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COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND LAND MANAGEMENT

Sixty-ninth session
Geneva, 22–23 September 2008
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

**WORK OF THE BUREAU AND THE REPORT OF THE HOUSING AND URBAN
MANAGEMENT ADVISORY NETWORK (HUMAN)**

**REPORT ON THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND LAND MANAGEMENT**

Report by the secretariat

Summary

This note contains the report of the meeting of the Bureau of the Committee on Housing and Land Management, held in Geneva on 9 May 2008. This provided information in support of the annotated agenda of the meeting (ECE/HBP/148) as well as the programme of work 2008-2010 (ECE/HBP/2008/10) as many of the issues and proposals made and agreed upon at the Bureau meeting will be presented and considered at the sixty-ninth meeting of the Committee.

Introduction

1. The meeting of the Bureau of the Committee on Housing and Land Management (CHLM) was opened by the Committee's Chairperson, Ms. Doris Andoni, at 9.30 a.m. on 9 May 2008. The secretariat introduced the annotated agenda for the meeting, which was adopted without amendments.

I. INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

2. The secretariat provided information on the status of the study on informal settlements carried out jointly by the Committee and the Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA) as well as plans for the further elaboration of related case studies, conclusions, recommendations and guidance. The Bureau agreed that further work was needed to develop guidance, and stressed the importance of gathering more information on case studies from relevant countries. The Bureau agreed on the timetable for the further development of the study, to be concluded in time for the next WPLA session in May 2009. It was also agreed that an informal workshop will be held on 24 September 2008, back-to-back with the sixty-ninth CLHM session, to start developing guidance and recommendations.

II. PROGRAMME OF WORK 2008–2009

A. Country profiles

3. The secretariat reported on progress made in the preparation of the country profiles for Belarus and Kyrgyzstan, including relevant missions.

4. Results of the self-evaluation exercise were presented to the Bureau. The Chairperson noted that the exercise had been useful in identifying bottlenecks, and recommended that findings be taken into consideration when organizing and preparing for the next country profile. It was noted that delays seemed to take place generally in the final phases of the study, due to reasons beyond the secretariat's responsibilities. Ways of shortening the finalization of the study should be looked at.

5. Mr. Khanlarov reiterated the interest of Azerbaijan in having a review carried out for his country and agreed to send an organigram of the State Committee for Construction and Architecture and its relation to other ministries in the Azerbaijani Government.

B. Urban environmental performance

6. The secretariat informed the meeting that the study *Spatial Planning. Key Instruments for Development of Effective Governance* had been published and posted on the UNECE website, and had been presented to the press during its regular press briefings of the day. A press release had been prepared and distributed to the Bureau members. The secretariat invited members of the Bureau to make the study available in their countries.

7. Several Bureau members stressed the importance of this study for their countries, in particular for the development of new planning codes and legislation. The Chairperson informed

participants about her intention to share the study with academics and local authorities in her country, and invited members to follow her suggestion. The importance of having the Russian version available as soon as possible was reiterated.

8. The delegate of Romania highlighted the relevance of findings and recommendations for his country, in particular with regard to urban sprawl, one of the most important and pressing challenges Romania is facing. The Bureau invited the delegate to consider organizing a workshop on that issue, which is relevant to many countries and a compelling development problem for the whole UNECE region.

C. Land registration and land markets

9. As Mr. Peter Creuzer, Chairperson of the Working Party, could not participate in the Bureau meeting, as he was attending the Commission on Sustainable Development session in New York, the secretariat reported on WPLA work, in particular on the outcome of the last WPLA Bureau meeting, which had been held on 9 April 2008 in Bergen, Norway.

10. The secretariat thanked Mr. Creuzer for his leadership and commitment to the work of the WPLA. The Bureau was informed about the establishment, membership and work programme of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group. The Bureau was also informed about the workshop held in Bergen on the topic of legal empowerment of the poor (10–11 April 2008), which had been attended by over 120 participants from 37 countries, from within and outside the UNECE region. The secretariat also reported on:

- (a) The new scheduling of the WPLA session, now to be held in the spring, prior to CHLM sessions;
- (b) Progress achieved with respect to the development of the study on fees and charges (a draft had already been considered by the WPLA Bureau in Bergen);
- (c) The upcoming workshop in Cavtat, Croatia, on the “Influence of Land Administration on People and Business”;
- (d) Progress in Land Administration Reviews of Bulgaria, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan (the latter carried out jointly with the Country Profile on the Housing Sector);
- (e) The self-evaluation exercise to be undertaken for WPLA workshops;
- (f) The intention of the WPLA to consider the issue of corruption in its future work.

11. The delegate of Romania asked for the assistance of the WPLA with regard to land policy and administration issues and inquired about the possibility of undertaking a Land Administration Review of Romania.

D. Housing modernization and management

12. With regard to the project on the multi-family housing stock, the secretariat informed the Bureau that only one reply to the questionnaire had been received to date. Concern was expressed by the Housing and Urban Management Advisory Network (HUMAN) regarding the

delay. The need to present at least a preliminary assessment at the next meeting of the Committee, to select the two pilot projects was reiterated.

13. Participants stressed that information is needed from pilot countries and should be submitted even if not complete data were available. A new deadline for submission of the replies to the questionnaire was agreed. Replies to the questionnaire would need to reach the secretariat no later than 30 May 2008. A reminder letter from the CHLM Chairperson would be sent to pilot countries.

14. The Bureau was informed that no feedback had been received on the organization of the workshop on homelessness (to be held in Norway), and that the secretariat would try to reach the workshop organizers as soon as possible to include CHLM issues in the programme.

III. ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN HOUSING

15. The delegate of Austria introduced a concept note on possible work to be carried out on energy efficiency and energy savings in the housing sector. The note provided background information on trends in energy efficiency in housing in the region, and identified potential roles and contributions of CHLM in this area to be undertaken in cooperation with the UNECE Committee on Sustainable Energy and the European Liaison Committee for Social Housing (CECODHAS).

16. The delegate of Austria stressed that the topic of energy efficiency in housing is of growing importance in the region, given its linkages and relations to environment and climate change as well as socio- economic issues. He noted the need to establish a task force to progress on work on this issue, and to formalize the cooperation with CECODHAS as soon as possible. The Bureau supported the idea of establishing a task force and to cooperate with CECODHAS on this topic.

17. The Austrian delegate and other members also noted the need:

- (a) To make the work of the task force as practical as possible, and include practitioners amongst its members;
- (b) To have an in-depth discussion on the issue at the sixty-ninth CHLM session, and to also include presentations on the situation from countries. The concept note should include specific issues and questions for countries to address;
- (c) To identify a host country for the first workshop, to be held in January or February 2009;
- (d) To focus the work of the task force on bridging the gap between decision makers and practitioners;
- (e) To put emphasis on the existing housing stock;
- (f) To stress the added value of this work for addressing related environmental, social and economic problems, which were currently very high on the UNECE agenda.

IV. CAPACITY-BUILDING AND TRAINING

18. The secretariat introduced a short note containing a proposal for the development of capacity-building and training modules and tool kits, intended to further and strengthen the implementation of CHLM and WPLA tools and guidance at the national and subregional levels.

19. The need to better organize the wealth of information and guidance currently available through the UNECE website was recognized. This was needed to make the website more readily available to member States, and easier to use for planners and decision makers. The secretariat would modify the proposal to make it part of its knowledge management and dissemination work, and the proposal would be discussed at the Committee's sixty-ninth session.

V. COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

20. The secretariat introduced a short note on how to improve outreach and communications on the work of the Committee, both internally and outside of the United Nations system.

21. Bureau members supported the idea of developing a newsletter and also establishing the thesis award. The proposals would be submitted to Committee in September.

VI. PREPARATIONS OF THE SIXTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND LAND MANAGEMENT

22. The Chairperson presented the draft agenda for the Committee's sixty-ninth session. She also introduced the proposed theme for the session's keynote speech, "Housing and population issues".

23. Bureau members expressed their interest in having the keynote speech cover issues related to ageing of population, migration and depopulation, in particular.

24. Amendments on the sequence of items in the draft agenda and new proposals would be duly reflected in the final version.

VII. SEVENTIETH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE

25. The secretariat reminded participants that the Committee would hold its seventieth session in September 2009. This might offer the Committee an opportunity for a stock taking exercise and an in-depth discussion of emerging and future housing and land management challenges. A more detailed proposal will be prepared by the secretariat for the sixty-ninth CHLM session.

VIII. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

26. The secretariat informed the Bureau of its request to the organizers of the workshop on "Options and perspectives of social rental housing in the Central and East European region" (Budapest, 6–7 October 2008) to participate actively in the organization of the meeting. The workshop is being organized by the Metropolitan Research Institute in Budapest in cooperation with the Council of Europe, and could provide an opportunity to further disseminate the guidelines on social housing and further its implementation, as well as to gather important information for the Committee's programme of work.
