a smart sustainable city profile for Bishkek, 7-11 September 2020, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
- ❖ UNECE events at the Second International EXPO Congress “Business for Smart Cities”, September 2020 (date tbc), Kyiv, Ukraine

October 2020

- ❖ SDG11 Day, 5 October 2020, Room XII, Palais des Nations, Geneva
- ❖ Forum of Mayors, Geneva, 6 October 2020 (with live-streaming), Room XVII, Palais des Nations, Geneva

October 2020 (continued)

- ❖ 81st session of the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, 7-8 October 2020 (with live-streaming), Room XVII, Palais des Nations, Geneva
- ❖ United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) Initiative Annual Meeting, 9 October 2020, Room IV, Palais des Nations, Geneva
- ❖ UNECE events at the European Week of Cities and Regions 2020, 12-15 October, Brussels, Belgium
- ❖ Fact-finding mission to Tbilisi to develop Smart Sustainable City Profile for Tbilisi, 19-20 October 2020, Tbilisi, Georgia
- ❖ Sub-regional Workshop on Land use planning and Industrial Safety for South-Eastern Europe, 21-23 October 2020, Belgrade, Serbia

See what's happening on our social sites:



@unecehlms



<https://www.facebook.com/UNECE.Housing/>



<https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/unece-housing-and-land-management-unit/>

Protecting the right to housing in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak

The Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, Leilani Farha, has called upon States to enforce a global ban on evictions and published a series of Guidance Notes to assist states in ensuring a human rights compliant response to the COVID-19 outbreak. These notes were developed in online consultations with experts from Asia, Africa, Europe, North America and Latin America.

COVID-19 Guidance Notes are available in English on the following topics:

- Protecting Residents in Informal Settlements
- Protection for those living in Homelessness
- Protecting renters and mortgage payers
- Protecting housing from financialization and building back a better future
- Prohibition of evictions

For more information:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/Issues/Housing/pages/COVID19RightoHousing.aspx>

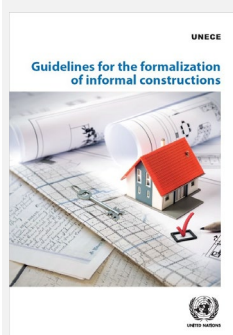
November 2020

- ❖ UNECE events at the World Smart City Expo Congress, Barcelona, 17-19 November 2020
- ❖ UNECE/UN-Habitat/Housing Europe workshop on environmental and climate change related aspects of housing affordability organized jointly with the City of Glasgow, 9 November 2020, Glasgow, UK

December 2020

- ❖ Presentation of findings on the Smart Sustainable City Profile of Almaty and a Capacity-building workshop on financing Smart Sustainable City Projects, December 2020, Almaty, Kazakhstan

Our latest publications



Guidelines for the formalization of informal constructions

This publication is a brief, practical and easy-to-read guide, explaining how to structure a programme for the formalization of informal constructions. The focus is on the formalization process itself, but there are also descriptions of the preparatory work needed to analyze problem magnitude, as well as how to find political acceptance, identify post-formalization factors, and identify the root problems that cause future informality.

<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=53438>

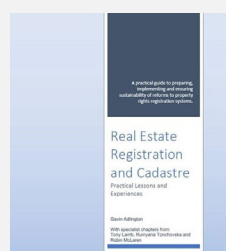


Survey on costs for registration and transfer of real estate and mortgages for the ECE region

This report presents final results of a study on benchmarking in land administration on the costs for registration/transfer of real estate and mortgages for the ECE region. The study covers costs of the registration of transfers, establishment of mortgages, subdivision of a land parcel and inspection fees for the registers.

<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=53567>

Publication from our partners



Real Estate Registration and Cadastre, Practical Lessons and Experiences

This new e-book is available for free and can be used as a basis for training, taking one chapter at a time, or for a workshop lasting two or three days, or just for reading about experiences and lessons learned in other projects and programs. The text of this book is

written to be enjoyable to read in a 'conversational' mode to explain what we did and why, and it is interspersed with specific stories and anecdotes that actually happened and that teach good lessons and experiences from multiple countries. Available for download here - gadlandreg.com



Gavin Adlington

Author

The book was prepared by Gavin Adlington with contributions by Romyana Tonchovska, FAO of the UN, Tony Lamb and Robin McLaren.

Composition of the Housing and Land Management Unit



Gulnara Roll

Secretary to the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management

Subprogramme Technical Cooperation focal point; responsible for the management of the Housing and Land Management Unit

Email: gulnara.roll@un.org



Maïke Salize

Secretary to the Working Party on Land Administration

Coordination of the Geneva UN Charter Centres

Energy efficiency in buildings

Email: maike.salize@un.org



Cecilia Batac

Publications
Communication and ICT focal point; website administration

Email: cecilia.batac@un.org



Evelina Rioukhina

Administration, contracts
Support to meetings
organization and documents
preparation

Email: evelina.rioukhina@un.org



Isa Mamedov

Secretary to the Real Estate
Market Advisory Group

Finance management

Email: isa.mamedov@un.org



Elise Zerrath

Organization of the Forum of
Mayors

Email: elise.zerrath@un.org



Agata Krause

Sustainable housing and urban
development
Evidence-based policies

Email: agata.krause@un.org



Nadiia Yeremenko

Sustainable Smart Cities with
Innovative Financing

Email:
nadiia.yeremenko@un.org



Enkel Leskaj

Support to technical cooperation
projects and organization of
Forum of Mayors

Email: enkel.leskaj@un.org



Liam Buckley

Translation
Support to smart cities projects
and communication

Email: liam.buckley@un.org