Meeting with the Chair of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management

Report by the Chair
Report from the Chair of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management

1. The Chair of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), Ms. Doris Andoni (Albania), is pleased to submit her report to the 108th meeting of EXCOM on 16 December 2019.

I. Introduction

2. This report outlines the main achievements of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management in implementing its programme of work 2018-2019 in the period between October 2018 and the present time. More information on the implementation is contained in the report of the Eightieth Committee session (ECE/HBP/201); the session was held on 2-4 October 2019 in Geneva.

II. Achievements of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management since its Seventy-ninth session

A. Aligning Committee activities with the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda

3. To support the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda, the Committee secretariat elaborated the Guidelines for evidence-based housing and urban development policies (ECE/HBP/2019/2, ECE/HBP/Inf 1), which:
   • Provide information on existing international legal and institutional frameworks that support evidence-based policy-making at global, regional, national and local levels; and
   • Offer specific recommendations to the governments and stakeholders for more effective data collection and analysis needed for the development and implementation of evidence-based policies on housing and urban development at national and city level.

B. Support to implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing: promoting access to decent, adequate, affordable and healthy housing for all

4. To further develop capacities of national and local governments and relevant stakeholders in the UNECE region for the implementation of the Charter and improving access to affordable and decent housing, a series of workshops and events were organized in: Sofia, Bulgaria (15-16 November 2018); Minsk, Belarus (21-24 May 2019); Lyon, France (7 June 2019); Prague, Czech Republic (21-22 June 2019); and Glasgow, UK (12-13 September 2019). All the workshops were organized jointly with the respective governments and UNECE partner organizations. The workshops in Bulgaria and Czech Republic were co-organised with the Committee’s Real Estate Market Advisory Group (REM). Topics of the workshops focused on different areas of ensuring affordable and decent housing, such as eradicating homelessness, bridging the gap in affordable housing and strategic city planning on housing.

5. To support the implementation of the Charter, the Real Estate Market Advisory Group prepared an update of the Committee’s “Guidelines on the Management and Ownership of
Condominium Housing"; the updated Guidelines were endorsed by the Committee and published as an official publication (ECE/HBP/198).

6. The implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing was supported by work of the Geneva UN Charter Centres of Excellence in Glasgow, UK; Tallinn, Estonia; and Vienna, Austria. A new centre was established in 2019 in Trondheim, Norway, which is hosted by the Norwegian University of Technology and Science and city of Trondheim. This centre is focusing on supporting Norwegian cities in achieving the urban related SDGs.

7. The following key activities were implemented by the Charter Centres. The Glasgow Centre of Excellence contributed to a draft Guidelines on evidence-based policies, supported the organization of an international workshop on affordable housing in liveable cities (Glasgow, 12-13 September 2019) and published a study on Scottish cities. The Tallinn Centre of Excellence contributed to the draft guidelines for the Management and Ownership of Condominium Housing, and led preparation of training programmes on multiapartment building management and ownership; it also organise a series of local trainings on the housing management in Ukraine. The Vienna Centre of Excellence supported the preparation of project proposals for the evaluation of cities in Norway and other countries using the Key Performance Indicators on smart sustainable cities (KPIs SSC) to promote city-based investments. It also co-organized capacity building events with the UNECE, held in Geneva (2 October 2018), Barcelona, Spain (14 November 2018) and Kyiv, Ukraine (29 January 2019); and a side event at the Geneva UNECE Day of Cities on Mobilizing Data for smart sustainable cities.

Energy efficiency in buildings

8. The Joint Task Force on Energy-Efficiency Standards in Buildings continued its work with a focus on capacity building to promote energy efficiency in buildings, including through the improved management of multiapartment buildings. The project on "Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings in the ECE Region" which was supported by contributions from Denmark and the Russian Federation, was completed in March 2019. Two studies were prepared under the project, on mapping energy efficiency standards and a compendium of best practices for energy efficiency standards. Training workshops were organized in Geneva (3 October 2018), Kyiv, Ukraine (13 November 2018) and Yerevan, Armenia (14-15 March 2019). These focused on areas such as the role of standards and technologies in energy efficiency.

Real Estate Market Advisory Group (REM)

9. In 2019, the REM finalized the updated and revised publication “Policy Framework for Sustainable Real Estate Markets” which was published as UNECE official publication and launched on 3 October 2019.

10. REM also contributed to the Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA) benchmarking series surveys and is working on two key studies on the topics of sharing economy in the housing sector and housing finance, which will be finalised at the end of 2020.

C. Sustainable urban development

Day of Cities and Forum of Mayors

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1 Initial publication was prepared in 2003; it is available at https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=10982
11. The Committee Bureau and the secretariat, in cooperation with the UNECE Office of the Executive Secretary, organized the Day of Cities to gather inputs from Mayors for the discussion on the UNECE strategic development which took place at the UNECE Commission session which took place after the Day of Cities. Over 50 Mayors and 400 participants attended to discuss making urban areas more sustainable. Mayors emphasised the need to support local authorities with implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A summary of discussions at the Day of Cities is available in the document HBP/ECE/2019/3.

12. The Committee at its Eightieth session recognized the important role of cities and local authorities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs and agreed to dedicate one of the three days of the Committee session to discussions concerning, and involving the participation of, local authorities, in particular mayors, following a similar format to the Day of Cities. The Forum of Mayors will be organized on the first day of the Committee session in 2020 and 2021.

**Smart Sustainable Cities**

13. In the framework of the “United for Smart Sustainable Cities” (U4SSC) initiative, two studies were developed – “Guidelines on tools and mechanisms to finance smart sustainable cities projects” and “Guidelines on strategies for circular cities”. When finalised, they will be published as official publications. The Committee secretariat also finalised the smart sustainable city profile for the city of Voznesensk, Ukraine (ECE/HBP/199), which was published as an official publication.

14. Events related to Smart Sustainable Cities were organized in Barcelona, Spain (14 November 2018), and the workshop “United Smart Cities: implementing smart sustainable cities approaches worldwide” at the Global Smart Cities EXPO in Kyiv, Ukraine (29 January 2019). A session on measuring the performance of Smart Sustainable Cities was held at the UNECE Commission session, where information on the Committee’s activities on smart sustainable cities was presented and discussed.

**D. Land administration and management**

Eleventh session of the Working Party on Land Administration and related workshops

15. The Working Party held its Eleventh session on 27-28 February 2019 in Geneva. The session discussed the megatrends impacting land administration, such as new business ecosystems, urbanization, climate change, disruptive technology, migration, etc. and how to incorporate the needs and priorities of land administration in the UNECE region in support of Agenda 2030 and the New Urban Agenda. The Working Party approved its Programme of Work 2020-2021 and endorsed its Terms of Reference of the Working Party for 2021-2025.

16. Other events held by the Working Party include: a side event on Measuring Progress in the Implementation of SDGs, the Role of Data and Statistics in Monitoring Land Administration and Management (28 February 2019). Organized by the Working Party and UN Custodian Agencies for Land Indicators in the SDGs (UN-Habitat, FAO and the World Bank) on 28 February 2019; a day session at The Ecosystems Related to Real Estate Conveyancing Conference (19 - 21 November 2019), Helsinki, Finland.

Land administration reviews and studies

17. The review of the land administration and real estate markets of Belarus was developed by experts from the Netherlands and the Russian Federation. The land administration review was published as a chapter of the Country Profile for Belarus (ECE/HBP/195).
18. The WPLA continued its activities on the preparation of “Informal Development: Guidelines for Formalization of Informal Constructions in the ECE Region”, which was finalised in 2019. Further, the Working Party finalized a study on “Costs for Registration/Transfer of Real Estate and Registration of Mortgage”, a study on “Land Consolidation” and an update to the Working Party study on “Fraud in Land Administration Systems”.

19. A roundtable on “Future Scenarios in Land Administration” was held in Stockholm, Sweden in March 2019. The roundtable discussed progress with the preparation of a study on the “Future Scenarios in Land Administration” (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2019/5).

20. The Sub-Regional Workshop on land-use planning and industrial safety for Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (22 - 24 May 2019) in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova was held. The first of a series of subregional workshops was co-organized by the ECE Industrial Accidents Convention and Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management.

E. Country profiles on urban development, housing and land management

21. The Country Profile Belarus (ECE/HBP/195) was finalized. A presentation of preliminary results of the study took place on 20 May 2019 in Minsk. The study was published as an official publication.

III. Major activities planned for 2020 and beyond

22. The following activities are expected to be implemented.

A. Aligning Committee activities with the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and New Urban Agenda

23. The UNECE will launch a regional observatory on urban-related Sustainable Development Goals as a web-based platform, with e-learning materials on achieving urban related SDGs.

24. Within the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) 10th tranche project, a policy paper on evidence-based policies and decision-making for sustainable housing and urban development will be developed in close cooperation with University of Geneva to reflect the experience of the implementation of the project and national specificities of evidence based policies in different countries.

25. National capacity building workshops for national and local governments on evidence-based policies will be organised in Albania, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine; as well as in Belarus and Kazakhstan.

B. Support to implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing: promoting access to decent, adequate, affordable and healthy housing for all

26. Activities on affordable decent housing will focus on the analysis of outcomes of a survey of member States on the needs and priorities for capacity-building activities of the Committee (ECE/HBP/194 paragraph 17) to be conducted by the UNECE secretariat in 2019
and the preparation of a study “Housing Affordability Outlook in the ECE Region”. The study will be implemented in cooperation with UN-Habitat, Housing Europe, European Network for Housing Research, other partners and with input data from the Questionnaire on Affordable and Social Housing (QuASH) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) database on affordable housing.

27. The UNECE Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings will establish an online database of energy efficiency experts and will conduct trainings on improving energy efficiency in buildings.

28. The Committee will continue cooperation with the International Coalition for Fire Safety Standards to develop a set of international standards on fire safety in buildings. Following the development of the standards by the Coalition, the Committee will consider adopting the standards as the UNECE standards.

29. Real Estate Market Advisory Group will continue its work on the ongoing studies on sharing economy in the housing sector and will provide input into the study “Housing Affordability Outlook in the ECE Region”.

30. The Committee secretariat will carry out in cooperation with UN-Habitat and the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works of Bulgaria capacity building workshops related to the development of social housing sector in Bulgaria. This work will be conducted as part of the interregional UNDA 11th tranche project “Strengthening evidence-based and participatory housing policies and strategies”.

31. In cooperation with Governments of Malta and Slovenia, regional conferences on housing policies will be organised in May 2020 in Malta and in February 2021 in Slovenia.

32. The Bureau and the secretariat will carry out an assessment of the work done by Centres of Excellence and report findings to the Bureau regarding efficiency in implementing the UN Charter on Sustainable Housing to discuss further steps on increasing effectiveness.

C. Sustainable urban development

Forum of Mayors

33. As outlined in the related proposal (ECE/HBP/2019/3) at the Eightieth session of the Committee, the “Forum of Mayors” will be convened in 2020 and 2021 on the first day of the Committee session. According to the decision of the Committee’s 80th session, the theme to be covered by the 2020 Forum of Mayors will be Cities Climate Action; the 2020 Forum will be held on 7 November. An assessment of the meeting format, based on parameters agreed upon by the Committee Bureau, will be presented at the Committee session in 2022.

Smart Sustainable Cities

34. Pilot projects in the cities of Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan; and in Grodno, Belarus, will be implemented. They will include analysis on urban sustainability, capacity building workshops and pilot activities on innovative financing.

35. In cooperation with the Governments of Norway and the Netherlands, the secretariat of the Committee will organize Key Performance Indicators (KPI) evaluation respectively in 17 municipalities in Norway and will develop policy recommendations to promote smart and sustainable cities.

36. Events on smart sustainable cities will be organised during the Smart City Expo World Congress (Barcelona, 19-21 November 2019); the World Urban Forum (Abu-Dhabi, 8-13 February 2020) and other relevant smart sustainable cities’ events, as appropriate.
37. The “Guide to Circular Cities” (ECE/HBP/2019/Inf. 6) and the “Guidelines on tools and mechanisms to finance smart sustainable cities” (ECE/HBP/2019/Inf. 8) which were drafted by experts and the secretariat, are expected to be finalised and published as official publications.

Integrated urban planning and national urban policies

38. A sub-regional workshop on land-use planning and industrial safety will be organized jointly with the secretariat of the Convention on industrial accidents in Belgrade, Serbia, in March 2020.

D. Land administration and management

39. Activities will focus on topics of security of tenure, and improvement of cadastres and land registries, including institutional arrangements for land administration. A study on scenarios for future land administration and land management solutions will continue. Activities on land administration will contribute to the work of the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management, in line with Economic and Social Council Resolution (E/RES/2016/27), including the United Nations Expert Group on Land Administration and Management.

40. The following workshops will be held in 2020: a workshop on National Spatial Data Infrastructure: Towards a Digital Society Conference on 2-3 April 2020 in Baku, Azerbaijan; as well as the Mont Tremblant Summit: International and indigenous perspectives for land governance National Surveyors’ Conference 2020 (19 - 22 May 2020), Mont Tremblant, Quebec, Canada.

41. The UNECE will continue its cooperation with the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG), United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM, the Food and Agriculture Organisation, UN-Habitat and the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) on land management issues.

E. Country Profiles on urban development, housing and land management

42. A second country profile on urban development, housing and land management of Albania will be initiated, subject to availability of funds.

IV. Any proposed change to the subsidiary structure of the Committee

43. There are no proposals to change the subsidiary structure of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management.

44. The Committee endorsed the:

(a) Programme of work of the Housing and Land Management Component of Housing, Land Management and Population Subprogramme for 2020 (as contained in document ECE/HBP/2019/8)

(b) Terms of Reference of the Working Party on Land Administration for the period 2021-2025 (as contained in document ECE/HBP/2019/6); and
V. Inter-sectoral activities: new activities and/or progress in existing inter-sectoral activities

46. The Committee continued cooperation with several UNECE subprogrammes within the four UNECE nexuses (sustainable management of natural resources, sustainable and smart cities, sustainable mobility and smart connectivity, and measuring and monitoring SDGs).

47. The following events will be organised jointly with other UNECE subprogrammes through the nexuses: a sub-regional workshop on land-use planning and industrial safety, to be organized in Belgrade, Serbia, in March 2020 jointly with the secretariat of the Convention on Industrial Accidents; national training workshops on evidence-based policies under the UNDA 11th and 12th tranche projects in Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine.

VI. Technical cooperation activities

48. As described above, the UNDA Tenth tranche project “Evidence-based policies for sustainable housing and urban development in selected countries with economies in transition” has been carried out in collaboration with UN-Habitat. Capacity building activities are implemented in the following countries covered by the project: Albania, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine.

49. The UNDA Eleventh tranche project “Strengthening evidence-based and participatory housing policies and strategies” is being carried out in collaboration with UN-Habitat. The project includes cooperation with the Ministry of Regional Development of Bulgaria on the review of the draft National Housing Strategy and other documents.

50. The ECE Regional Programme on Technical Cooperation provided support for the travel of staff and experts to workshops in Minsk, Belarus; Tashkent, Uzbekistan; and Chisinau, Moldova. Topics included sustainable urban development, energy efficiency in buildings, housing management and land-use planning.

51. A project with the support of the Russian Federation started in cities Grodno, Belarus, and NurSultan, Kazakhstan “Strengthening capacities of selected CIS countries to implement urban related SDGs through Country Profiles on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management and innovative financing mechanisms”. The project will continue until end 2020.

VII. Cooperation with other organizations

52. A joint event of the five UN regional commissions was organized at the First UN-Habitat Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya (27 – 31 May 2019).

53. A joint project proposal “Inter-regional cooperation for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda” of the five UN regional commissions and UN-Habitat was developed and submitted for funding to the UNDA 12 tranche programme; the proposal was accepted.
and the project will be implemented in 2020-2023. The kick-off meeting will be organised as a networking event during the World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi in February 2020.

54. The Committee is working together with UN-Habitat, the UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, Housing Europe Federation, the World Economic Forum, Union of Cities and Local Governments, the European Commission, Eurocities and many other pan-European networks of organizations as well as cities, on issues related to affordable and healthy housing. Multiple joint events were organized together with the partners.

55. An annual roundtable “In focus: SDG 11” was held on 1 October 2019 in Geneva, to discuss synergies and cooperation of the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management with partner organizations and plan joint events and projects.

56. The Committee continues its cooperation with International Telecommunication Union (ITU), 15 other UN entities, the Organization for International Economic Relations (OiER), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) offices of Armenia and Ukraine and other stakeholders through the global initiative “United for Smart Sustainable Cities” (U4SSC).

57. The Committee secretariat cooperates with OECD, UN-Habitat and other organizations involved in the interagency National Urban Policy Programme through its ongoing technical cooperation activities.

58. Under the Memorandum of Understanding on Land Administration and Management with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Working Party on Land Administration is collaborating under a bi-annual cooperation plan with FAO, as well as with the World Bank and the European Commission Joint Research Centre. The Working Party regularly cooperates with UN-Habitat, the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management (UNG-GGIM), the EU INSPIRE Initiative, the European Land Information Service, EuroGeographics and others.

59. To ensure the long-term sustainability of the results of the country profiles, the Committee cooperated with UN-Habitat and UNDP to prepare the profiles that are being developed. UN-Habitat and UNDP office in Belarus contributed to the preparation of the Country Profile of Belarus.
Annex I. Key events organized/participated in 2018-2019 after the Seventy-ninth session of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management

2018


Joint Conference of World Party on Land Administration, International Federation of Surveyors and Technical Chamber of Greece (7 - 9 November 2018, Athens, Greece) organized jointly with the Technical Chamber of Greece, the International Federation of Surveyors, the International Union of Architects (Greek Section), and the European Council of Civil Engineers


United Smart Cities events at the Smart City Expo World Congress (14 November 2018, Barcelona, Spain) events jointly organized as part of United Smart Cities and with Branch Association for ICT Telecommunications Large Users (BTG)

International workshop "My City, My Home, My Business" (15 - 16 November 20180, Sofia, Bulgaria) organized in collaboration with the National Real Estate Association of Bulgaria in cooperation with the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works and UN-Habitat

International Conference "European Smart and Sharing Cities" (22 - 23 November 2018, Prague, Czech Republic) organized jointly by the Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic, and the Fakulta architektury ČVUT v Praze

Workshop “Evidence-based policies for sustainable housing and urban development in Europe and beyond” (13 December 2018, Brussels, Belgium) organized jointly with collaboration with UN-Habitat and the European Committee of the Regions.

2019

National Workshop “Evidence-based policies to achieve Sustainable Development Goals: sustainable housing and urban development in Ukraine” at the Business for Smart Cities Expocongress (30 January 2019, Kiev, Ukraine) jointly organized with UN-Habitat.

11th session of the Working Party on Land Administration (27-28 February 2019, Geneva, Switzerland)

Workshop “Measuring Progress in the Implementation of SDGs, the Role of Data and Statistics in Monitoring Land Administration and Management” (28 February 2019, Geneva, Switzerland) jointly organized with UN-Habitat, FAO and the World Bank

National workshop on “Evidence-based policies to achieve Sustainable Development Goals: sustainable housing and urban development in Albania” (2-3 May 2019, Tirana, Albania) organized jointly with UN-Habitat.

13th Symposium on Information and communications technology (ICT) “The role of frontier technologies in combating climate change and achieving a circular economy” (13 May 2019, Geneva, Switzerland) organized jointly with the International Telecommunication Union, Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, UN Environment, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,
UN Global Compact, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, United Nations Industrial Development Organization and UN-Women

Presentation of preliminary results of the Country Profile of Urban Development, Housing and Land Management of Belarus (20 May 2019, Minsk, Belarus) jointly organized with the Ministry of Architecture and Construction of the Republic of Belarus, the Academy of Public Administration under the aegis of the President of the Republic of Belarus, UNDP Office in Belarus and UN-Habitat.

Workshop “Towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development: housing management, energy efficiency in buildings and sustainable urban development” (21-24 May, Minsk, Belarus) jointly organized with the Ministry of Architecture and Construction of the Republic of Belarus, the Academy of Public Administration under the aegis of the President of the Republic of Belarus, UNDP Office in Belarus and UN-Habitat.

Sub-Regional Workshop “Land-use planning and industrial safety for Eastern Europe and the Caucasus” (22-24 May 2019, Chișinău, Moldova) jointly organized with the ECE Secretariat of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents.

European High-level Roundtable on Housing “Bridging the Gap in Affordable Housing” (7 June 2019, Lyon, France) organized jointly with Housing Europe Federation

Consultation on the draft “Housing Migrants in the UNECE region: Challenges and Practices” (13 June 2019, Geneva, Switzerland)

National workshop “Evidence-based policies to achieve Sustainable Development Goals: sustainable housing and urban development in the Kyrgyz Republic” (18-19 June 2019, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan) jointly organized with the Norwegian Mapping Authority, UNDP Kyrgyzstan, State Agency for Architecture and Construction, State Registration Service under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, University of Geneva and UN-Habitat.

International Conference “Affordable Housing in the 21st Century” (21-22 June 2019, Prague, Czech Republic) organized jointly with The Faculty of Architecture and Mazaryk Institute of Advanced Studies of the Czech Technical University in Prague in cooperation with the Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic

National workshop “Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Georgia: The Contribution of SDG Indicators to Evidence-based Policy-making for Sustainable Housing, Urban Development and Land management at National and Local Levels” (26-27 June 2019, Tbilisi) organized jointly with Norwegian Mapping Authority, Ministry of Innovation and Infrastructure of Georgia, the Land Registry of Georgia, the University of Geneva and UN-Habitat

“UNECE Conference on City Living” (12-13 September 2019, Glasgow, United Kingdom) organized jointly with the Academy of Urbanism and the Geneva UN Charter Centre both at the Glasgow School of Arts and the Glasgow City-Region Partnership.

Conference “Digitally Enabled Development for a Sustainable Future in Eastern Europe” (18-20 September 2019, Vrdnik, Serbia) jointly organized with the Republic Geodetic Authority (RGA), European Commission's Joint Research Centre (EC JRC), the World Bank (WB), the United Nation Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management in Europe (UNGGIM-Europe).

Roundtable “In Focus: SDG11” (1 October 2019, Geneva, Switzerland)

Workshop on “Evidence-based policies for sustainable housing and urban development” (2 October 2019, Geneva Switzerland)
80th Session of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (2-4 October 2019, Geneva, Switzerland).