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**Economic Commission for Europe**

Committee on Housing and Land Management

**Working Party on Land Administration****Seventh session**

Geneva, 30 June 1 July 2011

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

**Report on the comprehensive review of the activities of the  
Working Party and the evaluation of the activities of  
the Real Estate Market Advisory Group****Evaluation of the activities of the Real Estate Market  
Advisory Group****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

In response to a decision of the Economic Commission for Europe requesting each sectoral committee to conduct biennial evaluations to report on programme performance (ECE/HBP/2007/10), at its the seventy first session the Committee on Housing and Land Management (ECE/HBP/162, para. 61) endorsed the proposal to evaluate the work of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group.

The objective is to assess the relevance of its activities for the work of the Committee and its Working Party on Land Administration and to identify ways to strengthen the impact of the work of the Advisory Group. This paper summarizes the findings of a questionnaire that was distributed to Member States. A total of 21 responses were received.

After the Working Party discusses this paper at its seventh session, feedback obtained will be included in a report that will be submitted to the Committee on Housing and Land Management for discussion at its seventy-second session (3-4 October 2011).

## **I. Evaluation of the programme of work of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group**

1. The totality of respondents expressed the view that the workshops and associated presentations by members of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group (REM) Group made a positive contribution to the programme of work of the Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA) (with 60% replies for “major contribution” and 40% for “moderate contribution”).
2. The majority of replies also agreed with the view that the REM group made an important contribution to the programme of work of the Committee on Housing and Land Management (CHLM) (with 29% replies for “major contribution,” 59% for “moderate contribution” and 12% for “insufficient contribution”).
3. When asked whether the workshops and associated presentations made an important contribution to improving land administration in the UNECE region, the majority of respondents also agreed that the impact was positive (with 18% replies for “major contribution,” 70% for “moderate contribution” and 12% “insufficient contribution”).
4. When asked whether they felt that the workshop and associated presentations were useful to their individual work, respondents replied positively, although replies were more evenly distributed (33% replies for “major contribution,” 40% for “moderate contribution,” 20% for “insufficient contribution” and 7% for “no contribution”).
5. A substantial number of respondents praised the overall quality of the work of REM. The scope of the problems addressed and the practical solutions offered by the Advisory Group were highlighted being comprehensive. Moreover, the participants in the survey emphasized the strong technical knowledge of the REM individual members and praised the feedback provided by them on different issues.
6. Respondents stated that the activities gave appropriate attention to the crisis of the real-estate sector in the UNECE region. They stressed that the REM-sponsored workshops and seminars helped the Working Party better understand trends in global finance. In addition, presentations at various Working Party events helped improve the understanding of the impact of the financial crisis on the real-estate sector and the need for Governments to adopt holistic approaches for regulatory reforms in this sector.
7. Respondents pointed out that the publication *Policy Framework for Sustainable Real Estate Markets* is a valuable contribution that lays out the basis for further in-depth work by the Advisory Group. In particular, they praised the wide spectrum of issues addressed by this publication.
8. The work of REM was also praised as a contribution towards increasing the involvement of private-sector expertise in the work of the Working Party. In particular, respondents emphasized that REM activities had brought new perspectives on what real-estate market actors should expect from land administration institutions and potential synergies between government agencies and real-estate professionals.
9. Other participants pointed out that the group could act as an enabler for cooperation among cadastre and land-registration authorities, contributing also to improved communications between the public and the private sector in different countries.

## **II. Suggestions for future activities of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group**

10. Some participants considered roundtables (such as the ones held in Ukraine and Portugal) very useful for assisting national authorities in implementing the principles contained in Policy Framework.

11. On the contents, it was suggested that REM activities should concentrate more on real-estate valuation (both mass valuation for taxation and market valuation of single properties). It was also suggested, that the group could conduct country workshops and training sessions on this topic, as well as assist countries with economies in transition to establish proper systems of land and property valuation. It was further suggested that training activities could be organized to address the needs of real-estate professionals (e.g. condominium managers).

12. An increase in operational activities as set out in the Advisory Group's programme of work should be encouraged, including the topic of Public-Private-Partnerships and the preparation of guidance to support real-estate market growth in countries with economies in transition. The topic of coexistence and interrelations among formal and informal real-estate markets in the UNECE region was proposed for further development.

## **III. Issues deemed underrepresented in the programme of work of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group:**

13. The following topics were referred as under-represented in the activities of REM and recommended for inclusion in future publications and/or events:

- (a) Statistical comparison of data on real estate markets in UNECE countries;
- (b) Influence of the real-estate market on urban and rural spatial planning and development;
- (c) Public-private partnerships in land administration;
- (d) Relationship between mass valuation and individual valuation of real estate and their influence on real estate markets;
- (e) Real property market prices and trends in the region (residential, commercial, agricultural);
- (f) Link between the new technologies such as land information system (LIS) or computer assisted mass appraisal system (CAMA) and land-registration security;
- (g) Taxation systems as they influence real-estate markets;
- (h) The creation of effective mortgage instruments in countries with economies in transition.

## **IV. Suggestions on how to improve future work:**

14. The respondents suggested that more practice-oriented and solution-oriented approaches in REM activities should be introduced. They recommended that the activities should strive to be in line with the programme of work and terms of references of the Working Party, and that more involvement of REM members in WPLA workshops should be encouraged. Another suggestion was to establish closer coordination between REM,

WPLA and CHLM. At the same time, it was stressed that the programme of work of the Advisory Group should be closely linked to the terms of references of each of the inter-governmental bodies.

15. Respondents emphasized that REM should work more intensively on preparing publications with specific recommendations and guidelines on how to develop and support real-estate markets, especially in countries with economies in transition. For this purpose, REM should also facilitate capacity-building in the area of real-estate markets across the ECE region (especially within CIS countries), promote and assist in implementation of the principles contained in Policy Framework and furthermore spread information on good practice.

16. It was especially recommended to expand the REM Advisory Group activities to the countries of Central Asia and to organize workshops or/and roundtable in this subregion.

## V. Terms of reference and composition of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group

17. The questionnaire specifically asked whether respondents believed that there was scope for REM to provide advice for both the Committee and the Working Party (at present it reports only to the Working Party according to its terms of reference). Most ((81%) of the respondents agreed that it would be useful if REM would provide advice both to the Committee and the Working Party, although some argued that the existing terms of references already provided sufficient margin to achieve this goal. The main arguments provided by respondents are summarized in table 1.

**Table 1: Who should REM advise in the future?**

<i>REM should advise both the Committee and the Working Party</i>	<i>REM should advise the Working Party only</i>
Providing advice for both WPLA and CHLM would increase the effectiveness of the REM Advisory Group and make the spectrum of covered topics broader.	The REM Advisory Group has been already providing advice to the Committee indirectly via the Working Party. There is no need to change this arrangement as the scope of interests and activities of the WPLA is broader than that of REM.
The goals and topics of WPLA and CHLM are strongly connected. Therefore the presence of only one advisory board serving the two bodies will allow for better synchronization and avoid duplication of work.	Owing to its limited number of experts, in principle REM should focus on real-estate markets as an integral part of sound land management policy (with the only possible exception of overlapping projects of CHLM and WPLA, where direct work with the Committee is justified).
Some of the REM activities, for example in the domain of social housing or greening real-estate markets, are more attached to the programme of work of the Committee.	
The REM members are qualified to provide advice to both WPLA and CHLM.	

18. Respondents were asked to indicate how important it was for its successful performance that the REM Advisory Group complied with each of the following characteristics:

- (a) That their membership be representative of all UNECE sub-regions;
- (b) That their membership be officially supported by Member States;
- (c) That the number of REM representatives be higher than six persons (current membership).

19. On the issue of geographical representation a large majority of respondents judged it was important (“largely important” 73%; “somewhat important” 20%; “unimportant” 7%).

20. On the issue of support by member States, a majority of respondents agreed that it was important (“largely important” 31%; “somewhat important” 44%; “unimportant” 25%).

21. On the issue of the number of REM representatives, a majority of respondents judged it was important that the number be higher than the current number (“largely important” 28%; “somewhat important” 36%; “unimportant” 36%).

22. In relation to the composition of the REM Advisory Group, some of the respondents mentioned that it is fundamentally important that adequate geographical representation of UNECE members States be ensured, as it allows the sometimes very diverse problems of different countries to be taken into consideration, as well experience to be shared in a more effective way.

23. Respondents also mentioned that the group would be more efficient if the chairmanship of the REM did not change every half year, in order to facilitate continuous and close collaboration with the Bureau of WPLA. There was a claim for the chair’s mandate to be at least for one or two years (similar to the WPLA chairmanship), which would enable continuous and close collaboration with the intergovernmental body.

24. Respondents also suggested that the creation of a special internet link to the work of REM, which is at present not separate from the website of the Working Party, could facilitate the dissemination of information of REM activities.

25. It was stressed that even though not each UNECE country can be represented at the same time in REM, at least it should be possible and useful to introduce a list of associate members that could be representative of all countries in the UNECE region. Actual members could be chosen from this list and rotate on an annual or biannual basis. However, some of the respondents suggested that too many experts in REM could decrease the efficiency of its work.

26. In general the participants emphasized that the composition of REM should guarantee the needed expertise to serve the substantive needs of WPLA and CHLM.

**Annex**

**UNECE Questionnaire**

**Evaluation of the Activities of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group**

This questionnaire is part of a self-evaluation exercise undertaken by Housing and Land Management sub-programme at UNECE during the biennium 2010-2011. The goal is to gather suggestions on how to improve the work of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group (REM) at UNECE.

**REM Programme of Work**

	Major contribution	Moderate contribution	Insuff. contribution	No contribution
1. Do you feel that the workshops and associated presentations by members of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group made an important contribution to the programme of work of the Working Party on Land Administration?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you feel that the activities of the REM group made an important contribution to the programme of work of the Committee on Housing and Land Management?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you feel that the workshops and associated presentations made an important contribution to bettering land administration in the UNECE region?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do you feel that the workshop and associated presentations are useful to your work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Please specify what in particular you believe was a good feature of the REM activities:**

**REM activities.**

Please evaluate your view of the outcomes of each of the following activities undertaken by the REM group between 2008 and 2010 as they have an impact on your own work.	Excellent	Good	Could improve	Not satisfactory	Not able to judge
1. International Forum on "Sound real	<input type="checkbox"/>				

estate markets” (Rome, 3-4 June 2009)					
2. Workshop on “Greening real estate markets” (Dessau, 29-30 November 2010)?	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. Publication Policy Framework for Sustainable Real Estate Markets (April 2010)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. Roundtables in New York (December 2008) and Kiev (June 2010) and presentations by REM members during WPLA workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**Your suggestions on future activities:**

**Could you think of any topic you deem it was underrepresented in the REM programme of work and should be addressed in the future?**

**In detail: Please indicate below what you were positively impressed with and what did not satisfy you on each of the activities undertaken by the REM Advisory Group.**

I was positively impressed with:

I was not satisfied with:

How to improve:

The REM Advisory Group is currently advising the Working Party on Land Administration. However, much of the subject covered in its programme of work is also directed to the work of the Committee on

Housing and Land Management. In the future, do you believe there is scope for REM to provide advice to both the Committee and the Working Party?

Yes  No

Please explain why:

**The composition of REM Advisory Group**

Please indicate how important it is for its successful performance that the REM Advisory Group complies with each of the following characteristics

	Very important	Somewhat important	Unimportant	Not able to judge
1. That their membership be representative of all UNECE sub-regions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. That their membership be officially supported by Member States	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. That the number of REM representatives be higher than six persons (current membership)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Please indicate any specific comment you may have on the composition of the REM Advisory Group**

**Name and Country (optional)**