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Charter on Sustainable Housing

Draft Geneva Charter on Sustainable Housing

Note by the Bureau of the Committee

Summary

The UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM), at its sixty-sixth meeting in February 2014, encouraged the Committee to further investigate and discuss the possibility of developing a Charter on Sustainable Housing for the ECE Region. The Committee, at its informal meeting on 7 May 2014, elaborated a draft Charter, which was further developed through an e-mail and web consultation with member States.

Comments to the draft Charter were received from the governments of Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Czech Republic, Croatia, Finland, Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands; from international organizations, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Global Compact Cities Programme and the World Health Organization; non-governmental organizations, including Autistic Minority International, Catalan Circle for Business, the International Real Estate Federation, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre of the Norwegian Refugee Council, and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors; the UNECE Real Estate Market Advisory Group; and individuals.

The updated draft was discussed by the Committee Bureau during its meeting on 18 July 2014. This document provides the draft Charter agreed upon by the Bureau with a new title proposed by the Bureau; "Geneva Charter on Sustainable Housing". Background information on the development of this draft Charter is in annex. The next version of the draft Charter will be developed after the informal negotiating pre-session on 7 October 2014.

The Committee is invited to endorse the Charter and forward it to the UNECE Executive Committee for adoption.

I. Draft Geneva Charter on Sustainable Housing

A. Chapter 1. Challenges to sustainable housing

ECE member States note that:

1. Sustainable housing has a key role in the quality of human life. 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, energy and building materials) and produce carbon dioxide emissions. Reducing this impact requires the engagement of Governments and civil society as well as support from the ECE and other international organizations. Achieving effective housing management, investing in large-scale retrofitting to improve environmental performance and developing financing 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 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, there is limited access to affordable and healthy housing of adequate quality.
5. It is disadvantaged population groups who most lack affordable and adequate housing. Young people, the poor and the elderly often lack access to affordable and adequate housing. Senior citizens and the disabled often are faced also with unhealthy and unsafe housing and physical barriers. Some groups, such as immigrants, refugees and Roma communities, face housing related discrimination and exclusion. Those living in poor 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.
7. 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 caused by climate change or climate changes.
8. 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.

B. 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.¹

12. The following four principles and related rationales are the basis of sustainable housing:

- (a) Environmental protection;
- (b) Economics;
- (c) Social inclusion and participation;
- (d) Culture.

(a) Environmental protection

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

- (i) Housing practices that contribute to reducing the carbon footprint of the life-cycle of buildings, from design, material supply, manufacturing, and construction, to maintenance, refurbishment and use;
- (ii) Improved environmental and energy performance of dwellings, which contribute to combating energy poverty, improving residents' quality of life and reducing health problems;
- (iii) Urban settlements, which when possible, use renewable energy;
- (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 safe planning, design and construction;
- (vi) Green spaces around and within housing areas, including areas that provide habitat for wildlife;
- (vii) Housing settlements with regulated growth to prevent urban sprawl;
- (viii) Housing settlements with priority given to sustainable and integrated transport systems;
- (ix) Encouragement of healthy living through: good housing design; maintenance; retrofitting; and space for leisure, sport and urban agriculture;

¹ 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>

(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) Economics

14. Housing should be both the sustainable basis of a vibrant economy as well as a sector for meeting people's needs. This should be addressed with:

- (i) Secure tenure rights for all property owners;
- (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 risks of losing homes;
- (iv) Investment in sustainable housing promoted through increased 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, local 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 additional employment;
- (ix) Upgraded infrastructures 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, 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 with:

- (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;
- (ii) Increased availability of housing options, particularly affordable and social housing, through different instruments, including through promoting tenure neutrality;
- (iii) Housing design, maintenance and retrofitting that promotes healthy living and encourages the implementation of universal design principles in order to increase the usability of homes for all people across generational, gender and disability divides;
- (iv) Support for adequate housing solutions for populations 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 learning about all aspects of sustainable housing;
- (viii) Effective, clear, and transparent governance, including institutionalized procedures for appeals related to housing decisions.

(d) Culture

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

- (i) National housing policies that take into account social and territorial peculiarities and support the preservation and development of landscapes and historical and cultural heritages;
- (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 people in this process.

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

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 impact of housing on the environment and enhance the energy efficiency of the housing sector;
 - (b) Promote access to housing and sustainable economic development;
 - (c) Promote healthy, barrier free and safe housing;
 - (d) Promote the continued application of sustainable housing principles.
- (a) Limit the 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 quality, municipal and other waste management²;
 - (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;
 - (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 the above measures for the most vulnerable parts of the population;

² 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>

- (xii) Promote integrated urban development and regeneration which brings workplaces and services into closer spatial relation to housing, while taking into account dangers and hazards;
- (xiii) Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, particularly for disadvantaged groups of the population³.

(b) Promote access to housing and sustainable economic development by taking measures to:

- (i) Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services⁴;
- (ii) Increase the availability of housing options and promote secure and neutral tenure (flexibility between owning and 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, housing finance 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 housing maintenance, including utility systems and encourage green investments in the sector;
- (vi) Encourage effective management of the housing stock and develop mechanisms for affordable housing refurbishment;
- (vii) Promote investment in sustainable housing through increased private and public investments, public-private partnerships, 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 programmes to ensure secure tenure rights for all property owners. Where possible and appropriate, assist people living in informal and low-income settlements to receive upgraded infrastructure and services;
- (x) 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;
- (xi) Generate additional employment in the housing construction sector by promoting housing construction and the renovation of existing buildings;
- (xii) Encourage the use of efficient local solutions for the design, construction, refurbishment and maintenance of sustainable housing while respecting the cultural and geographic particularities of member States;

³ 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>

⁴ Ibid.

- (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 use of cadastral and land registration information and services to create an environment conducive to investment in housing and security of land and housing tenure;
- (xv) Support cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change and resilience to disasters⁵;
- (xvi) Promote integrated spatial planning, which supports: the efficient distribution of economic activities; the improvement of technical and social infrastructure; urban regeneration; and affordable housing and which also addresses urban sprawl.

(c) Promote healthy, barrier free and safe housing by taking measures to:

- (i) Improve access for all to safe, decent, affordable, good quality and healthy housing, reduce homelessness and improve access to barrier-free housing;
- (ii) Develop housing in a way that avoids gentrification and includes incentives to develop mixed housing, in order to avoid social segregation;
- (iii) Encourage healthy living through housing design, maintenance and retrofitting as well as through public and green spaces around and within housing areas;
- (iv) Improve the resilience of buildings to natural and human-generated hazards through safety planning, design and construction;
- (v) Apply, when possible, design principles that facilitate usability for all potential inhabitants;
- (vi) Develop sustainable housing strategies that improve access to basic utilities and services, including safe drinking water and sanitation, and contribute to better living conditions;
- (vii) Promote the use of universal design principles in order to increase, for the elderly and people with disabilities, access to housing and the ability to live independently;
- (viii) 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, and make these national statistics publicly available in order to support policy-making;
- (ii) Encourage investment in research and innovation in all aspects of sustainable housing;

⁵ Introduction to the proposal of the Open Workign Group for Sustainable Development Goals of 19 July 2014. At <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/4518outcomedocument.pdf>

- (iii) Support good governance, cooperation between relevant government agencies, 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.

Annex

Background information for the development of the draft Charter

I. About the Committee on Housing and Land Management

1. The UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management was established in 1947 to provide support to governments in the post-war reconstruction of the housing stock in Europe. Its mandate was subsequently broadened to include housing, urban development and land administration.⁶

2. The Committee's mandate, as reconfirmed by the Ministerial Meeting held in 2013, is "to promote the sustainable development of human settlements in the ECE region while fostering economic and social prosperity and supporting democratic governance".⁷ Its mission is to improve housing and land management throughout the ECE region in a sustainable manner, in particular by providing practical solutions and guidelines.

3. The Committee is the only intergovernmental body dealing with housing, urban development and land management for the entire ECE region, which is home to one fifth of the world's population.

4. In 2000, the Committee adopted the ECE Strategy for a Sustainable Quality of Life in Human Settlements in the Twenty-First Century.

5. In 2013, the Committee adopted the Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region for the Period 2014-2020.⁸

II. History of discussions on a regional instrument to promote sustainable housing by the Committee

6. Work on a regional instrument to support sustainable housing was started by the Committee on Housing and Land Management over five years ago with discussions on the development of a possible Framework Convention on Sustainable Housing in the ECE Region.

7. The Bureau of the Committee initially proposed the development of a convention at its meeting in Prague on 21 December 2009, where the Bureau agreed that developing such a framework convention would provide countries with an effective tool to address key housing challenges. It would also further support the application of existing UNECE housing policy tools (e.g., social housing guidelines, housing finance principles and Action Plan for Energy-efficient Housing in the UNECE Region). At its meeting in March 2010, the Bureau suggested dedicating a part of the next Committee session to discussing a convention.⁹

⁶ On the history of the Committee on Housing and Land Management, please read at http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/VitalSpaces/Vital_Spaces_Year_05_-_Issue_1.pdf

⁷ <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/2013/ece.hbp.173.en.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/2013/ece.hbp.2013.3.e.pdf>

⁹ Report of the Bureau meetings of the Committee on Housing and Land Management for the period 2009–2010 (ECE/HBP/2010/2), available at:

<http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/2010/ece.hbp.2010.2.e.050810.pdf>.

8. At its seventy-first session in September 2010, the Committee discussed a possible legally binding instrument on housing and decided to establish an ad hoc Working Group on Sustainable Housing in order to explore the potential added value of such an instrument and to define what might be its scope, objectives and possible options. The Committee further invited member States to nominate representatives to the Working Group.¹⁰

9. In 2011 and 2012, the Working Group met three times.¹¹ It recognized the added value of a Framework Convention on Sustainable Housing as a possible instrument to address housing issues in the UNECE region and recommended that the Committee on Housing and Land Management consider its development favourably.¹²

10. In September 2012, at its seventy-third session, the Committee endorsed the conclusions of the Working Group and supported the proposal to open negotiations on a possible Framework Convention on Sustainable Housing.¹³

11. Based on the recommendations of the Working Group, the Committee agreed that the convention could have the following scope: “to improve the sustainability of housing in the UNECE region through effective policies and actions at all levels supported by international cooperation and with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the region”.¹⁴ The Committee recommended that EXCOM approve the establishment of an Intergovernmental Negotiating Group to prepare the framework convention. The Committee also recommended that this group agree on the objectives of a convention as the starting point for its substantive work.¹⁵

12. At its seventy-fourth session in October 2013, the Committee opened a discussion on the possible development of a non-legally-binding Charter on Sustainable Housing for the ECE Region. Noting the interest of some member States in a charter on sustainable housing, the Committee requested that the Bureau provide further information and, if appropriate, in the light of decisions made by EXCOM, to develop elements of the proposed charter.¹⁶

13. At the sixty-sixth meeting of EXCOM on 6 February 2014, EXCOM encouraged the Committee to further investigate and discuss the possibility of developing the Charter. The development of the Charter was added to the Committee’s programme of work for 2014-2015, which was approved by EXCOM (ECE/EX/2014/L.2).

¹⁰ Report on the seventy-first session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management (ECE/HBP/162), available at

<http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/2010/ece.hbp.162.e.pdf>

¹¹ Reports of first (ECE/HBP/AC.1/2011/2), second meeting (ECE/HBP/AC.1/2011/4) of the Working Group, available at

<http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/2011/AC1/ece.hbp.ac.1.2011.2.e.pdf>,

<http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/2011/AC1/ece.hbp.ac.1.2011.4.e.pdf>

and third meeting of the Working Group (ECE/HBP/AC.1/2012/2), available at

<http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/2012/ac1/ece.hbp.ac.1.2012.2.e.pdf>

¹² Report of the third meeting of the Working Group on a Possible Framework Convention on Sustainable Housing in the UNECE region (ECE/HBP/AC.1/2012/2), available at

<http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/2012/ac1/ece.hbp.ac.1.2012.2.e.pdf>

¹³ Report on the seventy-third session of the Committee (ECE/HBP/170), available at

<http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/2012/ece.hbp.170.e.pdf>

¹⁴ Ibid. ECE/HBP/170.

¹⁵ Ibid. ECE/HBP/170.

¹⁶ Report of the 74th Session - ECE/HBP/173, available at

<http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/2013/ece.hbp.173.e.pdf>.

14. The Committee at its informal meeting on 7 May 2014 elaborated a draft Charter, which was further developed through an e-mail and web consultation with member States and discussed at the Bureau meeting on 18 July 2014. Bureau members proposed at the meeting a new title to the document – Geneva Charter on Sustainable Housing.

15. The next version of the draft Charter will be developed after the informal negotiating pre-session on 7 October 2014. After that, the Committee will be invited to endorse the Charter and forward it to the UNECE Executive Committee for adoption.

III. Background documents to the charter

16. Several United Nations and intergovernmental documents refer to the right to adequate housing; these documents were considered when formulating the text of this draft Charter.

17. Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, provide for the right to an adequate standard of living and adequate housing for all.

18. Agenda 21¹⁷ calls for (1) providing adequate shelter for all; (2) improving human settlements management; (3) promoting sustainable land-use planning and management; (4) promoting the integrated provision of environmental infrastructure: water, sanitation, drainage and solid waste management; (5) promoting sustainable energy and transport systems in human settlements; (6) promoting human settlements planning and management in disaster-prone areas; (7) promoting sustainable construction industry activities; and (8) promoting human resource development and capacity-building for human settlements development.

19. The report of the Brundtland Commission, “Our Common Future”,¹⁸ the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Rio+20 United Nations Sustainable Development Conference outcome document, “The Future We Want”, define sustainable development as based on the three pillars of sustainability (economic, environmental and social).

20. “The Future We Want” recommends that significant attention be given to the sustainable development of human settlements, especially in urban areas, emphasizes the importance of improving the quality of these settlements through an integrated approach and recognizes the need for policies to support inclusive and affordable housing and the importance of adopting energy-efficiency programmes in building management.

21. The Habitat Agenda,¹⁹ which establishes the goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world and states the need for Governments to create an enabling environment that allows the involvement of all actors, public and private, to achieve these targets and recommends actions to promote these issues, supported by international cooperation.

¹⁷ United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 3-4 June 1992. Agenda 21, Chapter 7: Promoting sustainable human settlement development.

¹⁸ Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future, Chapter 2: Towards Sustainable Development; adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-second session, Resolution no. A/RES/42/187.

¹⁹ The Habitat Agenda is the main political document that came out of the Habitat II conference in Istanbul, Turkey, 3-14 June 1996. Adopted by 171 countries, it contains over 100 commitments and 600 recommendations on human settlements issues. For more information visit the site: http://www.unhabitat.org/declarations/habitat_agenda.asp

22. The UN-Habitat Global Housing Strategy to the Year 2025 aims to advance the Habitat Agenda theme of “adequate shelter for all”, using an innovative urban planning framework in which housing planning and construction are fully integrated with the urban planning in order to ensure the availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructures, affordability, habitability, accessibility, proximity to employment and socio-economic opportunities as well as cultural adequacy.

23. Introduction to the proposal of the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals of 19 July 2014. The Open Working Group was established after Rio+20 Conference with the aim to develop a set of sustainable development goals for consideration and appropriate action by the General Assembly at its 68th session. The Working Group elaborated a set of goals, including on cities and human settlements.

24. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This Convention supports accessibility to housing, adequate standards of living for people with disabilities and their right to live independently and be included in the community.
