



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
28 October 2014

Original: English

## Economic Commission for Europe

### Committee on Housing and Land Management

Seventy-fifth session  
Geneva, 8-9 October 2014

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

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## I. Introduction

1. The Committee on Housing and Land Management held its seventy-fifth session in Geneva from 8 to 9 October 2014.

### A. Attendance

2. Representatives of the following ECE countries participated in the meeting: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, and Uzbekistan.

3. Representatives of the Dubai Real Estate Institute attended the session on behalf of the United Arab Emirates.

4. Representatives of the following United Nations programmes and specialized agencies attended the session: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).

5. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended: European Commission, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Council of Europe, Council of Europe Development Bank, and European Investment Bank.

6. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations attended the session: le Comité Européen de Coordination de l'Habitat Social (CECODHAS Housing Europe), Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, International Union of Tenants, National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO), International Council of Women (ICW), National Water Partnership of Georgia, NGO Apriori, World Future Council, International Society of City and Regional Planners, Energy Cities, European Disability Forum, International Real Estate Federation (FIABCI), International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP).

7. Private-sector representatives, experts and academics from universities and research institutions also attended the session at the invitation of the secretariat.

### B. Adoption of the agenda

8. The Chair of the Committee, Ms Elena Szolgayová (Slovakia) presented the provisional agenda (ECE/HBP/178), which was adopted without any changes.

### C. Organizational matters

9. The Chair opened the meeting. She reported that 160 delegates from 42 countries had registered for the meeting. She invited participants to an exhibition and a lunch reception that was dedicated to World Habitat Day, which is a day to reflect on the status of our cities and towns and on the basic human right to adequate shelter.

10. The Executive Secretary of ECE, Mr Christian Friis Bach, welcomed the participants and highlighted the main issues to be covered during the session, including the draft Charter for sustainable housing. He underlined that agreeing on the text of the Charter during this Committee session could provide important support to the post-2015 development agenda in the area of Sustainable Human Settlements. He also stressed the importance of the work of the Committee on Housing and Land Management in view of recently released Sustainable Development Goals, especially proposed Goal 11 to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. He also noted the importance of the Committee's active involvement in the preparations for the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in 2016.

11. The Executive Secretary also informed the meeting about the exhibit on "Greener and smarter homes: energy efficiency in buildings". This exhibit, in the Palais des Nations, included examples of the application of cost- and energy-efficient technologies in buildings. It was co-organized by the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management; the United Nations Office at Geneva; the public service organization SIG (Services Industriels de Genève), a provider of utility services for the Canton of Geneva; and Energy Cities.

## **II. Results of the review of the Committee's work by the ECE Executive Committee**

12. The Chair reported that the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) had adopted the Committee's programme of work; and had extended the terms of reference of the Working Party on Land Administration until 31 December 2015 and the terms of reference of the Real Estate Advisory Board until 31 December 2014.

13. The Committee took note of this information.

## **III. Work of the Bureau of the Committee on Housing and Land Management**

14. The Chair of the Committee reported on the Bureau's work and the main decisions taken since the seventy-fourth session of the Committee (ECE/HBP/2014/1).

15. The Committee took note of this information.

## **IV. Charter on Sustainable Housing**

16. The Committee was presented with the draft Geneva Charter on Sustainable Housing in the ECE region as contained in (ECE/HBP/2014/2) and amendments proposed by countries during the informal negotiating pre-session on 7 October 2014.

17. The Committee agreed on the text of the Charter, as found in Annex I to this report, and recommended that the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) approve it for adoption at the Commission session in April 2015.

18. The Chair thanked all those involved in the preparation and finalization of the Charter for their time, effort and dedication.

## V. Biennial evaluation report for the period 2012-2013

19. The secretariat presented the Committee with the biennial evaluation of the activities carried out by the Committee on Housing and Land Management in 2012-2013 (ECE/HBP/2014/3). This is in line with the decision of the Commission requesting each sectoral committee to conduct biennial evaluations.<sup>1</sup>

20. The Committee endorsed the Committee's biennial evaluation report.

21. The Chair informed the meeting that, in October 2014, the UNECE Executive Committee approved a new ECE evaluation policy, according to which the subprogrammes' evaluation would be conducted, in the future, by independent experts and not by the subprogrammes themselves. Therefore, preparing biennial evaluation reports is now optional for the subprogrammes.

22. In view of the new UNECE evaluation policy, the Committee decided to discontinue the preparation of biennial evaluation reports.

## VI. Implementation of the Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region for the Period 2014-2020

23. The Ministerial Meeting on Housing and Land Management on 8 October 2013 adopted the Strategy on Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region for the Period 2014-2020 (ECE/HBP/2013/3). The Committee Bureau, at its meeting on 6 May 2014, requested a discussion at the Committee session on progress in implementing the Strategy.

24. Representatives of the governments of Belarus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Malta, the Russian Federation and Slovakia reported on the implementation of the Strategy at a national level. These informative presentations are available on the Committee Session website at: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=35435>

25. The Committee took note of the information provided<sup>2</sup>.

26. The secretariat presented an update on the collection of national contributions to the draft regional report "Challenges and Priorities in Housing and Urban Development in the ECE Region" and preparation of the related publication (Informal note 1).

27. The Committee agreed that the national reports, which had been submitted as contributions to the regional report "Challenges and Priorities in Housing and Urban Development in the ECE Region", might also be useful to countries as input to their national contributions to Habitat III.

28. The Committee also confirmed that the regional report containing an analysis of challenges and priorities in housing and urban development in the region would be the Committee's contribution to Habitat III.

<sup>1</sup> Decision adopted by EXCOM at its tenth meeting on 30 November 2006. See also Guide for biennial evaluations of subprogramme performance by UNECE sectorial committees available at <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/commission/Biennial-evaluations-Guide.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> An informal, detailed report of the meeting containing more information on the presentations has been provided by International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/unece/chlm75/>

29. The Committee agreed that the regional report should be finalized before the 76th Committee Session (November 2015) and printed as an official publication.

## **VII. Review of the implementation of the programme of work 2014 -2015**

30. The Committee reviewed progress made in the implementation of the 2014-2015 programme of work, agreed upon at its seventy-fourth session (ECE/HBP/2013/10), as well as implementation of the Strategy on Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region for the period 2014-2020 (ECE/HBP/2013/3).

### **(a) Sustainable housing and real estate markets**

#### Social housing

31. The secretariat presented the outcomes of the study on social housing (Informal note 2). The Committee endorsed the study and agreed to publish it as an official publication of the Committee.

32. The Chair made a proposal for a follow up activity to the study. This would be a project aimed at identifying the best practices in public-private partnerships to support affordable housing and social housing. These best practices would then form the basis for the development of international recommendations and/or standards on this topic. The project would be implemented in cooperation with the UNECE Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration and the UNECE Cooperation and Partnerships Section which supports this work. The Committee requested that the Bureau further explore this proposal.

33. Given that the activities of the Committee are funded through extra-budgetary resources the Chair also invited member States and other organizations to provide financial or in-kind expert support for the finalization and publication of the study.

#### Energy efficiency in the housing sector

34. The secretariat informed the Committee about activities supporting the implementation of the ECE Action Plan for Energy-Efficient Housing (ECE/HBP/164). At its seventy-fourth session, the Committee approved the publication on “Good Practices for Energy-efficient Housing in the ECE Region”, which was prepared jointly with UN-Habitat and the City of Vienna (ECE/HBP/175). This publication will be further used as training material for workshops on energy efficiency in the housing sector.

35. The secretariat presented a proposal for developing a study on standards related to energy efficiency in buildings and disaster risk reduction (ECE/HBP/2014/4).

36. The secretariat presented information on the preparation of the International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development and other cooperative energy efficiency activities with the UNECE Sustainable Energy Division.

37. The representative of the Albanian Housing Agency presented information on the outcomes of the national workshop “Energy efficient housing for sustainable development” in Albania and provided comments and recommendations to the proposal for developing a study on standards, which was followed by a discussion.

38. The secretariat presented information on the study of public policies in the UNECE region which promote sustainable construction materials and, particularly, the use of wood in green buildings.

39. Representative of Canada informed on the Sustainable Buildings and Construction Programme of 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP) and recommended that UNECE joins this partnership. The Committee endorsed this proposal.

40. The Committee also endorsed the proposal for developing a study on standards related to energy efficiency in buildings and disaster risk reduction (ECE/HBP/2014/4) as a concrete tool to move the housing agenda forward and invited governments and other organizations to provide financial or in-kind expert support to the preparation of this study.

#### Real Estate Market Advisory Board

41. The Committee extended the mandate of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group for two years at its seventy-second session in 2011. At its seventy-fourth session the Committee agreed to recommend to the EXCOM the renewal of the mandate of the Advisory Group for one year and, meanwhile, to entrust the Bureau with drafting new terms of reference to be adopted at the seventy-fifth session of the Committee. EXCOM, at its sixty-sixth session in February 2014, renewed the mandate of the Advisory Group for one year (ECE/EX/2014/L.4).

42. The Chair presented the draft terms of reference of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group for 2015-2016 (ECE/HBP/2014/5) to the Committee.

43. The Committee endorsed the new terms of reference of the Advisory Group and recommended to the UNECE Executive Committee to extend the mandate of the Advisory Group for two years.

44. The Committee also invited member States to nominate their representatives to the Advisory Group by 20 November 2014 and to provide input on future activities of the Advisory Group<sup>3</sup>.

45. The Committee entrusted the CHLM Bureau and the WPLA Bureau with overseeing the implementation of the Advisory Group's programme of work for the period 2015-2016.

### **(b) Sustainable urban development**

#### Smart cities

46. The secretariat informed the Committee on the implementation of activities on smart cities (Informal note 3), which include a series of smart cities capacity building events and the preparation of policy documents.

47. The Committee took note of the information delivered by the representatives of the following organizations: Organization for the International Economic Relations (OiER); Austrian Environment Agency, Smart City Laboratory and Rakvere Smart House and Intelligent Building Competence Center.

48. The Committee took note of the information provided on the project and agreed to present to the next Committee Session a set of Smart City Indicators for its consideration and endorsement.

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<sup>3</sup> Subject to EXCOM approval.

### Urban planning and disaster risk reduction

49. The secretariat presented to the Committee a proposal for the development of a policy brief on spatial planning, which would contain recommendations for addressing disaster risks, such as earthquakes, floods, landslides and industrial accidents (ECE/HBP/2014/6).

50. A thematic discussion followed in which representatives of ESRI Mapping Company, the Urban Planning Advisory Group, UN International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction – UNISDR, the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) represented by the Joint Research Centre (European Commission) and the National Observatory of Athens, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development participated.

51. The Committee endorsed the proposal for the development of a policy brief on spatial planning (ECE/HBP/2014/6) and invited financial and in-kind expert contributions to the study. The Committee also welcomed the offer of UNISDR to contribute to the study.

### **(c) Land administration and management**

52. The Chair of the Working Party on Land Administration reported thoroughly on the publications, workshops and other activities carried out by the Working Party since the last session of the Committee and elaborated proposals for possible future activities (Informal note 4).

53. The Chair of the Working Party also presented the publication “Survey on Land Administration Systems” (ECE/HBP/180) which is based on a survey of land administration systems in UNECE member States. This study provides an analysis of national land administration systems services, data security, practices on recovering data in the event of a disaster and other aspects of land administration.

54. The secretariat also presented to the Committee a draft study on informal settlements in the ECE region (Informal note 5). The study was prepared in cooperation with the International Federation of Surveyors.

55. The outline of a study examining advantages and disadvantages of the unification of land registries and cadastres (Informal note 6) was also presented to the Committee by a representative of the Netherlands.

56. The secretariat presented the Committee with information on the preparation of the WPLA workshops in Vienna (15-17 October 2014), Baku (27-28 November 2014), the WPLA session (26-27 February 2015) and the INSPIRE Geospatial Forum 2015 (25–28 May 2015).

57. The Committee took note of the information provided.

### **(d) Country profiles on housing and land management**

58. The Committee was provided with updates on the status of the country profiles on housing and land management. In particular, the Committee was informed of the:

- Status of the implementation of policy recommendations of the country profile on housing and land management of Tajikistan (ECE/HBP/163) and the Action Plan developed by the country to implement recommendations;
- Key outcomes and policy recommendations in the country profile on housing and land management of the Republic of Moldova (ECE/HBP/181);
- Outcomes of the research mission for the country profile on housing and land management of Uzbekistan;

- Steps taken to develop a country profile on housing and land management for Armenia.
59. The representative of the Russian Federation also presented actions undertaken to improve housing and land management in the country.
60. Delegations of all member States were invited to inform the Committee if they are interested in having a country profile prepared for their country.
61. The Committee took note of the information provided.

## **VIII. Draft Rules of Procedure for the Committee**

62. The Chair reminded the meeting that the seventy-fourth session of the Committee invited the secretariat to develop Rules of Procedure for the Committee to be presented for approval at the seventy-fifth session. According to the Guidelines on Procedures and Practices for ECE bodies adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe (E/2013/37-E/ECE/1464, Annex III), all Sectoral Committees and other subsidiary bodies may adopt their own Rules of Procedure on the basis of ECE Rules of Procedure and, where applicable, Rules of Procedure of ECOSOC, taking into account these guidelines.
63. The Committee was presented with Rules of Procedure for the Committee (ECE/HBP/2014/7), which are based on the Guidelines on Procedures and Practices for ECE Bodies (E/ECE/1468).
64. The Committee adopted the Committee's Rules of Procedures as contained in Annex II and decided to transmit them to EXCOM for its consideration.

## **IX. Status of the trust fund on human settlements**

65. The secretariat reported on the status of the trust fund on human settlements.
66. The secretariat thanked the governments of the Czech Republic and the Russian Federation, the Organization for International Economic Relations and European Institute for Real Estate for their contributions to the Committee's Trust Fund. She also thanked the many organizations that have contributed in-kind contributions and expert support.

## **X. Interdivisional and inter-agency activities**

67. The Chair reminded the meeting that information on many cooperative projects between the Committee and other UNECE subprogrammes and partner organizations had been presented during the discussions under agenda item VII on the review of the Committee's programme of work 2014-2015.
68. The secretariat was presented with information on the UN Global Compact/RICS project on green building certification systems.
69. The Committee took note of the information provided.

## **XI. Other business**

70. No matters were raised.

## **XII. Election of the Bureau**

71. The Chair invited the member States representatives to present nominations for the Bureau members.

72. The Committee elected the Bureau for its seventy-sixth session, as follows:

- Elena Szolgayová, Slovakia (Chair)
- Ali Musa Jafarov, Azerbaijan
- Alena Rakava, Belarus
- Daniela Grabmüllerová, Czech Republic (Vice Chair)
- Lise Nielsen, Denmark
- David Gigineishvili, Georgia (Vice Chair)
- Stefano Scalera, Italy
- Vilma Vaiciuniene, Lithuania
- Inger Vold Zapffe, Norway
- Svetlana Ristić, Serbia
- Abduvali Komilov, Tajikistan
- Paul Dowse, UK

73. The Chair also welcomed Mr Elshad Khanalibayli as an ex officio member of the Bureau of the Committee in his capacity as Chair of the Working Party on Land Administration.

## **XIII. Closing of the session and adoption of the report<sup>4</sup>**

74. The Committee reviewed its report based on a draft prepared by the secretariat and adopted the report of the seventy-fifth session.

75. The chair announced that the seventy-sixth session of the Committee was tentatively scheduled from 2 to 4 November 2015 in Geneva however the secretariat is in contact with a potential host country. The Bureau will be informed of the offer once received and decide on the venue and date and inform Committee Members accordingly.

76. The meeting was closed by the Chair at 18:05 on 9 October 2014.

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<sup>4</sup> Item 13 of ECE/HBP/178

## Annex I

### The Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing

#### Chapter 1. Challenges to sustainable housing

*United Nations Economic Commission for Europe member States note that:*

1. Sustainable housing has a key role in the quality of human life. The positive impact of housing can be increased through the application of principles of: environmental protection; economic effectiveness; social inclusion and participation; and cultural adequacy. The development of sustainable housing in the ECE region faces multiple challenges resulting mainly from globalization, demographic changes, climate change and the economic crisis.
2. Housing provision, management and demolition impact the environment; these processes consume resources (land, water, energy and building materials) and produce, for example, greenhouse gas emissions. Reducing this impact requires the engagement of Governments and civil society as well as action by the ECE and other international organizations. Achieving effective housing management, investing in large-scale retrofitting to improve environmental performance and developing financial mechanisms to improve access to housing should be policy priorities. The life-cycle approach in design should be promoted as one way to reduce the impact of this sector on the environment.
3. A degraded urban environment, with air and noise pollution and a lack of green spaces and mobility options, poses health risks. Housing conditions also have a direct effect on the physical and mental health of the population. Poor housing and indoor environments cause, or contribute to, many preventable diseases and injuries such as respiratory, nervous system and cardiovascular diseases and cancer.
4. The 2008 financial and economic crisis underscored the vital role that stable and transparent housing markets play in the economy. As a result of the crisis, some countries have experienced disturbing imbalances in their housing markets with foreclosures, homelessness, excess housing stock and a lack of affordable housing.
5. Poor, disadvantaged and vulnerable populations<sup>5</sup> may lack affordable and adequate housing, face unhealthy and unsafe housing and physical barriers, and/or related discrimination and exclusion. Those living in substandard and informal settlements often lack water, sanitation and other public services.
6. In some cases urbanization has led to urban sprawl. This has had a negative impact on existing settlements and has reduced the land available for other uses. In other cases, urbanization has been uncontrolled, creating and expanding informal settlements, whose residents may lack security of tenure and social and physical infrastructure.

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<sup>5</sup> The definition of vulnerable groups and people varies from country to country and may include: young people; senior citizens; large families with children and single parent families; victims of domestic violence; people with disabilities including mental illness, intellectual and/or physical disabilities; immigrants; refugees; Roma communities; and other minority groups.

7. Natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods and landslides, as well as human-generated disasters, have resulted in large-scale damage to housing across the ECE region and present serious challenges for governments and the region. National policies and planning are often inadequate to prevent and minimize damage from disasters and emergency situations. Affected populations should be provided with adequate temporary housing solutions, if necessary, through international and humanitarian assistance.

8. Climate change has become a tangible reality, with rising global temperatures, flooding, storms and landslides affecting people's lives and assets and causing economic and social losses. Houses and human settlements need to become resilient to extreme weather events, including those caused by climate change (*switched 7 and 8*).

## Chapter 2. Goal, Scope and Principles

9. The goal of the Charter is to support member States as they seek to ensure access to decent, adequate, affordable and healthy housing for all, with due attention to reducing the impact of the housing sector on the environment.

10. The scope of the Charter is to improve the sustainability of housing in the ECE region through effective policies and actions at all levels, supported by international cooperation, in order to contribute to sustainable development in the region.

11. The Charter contributes to the implementation of relevant Sustainable Development Goals on Cities and Human Settlements<sup>6</sup> and the implementation of the UN HABITAT Global Housing Strategy Framework<sup>7</sup>.

12. When addressing the challenges outlined in Chapter 1, the following four principles and related rationales form the basis of sustainable housing:

- (a) Environmental protection;
- (b) Economic effectiveness;
- (c) Social inclusion and participation;
- (d) Cultural adequacy.

### (a) Environmental protection

13. Housing should be planned, constructed and used in a way that minimizes environmental impact and promotes environmental sustainability. This should be addressed through:

- (i) Housing practices that contribute to reducing the carbon footprint of buildings throughout their life-cycle, from design, material supply, manufacturing, and construction, to use, maintenance, refurbishment, and demolition;
- (ii) Improved environmental and energy performance of dwellings, which contribute to combating energy poverty, improving residents' quality of life and reducing health problems;

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<sup>6</sup> Introduction to the proposal of the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals of 19 July 2014. At <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/4518outcomedocument.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> See document HSP/GC/24/2/Add.6 and, for related decisions, <http://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Decisions-and-resolution-GC-24th-session.pdf>

- (iii) Resilient urban settlements which, when possible, use renewable energy, and proactively take into account climate change;
- (iv) Existing houses that are retrofitted, as much as possible, for the efficient use of resources;
- (v) Housing stock that is resilient to natural and human-generated hazards, enhanced through adequate planning, design and safe construction;
- (vi) Green spaces around and within housing areas, including areas that provide habitat for wildlife, space for leisure, sport and urban agriculture;
- (vii) Compact housing settlements with planned growth to prevent urban sprawl;
- (viii) Housing settlements with priority given to sustainable and integrated transport systems and the provision of green infrastructure;
- (ix) Encouragement of healthy living through: good housing design; maintenance; and retrofitting;
- (x) Waste management treated as an integral part of sustainable housing strategies, including in housing construction, housing demolition and household living, with the encouragement of re-use, recycling, and composting.

**(b) Economic effectiveness**

14. Housing is, and has been, an influential sector in national economies. Housing should be both a sustainable element in a vibrant economy as well as a sector for meeting people's needs. This should be addressed through:

- (i) Secure and neutral tenure (i.e. with flexibility between owning and renting);
- (ii) Cadastral and land registration information and services that support an environment conducive to investment in housing and the promotion of secure land and housing tenure;
- (ii) Transparent, efficient and effective accounting, regulatory procedures and mortgage rules in order to ensure appropriate mortgage availability, protect consumers, enhance their housing security, enlarge housing choices and reduce the risk of homes being lost;
- (iv) Increased investment in sustainable housing promoted through private and public investments including public-private partnerships and other financing instruments;
- (v) Housing construction and renovation as well as retrofitting of the existing housing stock in order to combat energy poverty by supporting energy efficiency (which will also contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation);
- (vi) Housing construction performed based on the use of building codes and standards, which promote harmonization of common practices, procedures, products specifications to allow compatibility across state borders and support building safety;
- (vii) The production of housing stock based, as much as possible, on local solutions, labour and local materials for their design, construction, refurbishment and maintenance, thus contributing to local employment;
- (viii) The retrofitting of existing housing using appropriate technologies and in such a way as to generate employment;

- (ix) Infrastructure and services to people in low income and informal settlements, when possible and appropriate;
- (x) National policies and programmes that encourage, when possible and appropriate, dwellers of informal construction to regularize and upgrade their constructions provided that the geographic location and other factors allow minimum safety requirements to be met;
- (xi) More integrated urban development and regeneration with workplaces and services brought into closer spatial relation to housing, while taking into account potential dangers and hazards;
- (xii) Spatial planning that includes policies to: efficiently distribute economic activities; improve technical and social infrastructure and services; undertake urban regeneration; provide affordable housing; and address urban sprawl.

**(c) Social inclusion and participation**

15. Housing policy and debate should be advanced with an enhanced emphasis on engaged and negotiated civic involvement, social inclusiveness, public health, transparency, and a concern for ethical processes. This should be addressed through:

- (i) Instruments of state support for adequate, healthy, safe and affordable housing, including access to basic utilities and services, which promote social cohesion and contribute to meeting the housing needs of various social groups, including marginalised and vulnerable groups and people<sup>8</sup>;
- (ii) Increased availability of housing options, particularly affordable and social housing, through different instruments, including through promoting tenure neutrality;
- (iii) Planning, housing design, maintenance and retrofitting that: promotes healthy living; encourages the implementation of universal design principles in order to increase the usability of homes for all people across generational, gender and disability divides; and encourages socially mixed communities;
- (iv) Support for adequate housing solutions for people affected by natural and human-made disasters;
- (v) Housing and land tenure policies that support social justice;
- (vi) National housing policies developed through deliberative and democratic processes based on expert knowledge, extensive data collection, transparent reporting of statistics, and extensive and inclusive public debate about all aspects of housing development;
- (vii) Research and exchange of knowledge on all aspects of sustainable housing;
- (viii) Effective, clear, and transparent governance at all levels, including institutionalized procedures for appeals to decisions related to housing

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<sup>8</sup> The definition of vulnerable groups and people varies from country to country and may include: young people; senior citizens; large families with children and single parent families; victims of domestic violence; people with disabilities including mental illness, intellectual and/or physical disabilities; immigrants; refugees; Roma communities; and other minority groups.

**(d) Cultural adequacy**

16. Housing policy should take into consideration questions of cultural identity, value, and emotional wellbeing. This should be addressed through:

- (i) National housing policies that take into account social and territorial peculiarities and support the protection and enhancement of: landscapes; historical heritage; and cultural heritage;
- (ii) Emphasizing the development of public spaces for cultural and social activities;
- (iii) Housing that takes into consideration the background and culture of inhabitants;
- (iv) Houses and neighbourhoods designed and actively maintained in order to enhance the emotional wellbeing of people, including by involving local communities in this process.

### **Chapter 3. Key directions of work and measures to promote sustainable housing**

17. Member States have the intention to advance in the following four key directions towards sustainable housing: Member States support the following actions:

- (a) Limit the negative impact of housing on the environment and enhance the energy efficiency of the housing sector;
  - (b) Promote access to housing, in the context of sustainable economic development;
  - (c) Promote decent, adequate, healthy, barrier free and safe housing;
  - (d) Promote the continued application of sustainable housing principles.
- (a) Limit the negative impact of housing on the environment and enhance the energy efficiency of the housing sector by taking measures to:**
- (i) Reduce the carbon footprint of the housing sector by reducing energy use throughout the entire life cycle of buildings, which includes: housing design; material supply and manufacturing; construction; maintenance; refurbishment; and demolition processes;
  - (ii) Decrease the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air and water quality, and waste management;
  - (iii) Apply building codes and standards for energy efficiency and the environmental safety of new and existing residential buildings;
  - (iv) Increase the proportion of low-energy housing units also as a part of an integrated urban renewal approach;
  - (v) Increase the use of low carbon and renewable energy technologies in housing;
  - (vi) Retrofit and renovate existing housing stock in an environmentally friendly, energy-efficient, affordable and cost-efficient way; making use of local solutions and knowledge when possible;

- (vii) Put in place strategies to ensure that the design and construction of dwellings apply principles of environmental sustainability, with special regard to climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- (viii) Adopt green housing policies and integrate them into sustainable urban and territorial development policies;
- (ix) Make waste and water management an integral part of sustainable housing strategies and policies;
- (x) Encourage construction of multifamily housing, promote integrated public transportation and facilitate the use of clean vehicles in order to, mainly, counteract urban sprawl and save energy;
- (xi) Provide appropriate technical and financial support to housing stakeholders and, in particular, ensure the feasibility and affordability of energy efficiency measures, including for the most vulnerable parts of the population;
- (xii) Promote and monitor integrated urban development and regeneration which brings workplaces and services into closer spatial relation to housing, while taking into account potential dangers and hazards; and increasing resilience to climate change;
- (xiii) Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, particularly for disadvantaged population groups<sup>9</sup>.

**(b) Promote access to housing in the context of sustainable economic development by taking measures to:**

- (i) Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services;<sup>10</sup>
- (ii) Promote secure tenure and the availability of housing options, including the neutral treatment of tenure options (such as ownership or renting), in order to encourage the development of adequate supplies of affordable housing;
- (iii) Promote transparent and fair rental markets with a balance of rights and duties between landlords and tenants through adequate legislation and conflict resolution mechanisms in order to facilitate residential and labour mobility;
- (iv) Contribute to well-functioning, efficient, equitable and transparent housing markets and land markets, which respond to different types of housing demand as well as favouring credit access for socially and economically vulnerable population groups, including through alternative forms of funding, such as housing microfinance;
- (v) Develop and review policies and procedures for integrated urban renewal and housing maintenance, including utility systems and the encouragement of green investments in the sector;
- (vi) Encourage effective management of the housing stock and develop mechanisms for affordable housing refurbishment;

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<sup>9</sup> Introduction to the proposal of the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals of 19 July 2013, at <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/4518outcomedocument.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

- (vii) Promote investment in sustainable housing through private and public investments, public-private partnership, and other means of financing;
  - (viii) Develop programmes, where appropriate, to assist those who are in danger of housing-loan default because of social or economic shocks and are threatened with homelessness;
  - (ix) Develop frameworks to ensure the rights and duties of all property owners as well as tenants;
  - (x) Where possible and appropriate, assist people living in informal and low-income settlements to have access to adequate infrastructure and services;
  - (xi) Promote national policies and programmes that encourage, when possible and appropriate, dwellers of informal construction to regularize and upgrade their constructions provided that the geographic location and other factors allow minimum safety requirements to be met;
  - (xii) Encourage the use of efficient solutions for the design, construction, refurbishment and maintenance of sustainable housing while respecting the cultural and geographic particularities of member States;
  - (xiii) Establish effective, clear and transparent regulations and procedures, as well as appropriate institutions for issuing building permits, with the objective of helping ensure fairness and non-discrimination and fighting corruption in the housing sector;
  - (xiv) Promote the use of spatial, cadastral and land registration information and services to create an environment conducive to investment in housing and the security of land and housing tenure;
  - (xv) Support cities and human settlements adopting and implementing smart city concepts, integrated policies and plans to support: inclusion, including socially mixed communities; resource efficiency; and resilience to climate change and disasters;<sup>11</sup>
  - (xvi) Promote integrated spatial planning which supports: the efficient spatial distribution of economic activities; the improvement of technical and social infrastructure; urban regeneration and integrated urban renewal; and affordable housing and which also addresses urban sprawl.
- (c) **Promote decent, adequate, healthy, barrier free and safe housing by taking measures to:**
- (i) Improve access for all to good quality and healthy housing, reduce homelessness and improve access to barrier-free housing;
  - (ii) Develop socially mixed communities and avoid social segregation, gentrification and gated communities;
  - (iii) Encourage healthy living through housing design, maintenance and retrofitting as well as through public and green spaces around and within housing areas;

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<sup>11</sup> Introduction to the proposal of the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals of 19 July 2014. At <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/4518outcomedocument.pdf>

- (iv) Improve the resilience of buildings to natural and human-generated hazards through safety planning, design and construction;
- (v) Develop sustainable housing strategies that improve access to basic utilities and services, including safe drinking water and sanitation;
- (vi) Promote the use of universal design principles in order to increase access to adequate housing and the ability to live independently for all;
- (vii) Ensure that housing policy and legislation, and their implementation, are non-discriminatory.

**(d) Promote the continued application of sustainable housing principles by taking measures to:**

- (i) Gather data on housing, including on homelessness, using common international standards to ensure data comparability between member States; make these data and national statistics publicly available in order to support policy-making, research and economic development; and make use of global and regional data repositories to support the policy-making process;
  - (ii) Encourage investment in research and innovation in all aspects of sustainable housing;
  - (iii) Support good governance at all levels, cooperation between relevant government agencies within countries, effective public participation in decision-making and the rule of law in housing;
  - (iv) Develop capacities for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management;
  - (v) Intensify the regional and international exchange of experience and cooperation in housing, urban planning and land management
  - (vi) Develop and implement capacity-building programmes on housing, urban planning and land management issues for all stakeholders.
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## Annex II

### Rules of procedure of the Committee on Housing and Land Management

#### I. Introduction

1. The draft rules of procedure in this document have been prepared in accordance with the Guidelines on Procedures and Practices for ECE bodies adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe (E/2013/37-E/ECE/1464, Annex III, appendix III).<sup>12</sup> In any area not covered in this document, the Rules of Procedure of the Economic Commission for Europe, and where applicable, the Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council will be used, as taken into account by the Guidelines on Procedure and Practices for ECE bodies, *mutatis mutandis*.

2. The draft rules of procedure have been prepared following a request by the Committee on Housing and Land Management at its seventy-fourth session (ECE/HBP/173).<sup>13</sup>

#### II. Organization of the Committee sessions

3. Regular sessions of the Committee shall be held annually, on dates fixed by the Committee at previous meetings. Changes in previously agreed dates of sessions due to unforeseen circumstances can be made by the Bureau in consultation with the secretariat.

4. The provisional agenda for the upcoming session shall be drafted by the Bureau in consultation with the secretariat and shall be circulated to member States well in advance of the meeting.

5. The agenda of the sessions shall cover, *inter alia*, a review of programme implementation, including a review of capacity-building activities, policy-relevant documents developed in the context of the Committee's programme of work and deliberations on future activities.

6. The Bureau shall propose important substantive issues within the mandate of the Committee to be addressed during the substantive segment of the sessions.

7. The Committee shall recommend its programme of work for approval by EXCOM.

#### III. Representation and credentials

8. The Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic Commission for Europe (E/ECE/778/Rev.5)<sup>14</sup> and the Guidelines on Procedures and Practices for ECE

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<sup>12</sup> Outcome of the review of the 2005 reform of ECE (E/2013/37-E/ECE/1464, Annex III) available at <http://www.unecce.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2013/ece/e.ece.1464.e.ECE2005ReformOutcomes.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Report of the Committee on Housing and Land Management on its seventy-fourth session (ECE/HBP/173)

Bodies adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe (E/2013/37-E/ECE/1464, Annex III, appendix III) shall be applied.

9. Representatives of the business and academic communities can participate in the sessions of the Committee at the invitation of the secretariat and as observers without a right to vote.

10. The list of delegates in the Committee's sessions shall be communicated by the secretariat to the Permanent Representations of member States five working days prior to the starting date of the session.

#### **IV. Officers**

11. The Committee Bureau shall elect one Chairperson, two Vice-Chairpersons and as many additional Bureau members as the Committee deems appropriate.

12. The term of office of a Bureau member shall be two years. Bureau members, including the Chairperson, can be re-elected for two additional terms. Efforts shall be made to ensure continuity within the Bureau, as appropriate. The terms of office of elected officials will begin at the end of the session in which they are elected. This will allow the current officers to preside over the session that they have planned.

13. Candidates for the Bureau of the Committee and other subsidiary bodies shall be nominated by member States based on the person's expertise, professionalism, and expected support from the membership.

14. The elections for the Bureau will take place in accordance with the Guidelines on Procedures and Practices for ECE bodies adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe (E/2013/37-E/ECE/1464, Annex III, Appendix III).

15. If the Chairperson is absent from any meeting or part thereof, a Vice-Chairperson shall perform the functions of the Chairperson. If no Vice-Chairperson is present, the Committee shall elect an interim Chairperson for that meeting or that part of the meeting.

16. If the Chairperson can no longer perform the functions of the office, the Bureau of the Committee shall designate one of the Vice-Chairpersons as interim Chairperson to perform those functions, pending the election of a new Chairperson. The interim Chairperson shall have the same powers and duties as the Chairperson.

17. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons serve collectively in the interest of all member States and not as official representatives of their Governments.

18. Inability by a member of the Bureau to constructively participate in the work of the Bureau may lead to a request by the Bureau to the Committee for a replacement.

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<sup>14</sup> Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic Commission for Europe – Fifth edition (E/ECE/778/Rev.5)

## **V. Functions of the Bureau**

19. The key functions of the Bureau are those detailed in the Guidelines on Procedures and Practices for ECE bodies adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe (E/2013/37-E/ECE/1464, Annex III, Appendix III).

## **VI. Procedures for the adoption of decisions and reports**

20. The Committee shall, whenever possible, take decisions on the basis of consensus. If voting is used, the Chapter on Voting in the Rules of Procedure of the UNECE shall apply.

21. The preparation and circulation of draft conclusions, recommendations or decisions, and their formal adoption at the end of the meeting, will take place in accordance with the Guidelines on Procedures and Practices for ECE Bodies adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe (E/2013/37-E/ECE/1464, Annex III, Appendix III).

22. A draft report of the meeting, which reflects in a concise and factual manner the discussion and the views expressed by participants, shall be circulated before the end of the meeting for comments and adoption by member States at the end of the meeting.

23. If the draft report cannot be circulated at or adopted during the meeting for technical reasons, the secretariat will distribute it, no later than 10 days after the conclusion of the meeting, to all Geneva Permanent Representations for subsequent approval no later than ten days after distribution.

## **VII. Subsidiary bodies**

24. The Committee may establish Teams of Specialists or other subsidiary bodies, in accordance with the existing Guidelines for the establishment and functioning of Teams of Specialists within UNECE (ECE/EX/2/Rev.1), to fulfil particular objectives in accordance with the terms of reference created for them, subject to approval by the Executive Committee (EXCOM).

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