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Report of the Committee on Housing and Land Management on its seventy-first session

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I. Introduction

1. The Committee on Housing and Land Management held its seventy-first session on 20 and 21 September 2010 in Geneva.

A. Attendance

2. Representatives of the following countries participated: Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, Tajikistan, Ukraine, United States of America and Uzbekistan.

3. Representatives of the following United Nations programmes and specialized agencies attended the session: the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat); and the World Health Organization (WHO).

4. Representatives of the following intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations attended the session: the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); the European Liaison Committee for Social Housing (CECODHAS); Habitat for Humanity International; the International Council of Women (ICW); the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)¹; the International Real Estate Federation (FIABCI); and the World Fire Statistics Centre (WFSC). A number of private sector representatives, experts and academics from various European universities and research institutions also participated.

5. Members of the Committee's Housing and Urban Management Advisory Network (HUMAN) and the Real Estate Market (REM) Advisory Group also attended the session.

B. Organizational matters

6. The Chair of the Committee, Mr. Wolfgang Förster (Austria), opened the session on 20 September. The Director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Environment, Housing and Land Management Division welcomed the participants and highlighted the importance of the main topics to be discussed by the Committee. He also emphasized that member States' central and local governments should play a more active role in helping cities to manage urban development and meet the housing challenges of the twenty-first century.

7. The Committee adopted its provisional agenda as contained in document ECE/HBP/161.

¹ IISD provided Web coverage of the session. Its summary report and other information on the session is available at <http://www.iisd.ca/yimb/unece/hlm71>.

II. Work of the Bureau and report of the Housing and Urban Management Advisory Network

8. The Chair of the Bureau reported on the Bureau's work and the main decisions taken since the Committee's previous session. The secretariat informed the Committee about the outcomes of the 2008–2009 biennial performance evaluation report per cluster of activities, and the 2010–2011 biennial evaluation plan per cluster of activities.

9. The Chair of the Housing and Urban Management Advisory Network reported on the Network's main activities since September 2009 as they related to the work of the Committee. Those included updating the study of housing finance systems for countries with economies in transition, and the organization of a joint workshop of UNECE and the European Federation of Building Societies in Munich, Germany, in May 2010 on "Housing finance: beyond subprime". The main objective of the workshop had been to evaluate the effects of the financial crisis on the national housing markets and to discuss institutional reforms that could reduce the volatility of financial markets. The Committee was also briefed about the Network's future activities.

10. The Committee approved the work of the Bureau. It endorsed the 2008–2009 biennial performance evaluation report per cluster of activities and the 2010–2011 biennial evaluation plan per cluster of activities. The Committee also took note of the work of HUMAN and agreed that the group would present concrete project proposals within its programme of work for the upcoming year, to be considered by the Bureau at its next meeting and presented at the Committee's seventy-second session. It was further agreed that the proposals would focus on development of a "cluster structure" for the housing sector and an implementation strategy for a limited-profit housing industry.

III. Review of implementation of the programme of work for 2010-2011 and draft programme of work for 2011–2012

11. The Committee reviewed the programme of work for 2010–2011 (ECE/HBP/2010/1) and the draft programme of work for 2011–2012 (Annex I to the present document). It assessed the progress made and offered advice on future activities.

A. Country profiles on the housing sector

12. The Committee was informed about the progress in the preparation, finalization and launching of the country profiles on the housing sector.

13. The delegation of Belarus reported on the launching event of its country profile (ECE/HBP/150), held in Minsk in December 2009, and informed the Committee about the progress in the implementation of recommendations contained in the country profile. Reforms were being implemented, including the adoption of a new housing code, the development of a draft law on housing savings and improved access to mortgages and low interest credit to support access to affordable housing. Belarus was interested in continuing its cooperation with UNECE, with a particular focus on further implementation of the recommendations contained in the country profile study.

14. The representative of Azerbaijan reported on the work carried out to finalize the country profile on the housing sector of Azerbaijan (ECE/HBP/156), including plans for a launching event to be held in Baku in November 2010. The country profile covered housing, land administration and financial issues, with a particular focus on informal settlements and building safety. The Government of Azerbaijan would disseminate the

results of the country profile to all stakeholders and had expressed interest in developing an action plan to facilitate the implementation of recommendations contained in the study.

15. The delegation of Tajikistan provided information on the fact-finding mission undertaken in February 2010 to develop the country profile of the housing sector of that country. The study would cover housing and land management issues, with a particular focus on challenges connected to infrastructure and settlements in disaster-prone areas. The work being done to improve housing rates in order to make housing more affordable was highlighted, along with the need for institutional and financial support to promote investments in the housing sector in the country.

16. The secretariat informed the Committee that the country profile on the housing sector of Kyrgyzstan had been finalized and would be published in the coming months. The study reflected the existing challenges and priorities of the sector in that country and also contained a chapter on land administration and spatial planning.

17. The delegation of Kyrgyzstan provided information on the housing and land situation in the country, emphasizing considerable progress that had been made last year in the implementation of some of the recommendations contained in the country profile. In particular, property registration procedures had been simplified and a unified policy for land management was under development. The delegation also stressed that Kyrgyzstan was in need of assistance to provide housing to those who had suffered from recent ethnic tensions. The Government looked forward to the publication of the country profile.

18. The delegation of Georgia reported on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the country profile of Georgia (ECE/HBP/143) and the challenges ahead. Progress had been made in dealing with illegal construction; modernizing housing stock; creating recreational zoning; and introducing education and training programmes. Challenges ahead included the development of a social housing policy and addressing the problem of unfinished construction. Updates on various new housing policies in Georgia would continue to be provided to the Committee.

19. The delegation of Slovakia provided information on the impact of the country profile of Slovakia on the housing policy of this country. The delegation reported that the recommendations contained in the country profile had served as the basis for substantive updates of the State housing policy in 2000, 2005 and 2009. As a result of the implementation of those recommendations, much progress had been achieved in developing a new set of housing policy instruments, adopting new housing legislation and introducing the national system of housing allowances.

20. The Chair of the Committee highlighted Slovakia's experience as an encouraging example of how country profiles could contribute to improving the housing and land management sector of a country.

21. The delegation of Ukraine provided information about the main priorities of the national housing policy and challenges to its implementation. In that connection, Ukraine expressed interest in having a country profile review undertaken that would provide recommendations on how to address existing challenges in its housing sector.

22. The secretariat informed the Committee about a joint mission to Uzbekistan, composed of experts from UNDP, UN-Habitat and UNECE and supported by the local UNDP team in Uzbekistan. The mission's main aim had been to prepare a policy brief on urbanization trends, particularly on trends in urban poverty in Uzbekistan, and to provide policy recommendations on urbanization in general and housing conditions in particular.

23. In the ensuing discussion, the delegations emphasized the importance of exchanging best practices on the implementation of the country profile recommendations, in particular on social housing and housing management, and underscored the importance of cooperation

with institutions like the World Bank to facilitate the development of new housing policy instruments in the reviewed countries.

24. The Committee took note of the information on the country profiles. It welcomed the proposal of the delegation of Ukraine, and agreed to undertake a country profile on the housing sector of Ukraine, which would also include land administration issues. The Committee also invited the delegation of Ukraine to liaise with the secretariat and requested that an official letter be sent by the relevant Ministry to the UNECE Executive Secretary.

B. Affordable, healthy and ecological housing

25. The Chair noted that the Bureau had commissioned a background document on “Principles and Goals for Affordable, Healthy and Ecological Housing” (ECE/HBP/2010/6) to facilitate the Committee’s discussion on that topic, including the issue of a possible framework convention on affordable, healthy and ecological housing in the UNECE region.

26. The secretariat presented the document, which outlined the major housing challenges in the region, provided the rationale for the development of a UNECE-wide comprehensive policy framework in the UNECE region and outlined key principles and goals for affordable, healthy and ecological housing. It was emphasized that the proposed set of principles and goals could serve as the basis for integrating the implementation of policy guidelines and recommendations, developed by the Committee, under a single comprehensive international framework.

27. A keynote presentation on the global context for affordable, healthy and ecological housing also guided and facilitated the discussion on this agenda item.

28. In the discussion that followed, the Committee acknowledged the importance of addressing the issues of affordable, healthy and ecological housing in a comprehensive manner and welcomed the background document as a concise summary of the most important principles and goals to tackle major housing challenges in the region.

29. The Committee emphasized that the background document could serve as a working paper for a proposed Working Group that could be established to discuss the issue of a possible legally binding instrument on affordable, healthy and ecological housing in the UNECE region. It was further suggested that future discussions in the proposed Working Group should reflect different economic realities and priorities across the UNECE region and also include such issues as finding a proper balance between rights and responsibilities of households, strengthening the role of spatial planning and urban development strategies, ensuring the involvement of communities in maintaining social cohesion and providing a platform for cooperation and exchange of best practice experience among member States.

30. The Committee:

(a) Decided to set up a Working Group on a possible legally binding instrument on affordable, healthy and ecological housing in the UNECE region and invited member States to nominate their experts/representatives to that body by the end of October 2010;

(b) Recommended that the paper on “Principles and Goals for Affordable, Healthy, and Ecological Housing” (ECE/HBP/2010/6) be used as a background document for discussions in the above-mentioned Working Group;

(c) Reviewed and agreed on the draft terms of reference for the above-mentioned Working Group, including the amendments presented by the secretariat at the session (contained in Annex II to the present document).

C. Improvement of urban environmental performance

31. The Chair reminded the delegations that the Committee at its seventieth session had decided to include the issue of climate neutrality under the item of its programme of work on improvement of urban environmental performance, and also agreed to develop a study on climate neutral cities that would identify means and tools for adaptation to and mitigation of climate change in cities.

32. A consultant presented an extended outline of the study on climate neutral cities (ECE/HBP/2010/3). The main objective of the study was to provide policymakers, practitioners, planners and other professionals with an overview explaining the relationships between cities, climate change and energy, and to outline responses required to mitigate the energy intensity and carbon footprint of UNECE cities.

33. The Committee heard presentations by representatives of several European cities (Porvoo, Finland; Drammen, Norway; Hamburg, Germany; and Copenhagen, Denmark) on case studies and best practices in the implementation of policies for adaptation to and mitigation of climate change. In addition, OECD shared the main findings and conclusions of its report on “Cities, Climate Change and Multilevel Governance”, which outlined a framework for multilevel governance of climate change in cities aimed at avoiding policy gaps between local action plans and national policy programmes.

34. Among key messages on tackling climate change in cities that emerged from the presentations were the needs to:

(a) Ensure proper coordination and interaction between policymakers at national, local and city levels;

(b) Develop effective urban climate strategies, integrated climate action plans and realistic implementation projects;

(c) Facilitate multi-stakeholder partnerships and participation, including local/community governments, the private sector, developers, landlords and the resident population;

(d) Mobilize financial resources for the implementation of the action plans and pilot projects;

(e) Raise awareness, educate stakeholders and properly communicate climate neutrality messages to encourage the population to participate in actions being implemented;

(f) Use spatial planning, zoning and other instruments to reduce and prevent urban sprawl; and

(g) Improve urban land use and transportation patterns, including through promoting the use of bicycles and public transport, ensuring greater use of renewable sources for district heating and improving urban waste-management systems.

35. In the ensuing discussion, delegates provided some practical guidance on issues to be reflected in the study, such as the role of cooperation between authorities at different levels (national/regional/municipal) in delivering effective policies for low carbon cities; the importance of identifying sustainable sources of income for carbon-neutral projects; the need for broad participation of all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, in decision-making processes to ensure their commitment; and the importance of ensuring a proper balance between public and individual interests in the implementation of low-carbon-city strategies and projects.

36. The Committee agreed on the extended outline of the study on climate neutral cities and requested the secretariat to develop the study and its recommendations, taking into account the outcome of the discussion, and to present the study at the seventy-second session of the Committee for endorsement.

37. The delegation of the Czech Republic informed the Committee about the outcome of the workshop on “Enhancing Urban Performance”, held in Prague on 3 and 4 May 2010. The objective of the workshop was to discuss and review examples and best practices of successful integrative approaches to urban planning, with a particular focus on the main challenges for up-to-date urban planning, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions for urban areas, increasing social cohesion and reducing urban poverty. The workshop had concluded, *inter alia*, that, in order to address complex challenges faced by modern cities, Governments needed to increase urban performance by adopting a comprehensive approach that integrated different dimensions of urban planning.

38. The secretariat informed the Committee about the organization of the forthcoming workshop on security of tenure and the role of land use planning, to be held under the auspices of the Working Party on Land Administration in Antalya, Turkey, on 28 and 29 October 2010.

39. The secretariat of the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents informed the Committee about a planned seminar organized jointly with the Committee on Housing and Land Management on the topic “Land Use Planning around High-Risk Industrial Sites”, to be held in The Hague, the Netherlands, on 11 and 12 November 2010. Its main objective was to facilitate a dialogue and improve understanding between authorities working on industrial safety and land use planning so as to ensure safe neighbourhoods around major hazardous industrial facilities.

40. The Committee took note of the information on the upcoming workshops and invited delegations to actively participate in the events to be held in Turkey and in the Netherlands.

D. Land registration and land markets

41. The Chair of the Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA) gave an overview of the activities of the Working Party related to land registration and land markets, including:

(a) The finalization of a draft study on monitoring and prevention of fraud in online land registers, to be presented for endorsement by the Working Party at its seventh session in 2011;

(b) Workshops on “Efficient and transparent land management in UNECE countries” (Baku, Azerbaijan, 3–4 March 2010) and on “Real property cadastre and registration services in the UNECE region: the impact of ‘e-government’ reforms” (Minsk, Belarus, 8–9 June 2010) (see ECE/HBP/2010/5);

(c) Work towards a land administration review of Tajikistan, to be prepared as a chapter of a country profile on the housing sector of that country, and a request to undertake a land administration review of the Republic of Moldova in 2011;

(d) The decision of the Bureau of the Working Party to initiate a discussion on the preparation of a Survey on Benchmarking of Land Administration Systems to be presented for endorsement by the Working Party at its seventh session in 2011; and

(e) Ongoing preparations for upcoming workshops to be held in Antalya, Turkey, on the role of “Spatial Planning to Improve Security of tenure” (28–29 October

2010) and in Italy on the role of economic information for real estate markets in the UNECE region (Spring 2011).

42. The delegation of Germany reported on the symposium, “Land management strategies for improving urban rural inter-relationships — best practice and regional solutions”, held in Hannover, Germany, in May 2010, where participants discussed the requisites for an integrated cross-sectoral approach to urban development. The symposium highlighted, inter alia, the importance of developing an effective spatial planning framework and improving land registration in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

43. The Chair of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group, reporting on the Group’s activities, informed the Committee that in April 2010 the Advisory Group had released its first publication, a *Policy Framework for Sustainable Real Estate Markets: Principles and guidance for the development of a country’s real estate sector* (ECE/HBP/147). The publication offered guidance for policy action aimed at building a sustainable real estate sector in countries of the UNECE region. In June 2010, the Advisory Group had held an event in Kiev, Ukraine, to present the Framework and to discuss with national authorities the possibility of implementing reforms in the country’s regulatory framework for real estate markets on that basis. The Policy Framework would be a guiding document for future activities of the REM Advisory Group, including a workshop on the development of social housing sectors in countries in transition to be held in 2011.

44. The Committee took note of the information provided.

E. Housing modernization and management

45. The discussion of housing modernization and management opened with a presentation of a video on Energy Efficiency in Housing, created by United Nations Television in collaboration with the UNECE secretariat. The video had been also presented at the fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Denmark (December 2009) and at the UN-Habitat World Urban Forum in Brazil (March 2010).

46. *Energy efficiency in housing.* The Committee heard a presentation by a consultant on the final draft Action Plan for Energy-efficient Housing in the UNECE Region (ECE/HBP/2010/4), which provided a framework programme for both national and international actions to improve energy efficiency of the housing sector. The overall aim of the Action Plan was to establish the necessary institutional conditions to improve housing energy efficiency by developing administrative, legal and financial capacities to implement energy-efficiency measures; promoting private and public investments into energy-efficient housing; improving the energy performance standards in the housing sector; and encouraging behavioural change with regard to energy demand practices in housing.

47. The Committee heard presentations by representatives of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and of CECODHAS on case studies and best practices for energy efficiency in housing.

48. The Committee adopted the Action Plan for Energy-efficient Housing in the UNECE Region and recommended UNECE member States to adapt the targets and measures contained in that document to local conditions in the respective countries and to implement policies with a view to removing barriers to energy efficiency and to progressively moving towards a low-energy and carbon-neutral housing sector.

49. *Social housing.* The delegation of Montenegro presented its experience in ensuring housing affordability through the development of a new approach for the provision of affordable housing. Three pillars were essential in implementing the approach: sound legal

regulations, in particular for public-private partnerships in housing; an effective financial scheme that established affordable rents for those at low income levels; and a social partnership model between the Government, the trade unions and employers. It was highlighted that the social partnership model could be adapted to other countries in South-Eastern Europe.

50. The representative of UN-Habitat briefed the Committee about that organization's work in Central and South-Eastern Europe, which included building national and local capacity to implement sustainable human settlements policies in countries of South-Eastern Europe; monitoring the implementation of the Vienna Declaration on Informal Settlements in South East Europe; and organization of a conference on decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities to be held in Poland in January 2011. Also highlighted was the State of European Cities in Transition report which was being prepared over the next 10 months and which would discuss such themes as population and urbanization, the economic role of cities, urban governance systems and urban environmental challenges.

51. The delegation of Serbia presented progress in implementing social housing policies since the publication of the country profile of its housing sector (2006). Reforms were being implemented in the housing sector, including a new social housing law adopted in 2009; a completed national strategy for social housing; new regulations on licensing neighbourhood housing organizations; and the coming establishment of a national housing agency in 2011. Recommendations contained in the country profile had served as the basis for the development of the national housing policy and addressing such issues as land administration policies, social housing and housing property registration. Lessons learned included the importance of involving all relevant stakeholders in the development and implementation of housing policy reforms and improving communication and cooperation between national and local authorities and with relevant international organizations. Information was also provided about the workshop on Access to Social and Affordable Housing, held in Belgrade in February 2010, which had been co-organized by UN-Habitat and the Serbian Government.

52. The Committee took note of the information provided.

IV. Building and construction safety

53. The Chair reminded the audience that at its seventieth session, in September 2009, the Committee had highlighted the role of building and construction safety in the context of disaster preparedness and had welcomed the offer of the delegation of Azerbaijan to host an international conference on those issues.

54. The delegation of Azerbaijan provided information on the upcoming "International Forum on Natural Disasters and Building and Construction Safety" (Baku, 16–17 November 2010). The Forum would address the two dimensions of building safety in relation to natural disasters: prevention and post-disaster reconstruction.

55. The Committee took note of the information provided and invited delegations to actively participate in the International Forum.

V. Cross-sectoral activities

56. The representative of the UNECE Sustainable Energy Division informed the Committee about the outcomes of the meeting of the Steering Committee of the Energy Efficiency 21 Programme. Positive synergies in interdivisional cooperation were highlighted, in particular as reflected in the development of the Action Plan for Energy-

efficient Housing in the UNECE Region. The Committee was also informed about the upcoming International Energy Efficiency Forum to be held in Astana, Kazakhstan, from 28 to 30 September, jointly organized by the Government of Kazakhstan, UNDP, UNECE and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. A Green Building Workshop to be held in the framework of the Forum would focus on issues of energy efficiency in the housing sector, including the implementation of the Action Plan for Energy-efficient Housing in the UNECE Region.

57. The representative of the Habitat for Humanity International reported on joint work with UN-Habitat, UNECE, UNDP and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to organize the first Housing Forum for Europe and Central Asia. The main objective of the Forum was to explore opportunities for the development of a coordinated vision for the housing sector in the region and to discuss key policy opportunities and best practices in addressing housing challenges. The programme of the Forum was built around four themes: housing as a political agenda; housing vulnerabilities; housing in the economic and financial crisis; and housing and development. The first Forum would take place in Budapest, Hungary, from 4 to 6 April 2011.

58. The secretariat reported on current and future joint activities with UN-Habitat and its regional office in Moscow. A joint UNDP/UNECE/UN-Habitat mission to Uzbekistan had been implemented in November 2009 to prepare a policy brief on urbanization trends and to provide policy recommendations. A training workshop on affordable housing for Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries was currently being prepared jointly by the UNECE, UN-Habitat regional office in Moscow and the Government of Belarus. The four-day training event, to be held in March 2011, would focus on such issues as housing policies and housing sector reforms in CIS countries; housing finance systems and instruments; maintenance and management of multifamily housing; and energy efficiency in the housing sector. Another training workshop, on the legal aspects of housing privatization and management, would be held in cooperation with UNDP in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 22 and 23 November 2010 as a follow-up to the country profile on the housing sector of Georgia.

59. The Committee took note on the information provided on cross-sectoral cooperation.

VI. Other business

60. The secretariat provided information on the UNECE Trust Fund on Human Settlements and invited delegations to announce their contributions to the Trust Fund for particular programme activities. Countries that had contributed funds since the previous session were thanked, in particular, Austria, Ireland, the Czech Republic, Norway, Slovenia, and Switzerland. The secretariat further emphasized that the Trust Fund was vital for undertaking any of the activities within the Committee's programme of work. It was a matter of concern that this year's contributions had not yet reached the necessary level. While acknowledging the current economic climate, it was suggested that member States consider contributing any funds left unspent at the end of the budget year.

61. The secretariat also provided information about the upcoming review of the mandates and extension of the WPLA, as well as HUMAN and the REM Advisory Group. In particular, based on a comprehensive review of their respective programmes of work and activities prepared by the WPLA and HUMAN, the Committee should assess and decide on any adjustments to the mandates and status of the WPLA and HUMAN, and determine whether their mandates should be renewed. As to the REM Advisory Group, assessment of its activities should be carried out by the WPLA. The Working Party would then determine whether the REM mandate should be renewed and submit its recommendation to the

Committee. Thereafter, the Committee would bring the conclusions of the assessment of the WPLA, HUMAN and the REM Advisory Group to the attention of the Executive Committee for approval. To facilitate the above-mentioned review process, by the end of 2010 the secretariat would distribute a questionnaire to all member States, inviting them to assess the programmes of work and activities of the WPLA, HUMAN and the REM Advisory Group, including areas for possible consolidation and/or expansion, as well as new areas of work to be addressed in the future. Replies to the questionnaire would serve to indicate the views of Governments on possible adjustments to the programmes of work and mandates of the above-mentioned bodies of the Committee.

62. The Committee took note on the information provided.

VII. Election of the Bureau

63. The Committee elected the Bureau for its seventy-second session, as follows: Mr. Wolfgang Förster (Austria), Chair; Ms. Doris Andoni (Albania); Mr. Azer Khanlarov (Azerbaijan); Ms. Daniela Grabmüllerová (Czech Republic); Mr. Damir Pahič (Croatia); Ms. Natia Jokhadze (Georgia); Ms. Elena Bejenaru (Republic of Moldova); Ms. Svetlana Ristic (Serbia); Ms. Elena Szolgayova (Slovakia); and Mr. Ernst Hauri (Switzerland).

VIII. Closing of the seventy-first session

64. The Chair announced that after the session the secretariat would prepare the report of the seventy-first session, circulate it among the participants and post it on the Committee's website. The Committee took the opportunity to express appreciation to Ms. Christina von Schweinichen for her long-term service and excellent work at the secretariat. The Chair then closed the session.

Annex I

Programme of work for 2011-2012

Subprogramme 8: Housing, Land Management and Population

8.1.1 Country profiles on the housing sector

Description: The housing sector plays a critical role in ensuring the success of economic and social development in countries in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region and in the reform process in UNECE countries in transition. At the same time, the transition to a market economy has had a profound impact on housing policy implementation and management for many UNECE countries. 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 them with progress made internationally. It also aims to provide housing-related information to potential investors. The country profile is an analytical study on the housing sector drafted by international experts. It places great emphasis on the linkages between housing, spatial planning and land administration policies. Recommendations and guidance for improving policies and practices are an essential part of this activity.

Work accomplished: To date, country profiles on the housing sectors of Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Lithuania, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Slovakia and Serbia and Montenegro have been published. The launching event of the country profile of Belarus was held in Minsk in December 2009, and the fact-finding mission for the country profile of Tajikistan took place in early February 2010.

Work to be undertaken: The Committee will continue its activities to prepare country profiles on the housing sector. In that connection, the secretariat is finalizing the country profile on housing and land administration of Tajikistan; a launching event for the country profile of Azerbaijan will be held in Baku on 18 November 2010; and the country profile of Kyrgyzstan will be published by the end of February 2011. Preparation of a pre-mission for the development of the country profile of Ukraine will start once an official letter from the relevant Ministry is received by the secretariat. The First Europe and Central Asia Housing Forum will be organized in April 2011 by the Habitat for Humanity International in partnership with UNECE, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. UNECE is contributing to this event by preparing a study on the progress made in the implementation of housing policies in countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia reviewed by the country profiles. Cooperation with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), UNDP, the European Union and the World Bank will be maintained and strengthened, in particular vis-à-vis the implementation of recommendations contained in the reviews.

8.1.2 Improvement of urban environmental performance

Description: Cities and towns are efficient starting points for promoting sustainable quality of life and for reducing carbon emissions. Numerous initiatives have already been launched in cities and towns to raise public awareness of the environmental impact of individual consumption behaviours, 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) *Spatial planning.* A workshop on “Enhancing urban performance: How effective urban planning can lead to greener urban communities and economies and promote social cohesion” was held in Prague, Czech Republic, in May 2010;

(b) *Climate neutral cities.* The Housing and Land Management Committee and the secretariat participated in the fifth session of the UN-Habitat World Urban Forum, “The Right to the City — Bridging the Urban Divide”, which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in March 2010. In addition, a networking event on “Climate Neutral Homes” was organized during the Forum to discuss the application of green technologies in cities and related social and economic benefits. A study on climate neutral cities is currently being developed by the Committee, and an extended outline of the study was presented to and endorsed by the Committee at its seventy-first session in September 2010.

Work to be undertaken:

(a) *Spatial planning.* A joint workshop with the Industrial Accidents Convention on the topic of “Land use planning around high-risk industrial sites” will be held in the Netherlands on 11 and 12 November 2010;

(b) *Informal settlements.* A workshop on spatial planning as it relates to security of tenure will be held in Antalya, Turkey, on 28 and 29 October 2010 as part of the programme of work of the Working Party on Land Administration;

(c) *Climate neutral cities.* The study on “Climate neutral cities: how to make UNECE cities less carbon intensive and more resilient to climatic changes” will be further developed, taking into account the outcome of the discussion of its extended outline at the seventy-first session of the Committee. The study and its recommendations will be presented to the Committee at its seventy-second session in 2011.

8.1.3 Land registration and land markets

Description: The Working Party on Land Administration is the subsidiary body of the Committee that specifically addresses land administration issues. 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 the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The Working Party’s activities aim to provide assistance to countries in transition in reforming cadastral and land registration systems and in 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:

(a) *Land administration reviews.* A land administration review of Tajikistan was developed jointly with the country profile on the housing sector of that country. A chapter on land administration was included in the country profile review of Kyrgyzstan;

(b) *Workshops.* In 2010, two workshops were held: in Baku, Azerbaijan, in March 2010, on efficient and transparent land management in UNECE member States; and in Minsk, Belarus, in June 2010, on the impact of e-government reforms on cadastre and registration services in the UNECE region;

(c) *Real Estate Market Advisory Group*. In April 2010, the Real Estate Market Advisory Group released its first publication, *Policy Framework for Sustainable Real Estate Markets: Principles and guidance for the development of a country's real estate sector* (ECE/HBP/147). A round table was held by the Advisory Group in Kiev, Ukraine, in June 2010 to present the Policy Framework and to promote its application in Ukraine;

(d) *Fraud in electronic registration and conveyancing*. A draft study on monitoring and prevention of fraud in online land registers was developed with the assistance of experts.

Work to be undertaken:

(a) *Working Party on Land Administration*. The seventh session of the Working Party will take place on 30 June and 1 July 2011;

(b) *Land administration reviews*. A fact-finding mission for a land administration review of the Republic of Moldova will be undertaken in 2011;

(c) *Real Estate Market Advisory Group*. A workshop on "Greening the Real Estate Market" will be held in Dessau, Germany, in November 2010;

(d) *Fraud in electronic registration and conveyancing*. A study containing policy recommendations and good practice examples for prevention of fraud in electronic registration and conveyancing will be presented to the Working Party on Land Administration for discussion and endorsement during its seventh session in 2011;

(e) *Informal settlements*. A workshop on spatial planning as it relates to security of tenure will be held in Antalya, Turkey, in October 2010 as part of the programme of work of the Working Party on Land Administration;

(f) *Land administration policies*. A workshop on "Economic information for real estate markets in the UNECE region" will be held in Italy in May 2011.

8.1.4 Housing modernization and management

Description: The main goal of this activity is to identify and provide tools for tackling problems related to housing stock and its management. Housing systems are an important factor with regard to both safeguarding social cohesion in UNECE countries and in responding to environmental challenges. Work in this area focuses in particular on urban renewal and housing refurbishment policies and on existing and emerging housing problems, especially those connected with housing financing and energy efficiency. As a result of privatization in countries in transition, the proportion of owner-occupied dwellings in multifamily housing has grown to the extent that it has become the major form of tenure there. It is therefore important to establish property rights, define mixed ownership and establish a legal and institutional framework for operating housing condominiums. Focus will be put on the basic mechanisms for social housing development and for the enhancement of building performance.

Work accomplished:

(a) *Energy efficiency in housing*. The Draft Action Plan for Energy-efficient Housing in the UNECE Region was adopted by the Committee at its seventy-first session in September 2010. The Action Plan provides a framework programme for the member States of the region to improve energy efficiency of the housing sector;

(b) *Affordable, Healthy and Ecological Housing*. A Working Group to explore the potential added value of and possible options for a UNECE-wide legally binding instrument on affordable, healthy and ecological housing was established by the seventy-first session of the Committee.

Work to be undertaken:

(a) *Energy efficiency in housing.* The Action Plan for Energy-efficient Housing in the UNECE Region will be issued as a UNECE publication. A forum on measuring the carbon footprint of buildings, prepared jointly by the secretariats of the UNECE Timber and the Housing and Land Management Committees, will be held in Canada in spring/summer 2011 (to be confirmed);

(b) *Affordable, Healthy and Ecological Housing.* UNECE member States will be invited to nominate their experts/representatives for the Working Group established by the Committee to examine the added value of a possible legally binding instrument on affordable, healthy and ecological housing. The Working Group will hold at least three meetings in 2011 and present its findings to the seventy-second session of the Committee;

(c) *Housing management.* A workshop on multifamily housing stock management will be hosted by Slovakia in 2011 to discuss lessons learned from the Slovak case study on housing management and to consider how its main findings could be replicated in other countries of the UNECE region;

(d) *Building and construction safety.* At its seventieth session in September 2009 the Committee highlighted the importance of building and construction safety in the context of disaster preparedness. To address those issues, an international forum on natural disasters and building and construction safety will be hosted by Azerbaijan in Baku on 16 and 17 November 2010 in collaboration with the UNECE and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;

(e) *Training activities.* A training workshop on affordable housing for Government officials from countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States will be held in cooperation with the Government of Belarus and UN-Habitat in Minsk, Belarus, in March 2011 as a follow-up to the country profile on the housing sector of Belarus. A joint UNDP-UNECE training on the legal aspects of housing privatization and management will be held in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 22 and 23 November 2010 as a follow-up to the country profile on the housing sector of Georgia.

Annex II

Terms of Reference for the Working Group on a possible legally binding instrument on affordable, healthy and ecological housing in the UNECE region

Purpose

1. The Working Group has been established to explore the potential added value of, and to define the scope, objectives and possible options for, a UNECE-wide legally binding instrument on affordable, healthy and ecological housing. In particular, the Working Group shall:

(a) Analyse the potential added value as well as the pros and cons of a possible framework convention on affordable, healthy and ecological housing in the UNECE region, including the factors supporting or hindering the development of such a legal framework, and the implications it might have in relation to existing agreements, institutions and processes;

(b) If appropriate, describe possible options for a future framework convention, including the rationale for the development of a framework convention and its scope, objectives and core elements;

(c) Develop proposals for possible further steps.

Expected output

2. The Working Group shall produce a report on its findings, including:

(a) Analysis of the potential added value and implications of a framework convention on affordable, healthy and ecological housing;

(b) Proposals on possible options for a future framework convention and the process for establishing a framework convention, if appropriate;

(c) Proposals for further actions to be taken.

3. The Working Group shall present its final report for consideration and decision by the Committee on Housing and Land Management at its seventy-second session in 2011 on a possible UNECE-wide legally binding instrument on affordable, healthy and ecological housing.

Composition

4. The Working Group is open-ended and shall be composed of experts/representatives to be nominated by the member States of the UNECE.

5. The secretariat of the Committee on Housing and Land Management will service the meetings of the Working Group to provide support to the Chair and to assist the Group as required to enable timely completion of its work.

Chair

6. The Working Group will be led by a Chair. The Chair will guide the process and moderate the Group meetings. In preparing for the meetings and in follow-up, the Chair will work closely with the members of the Group and the Committee on Housing and Land Management secretariat.

Process and working methods

7. There will be at least three meetings of the Working Group. The Chair, with the support of the members of the Group and the Committee secretariat, will decide on the timing, duration, venue and agenda of the Group's meetings. The Working Group should also work through electronic means.

8. The Working Group should submit, through its Chair, regular reports to the meetings of the Bureau of the Committee on Housing and Land Management in the intersessional period.

9. The Working Group shall carry out its work under the auspices of the Committee on Housing and Land Management and build on the background paper on "Principles and Goals for Affordable, Healthy, and Ecological Housing", the UNECE Strategy for a Sustainable Quality of Life in Human Settlements in the Twenty-first Century and relevant policy guidelines and recommendations developed by the Committee on Housing and Land Management. The Working Group shall also take into account comments to the background paper on "Principles and Goals for Affordable, Healthy, and Ecological Housing" provided by member States at the seventy-first session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management.
