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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND LAND MANAGEMENT**

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**PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2008-2009**

**DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2008-2009**

Note by the secretariat

*Summary*

This note provides information to assist the Committee in establishing its programme of work, the duration of each activity, and its methods of work. The note takes into account related decisions of the Committee's Bureau at its meeting (20 April 2007).

The draft programme of work for 2008–2009 constitutes the main part of this document. When discussing its programme activities, the Committee may wish to keep in mind that the programme should reflect the real commitments of member countries and their willingness to contribute to the programme's implementation in terms of expertise and human and financial resources.

## SUBPROGRAMME 10: HOUSING, LAND MANAGEMENT AND POPULATION

10.1.1 Country profiles on the housing sector

Description: The housing sector plays a critical role in ensuring the success of economic and social development in the UNECE region and the reform process in countries in transition. At the same time, the transition to a market economy has had a profound impact on housing policy implementation and management. This item of the Committee's programme of work enables Governments to analyse their housing policies, strategies, and institutional and financial frameworks for the housing sector and to compare these with progress made internationally. The country profile is a process-oriented activity. At its core is an analytical study on the housing sector drafted by international experts and members of the secretariat. Recommendations for improving policies and practices are an essential part of this activity. It also aims to provide housing-related information to potential investors.

Work accomplished: The country profiles on the housing sectors of Bulgaria, Poland, Slovakia, Lithuania, Romania, Moldova, Albania, Armenia, the Russian Federation, and Serbia and Montenegro have been published. The draft study for Georgia was finalized and submitted to the host country for acknowledgement. The review for Belarus is under preparation. A pre-mission of the UNECE secretariat took place in May 2007.

The streamlined concept of the country profiles has been applied for the country profile of Georgia. The focus on country-specific thematic areas was increased. Descriptive parts were reduced, and analytical components, including conclusions and recommendations, strengthened.

Work to be undertaken: The Committee will continue its activities to prepare country profiles on the housing sector. The country profile study for Georgia will be translated into Georgian by the host country. Thereafter, it is envisaged to organize a launching event, involving all stakeholders and especially local governments. The new approach of the country profiles will also be applied for the study of Belarus. The research mission to Belarus is scheduled for July 2007. Future reviews will put a strong emphasis on linkages between housing, spatial planning and land administration policies. In the case of Belarus, a chapter on land administration and spatial planning will be contained in the report. Synergies between the country profiles and the Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs) will be sought in cases where both exercises are being carried out in the same country. Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have expressed interest in having a country profile carried out. Further follow-up workshops and meetings of experts will be held to discuss the results of the studies and the implementation process. Cooperation with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Union and the World Bank will be maintained and strengthened. Especially important is the collaboration with UN-HABITAT to organize follow-up activities and work to implement related recommendations.

### 10.1.2 Improvement of urban environmental performance

Description: Cities and towns are efficient starting points for promoting sustainable quality of life. Numerous initiatives have already been launched in cities and towns to raise public awareness of the environmental impact of individual consumption behaviour, as well as to promote environmentally sound goods and services and the sustainable use of energy, water, raw materials and land by individuals and communities. The spatial planning process focuses on a broad range of issues and factors, including social, economic, environmental, financial and cultural ones. It is important to develop an effective local planning process as an integral part of strategic national and regional development planning.

Work accomplished: A workshop on Sustainable Urban Transport was held in Tbilisi from 18 to 20 October 2006 within the framework of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP). A draft study “Spatial Planning – Key Instrument for Development and Effective Governance, with Special Reference to Countries in Transition” was prepared with the assistance of a consultant and a reference group.

Work to be undertaken: The draft study on spatial planning will be published. A workshop on spatial planning for small and medium-sized towns will be held in Belarus in October 2007. Other follow-up activities will be developed.

### 10.1.3 Land registration and land markets

Description: Proper land registration is crucial for security of tenure and property rights, effective housing policies and the promotion of reforms in economies in transition, as well as in the context of European integration and implementation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The activity is aimed at providing assistance to countries in transition in reforming cadastral and land registration systems and sharing information and experience regarding the modernization of land administration systems in the more advanced economies through education, training, research and development, exchange of experience, transfer of technology, and standardization.

Work accomplished: The land administration review of Azerbaijan was finalized in June 2007 Azerbaijan (see documents ECE/HBP/2007/3 and Add.1). Workshops were held on institutional aspects of land administration in Tbilisi (11–12 May 2006); on land administration and e-society in Prague (26–27 October 2006); on informal settlements in Athens (28–30 March 2007, jointly organized by the Committee, the Working Party and the International Federation of Surveyors), and on sustainable land management in Munich (Germany, 24–25 May 2007).

Work to be undertaken: The fifth session of the Working Party will be held on 19 and 20 November 2007. A joint study on informal settlements will be carried out jointly by the Committee and the Working Party. A study on fees and charges is under preparation. The next land administration review will be carried out in Bulgaria (14–19 October 2007). Workshops will take place in Dublin (“Registering the World”) from 26 to 28 September 2007; in Bergen, Norway, (“Legal Empowerment of the Poor”) on 10 and 11 April 2008; and in Dubrovnik, Croatia, on 9 and 10 October 2008. Real estate activities will be integrated through the proposed establishment of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group (REM). Cooperation with key partners,

such as the World Bank, the Permanent Committee on Cadastre in the European Union and EuroGeographics, will be further developed.

#### 10.1.4 Housing modernization and management

Description: This activity mainly aims to identify and provide tools for tackling problems related to the housing stock and its management. Housing systems are an important factor in safeguarding social cohesion in the UNECE countries. The activity also provides an opportunity to look at urban renewal policies and at existing and emerging housing problems, especially regarding housing financing. As a result of privatization in countries in transition, the proportion of owner-occupied dwellings in multi-family housing has increased considerably. It is therefore important to establish property rights, define mixed ownership, and establish a legal and institutional framework for operating housing condominiums. This programme element also focuses on the basic mechanisms for social housing development.

Work accomplished: The study on *Housing Finance Systems for Countries in Transition* (ECE/HBP/138) and *Guidelines on Social Housing* (ECE/HBP/137) were published. The Committee and its Bureau promoted the practical application of the *Guidelines on Condominium Ownership of Housing for Countries in Transition* (ECE/HBP/123) and widely disseminated it in countries in transition. A follow-up workshop, “The Relationship Government-Local Administration-Owner Associations. Partnerships for Sustainable Housing”, was held in Bucharest on 21 and 22 June 2007.

Work to be undertaken: A workshop “Integrated Approaches in Housing Development” will be held in Albania from 4 to 6 July 2007 as a subregional follow-up to the UNECE guidelines on social housing, housing finance and condominium management. A workshop on homelessness is planned in Norway in 2008. The Committee will consider a HUMAN project proposal on the management of the multi-family housing stock.

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