



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
13 March 2015

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Housing and Land Management

Working Party on Land Administration

Ninth session

Geneva, 26-27 February 2015

Report of the Working Party on Land Administration on its ninth session

Note by the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA) held its ninth session in Geneva on 26-27 February 2015.

A. Attendance

2. Representatives of the following countries participated: Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

3. Representatives of the following United Nations programmes and specialized agencies attended the session: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and International Labour Organization (ILO).

4. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended the session: Organisation for Economic co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Permanent Committee on Cadastre for the European Union (PCC).

5. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations attended the session: the Council of European Geodetic Surveyors (CLGE), EuroGeographics, the

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European Land Information Service (EULIS), European Umbrella Organisation for Geographic Information (EUROGI), Housing Europe, and International Federation of Surveyors (FIG).

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

B. Organizational matters

7. The Chair of the Working Party, Mr. Elshad Khanalibayli, opened the session and Mr. Christian Friis Bach, Executive Secretary, UNECE, welcomed the participants.

8. The session was organized back to back with the workshop “The Challenges of Informal Settlements”. In this workshop, representatives of member States and other stakeholder UN organizations discussed the challenges posed by illegal and unplanned urban growth in the region and tools available to governments to better the lives of their inhabitants.

9. The Working Party adopted its provisional agenda as contained in document (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2015/1).

II. High-Level Segment, Land and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

10. The High-level Segment consisted of a high-level dialogue on the main development challenges in the region and how sound land administration, proper land management and sustainable real estate markets can help the transition towards better, safer and more balanced human settlements and sustainable cities. The list of speakers is attached in Annex I.

11. In the afternoon, participants discussed priorities of work on land administration and management in the region. Among the proposed activities to the Working Party were the development of a compendium of best practices and recommendations on land and property valuation and guidelines on land consolidation; and preparation of a comprehensive study on land administration systems in the UNECE region as a follow-up to the completed “Survey on Land Administration Systems”.

III. Second meeting of international organizations/agencies working in land administration and land management

12. The Second Meeting of International Organizations/Agencies took place Friday, 27 February from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. A separate detailed report of the meeting will be prepared and shared with Working Party members and relevant organizations and posted on the ECE website.

13. At the Second meeting of international organizations/agencies the following were represented: UNECE WPLA, Council of European Geodetic Surveyors (CLGE), EuroGeographics, Permanent Committee on Cadastre in the European Union (PCC), European Land Information Service (EULIS), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Federation of Surveyors (FIG), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Human Settlements

Programme (UN-Habitat). This meeting follows the meeting held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in May 2014. Participants discussed the cooperation on initiatives and proposed specific cooperative initiatives involving multiple agencies.

14. Representatives of the international organizations presented on their work in the area of land management and their proposals for the cooperation with the Working Party.

15. Organizations present agreed to develop a partnership agreement to cover work of common interest and elements for a joint programme of work. The WPLA secretariat will develop a draft agreement for the consideration of organizations.

IV. Matters arising from the seventy-fifth session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management and the sixty-fifth session of the Economic Commission for Europe

16. The secretariat informed the Working Party about issues discussed at the Committee on Housing and Land Management's seventy-fifth session (ECE/HBP/179) which were relevant to the work of the Working Party:

- The Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing was agreed by the Committee, approved by EXCOM and transmitted to the Commission for adoption. The secretariat explained that during the sixty-sixth session of the Economic Commission for Europe from 14 to 16 April 2015 the Commission is expected to adopt the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing.
- Preparations for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development - HABITAT III.
- The planning of work of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group after the approval by the EXCOM of its new Terms of References.

17. The Working Party took note of the information provided.

V. Report from the Informal Settlements workshop (25 February 2015, Geneva, Switzerland) and related recommendations

18. The Chair of the workshop, Ms. Doris Andoni, presented the conclusions and recommendations of the workshop. The main recommendation is to include guidelines on informal settlements¹ in the 2016-2017 Programme of Work.

19. The Working Party took note of the information provided.

VI. Review of the programme of work for 2014-2015

20. The Secretariat and members of the Bureau presented a short overview of the progress made in the implementation of the programme of work for the period 2014-2015 (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2015/2).

¹ Outcomes of the study were presented at the WPLA workshop "The challenges of Informal Settlements" on 25 February 2015. The presentations and report are available at <http://www.unece.org/hlm/informalsettlements.html#/>

21. The Working Party was informed about the outcomes of its workshops held since the eighth session, as well as those to be held in 2015. These workshops were:

- “Land Administration in Central Asia: Building Systems for 21st Century Challenges” in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 19-20 March 2013. The workshop addressed challenges and prospects for land administration and cadastre agencies throughout the UNECE region, with a focus on challenges and opportunities related to land management in the countries of Central Asia;
- “Collaborating for Secured Ownership” in Uppsala, Sweden, 29-31 May 2013. The workshop examined how e-governance can give individual landowners better service and allow the administration to serve the society more efficiently;
- “The Socioeconomic Potential of Land Administration Services,” in Copenhagen, 22-23 May 2014. The workshop explored different aspects of open data in land registration systems and how data interoperability among government agencies could increase citizens’ well-being;
- “Real Estate Infrastructure – Fit for Use?” in Vienna, 16-17 October 2014. During the workshop participants shared experiences, presented recent achievements and major challenges in developing real estate infrastructure from a technical, organisational and innovative perspective;
- “Benchmarking of Land Administration Systems and Implementation of Land Governance Assessment Framework in the UNECE Region” in Baku, 28 November 2014. During the workshop the study on the Survey on Land Administration Systems in the ECE Region was presented. It provides an analysis of national land administration systems services, data security and practices for recovering data in the event of a disaster, and other aspects of land administration.
- “The Challenges of Informal Settlements” in Geneva, 25 February 2015. The workshop addressed challenges posed by illegal and unplanned urban growth in the region and tools available to governments to better the lives of their inhabitants.
- The Working Party will organize two more workshops in 2015: the first to take place in Russia in June and the second to take place in Baku in October.

22. The representative of the United Kingdom informed the Working Party about the land administration reviews (2013 and 2014, Republic of Moldova and Uzbekistan) which were developed since the eighth Session. These reviews will be published as chapters in the country profiles on housing and land management of these countries.

23. The representative of Ireland informed the Working Party about the results of the study “Survey on Land Administration Systems” (ECE/HBP/180), which was in the programme of work for 2012-2013 (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2013/2).

24. The representative of the Netherlands presented the study on “Land Registration and Cadastre: One or Two Agencies?” (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2015/3).

25. The representative of Greece presented the summary “Informal Development: Challenges and Solutions from South-East Europe” (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2015/4) based on the study, “Formalizing the Informal: Challenges and Opportunities of Informal Settlements in South-East Europe”.

26. The Working Party Chair discussed the work of the Bureau to promote the work of the Working Party at land administration events in the ECE region.

27. The Working Party:
- Expressed appreciation for activities undertaken and to be undertaken to implement the programme of work for 2014-2015.
 - Encouraged the secretariat to continue to assist member States in implementing policy recommendations of the land administration reviews after the country profiles of Republic of Moldova and Uzbekistan were completed.

VII. Report on the work of the Bureau of the Working Party

28. The Working Party Chair informed that the work of the Bureau was organised in seven thematic Task Groups: TG1 on Workshops; TG2 on Land administration reviews and country profiles; TG3 on Publications; TG4 on Benchmarking and inventories; TG5 on Cooperation with national organizations; TG6 on Cooperation with related international organizations and interregional cooperation and TG7 on Institutional research.

29. The Bureau members from Working Party Task Groups 1-6 made presentations on the work of the Groups established since the eighth session. The work of task group 7 was presented during the review of selected topics in land management.

30. The Working Party took note of the information provided.

VIII. Programme of work for 2016-2017

31. The Working Party Chair presented the draft programme of work for 2016-2017 (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2015/5).

32. The secretariat presented information on a study conducted by the Committee on Housing and Land Management on the elaboration of Smart City Indicators and Smart City Profiles (ECE/HBP/179, para 48). The study is part of the UNECE's project "United Smart Cities: Smart urban solutions for transition and developing countries". The Working Party was invited to contribute to the Committee on the development of the Smart City Indicators and Smart City Profiles.

33. The secretariat presented a proposal for a study on "Cities and human settlements in coastal areas: preventing and mitigating the risks of impacts of natural and human induced disasters". This study will include the elaboration of a classification system for cities in coastal zones as well as identify management options aimed at preventing or mitigating the risks of impacts in cities in coastal areas.

34. The secretariat informed on the progress with the establishment of the new membership of the UNECE Real Estate Market Advisory Group according to its new Terms of References (ECE/HBP/2014/5) endorsed by the seventy-fifth session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management.

35. The Working Party agreed on:
- The draft Programme of Work 2016-2017 and approved its revised version as contained in Annex II.
 - The organization of four workshops on topics in land management in the UNECE region, including four workshops to be held in locations to be determined by the Bureau of the Working Party.

The Working Party also agreed to:

- The dissemination of conclusions and recommendations of the study “Formalizing the Informal: Challenges and Opportunities from South-East Europe” and to use the study methodology to review the situation of informal settlements in other member States in the UNECE region.
- The elaboration of Smart City Indicators and Smart City Profiles.
- Contribute to the study on “Cities and human settlements in coastal areas: preventing and mitigating the risks of impacts of natural and human induced disasters”, provided the funding for the study is available.

IX. Any other Business

36. No matters were raised.

X. Election of the Bureau

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

38. The Working Party elected the Bureau for its tenth session, as follows:

- Mr. Elshad Khanalibayli, Azerbaijan (Chair)
- Ms. Julie Barry, United Kingdom (Vice-Chair)
- Mr. Rik Wouters, The Netherlands (Vice-Chair)
- Mr. Julius Ernst, Austria
- Ms. Pia Dahl Højgaard, Denmark
- Mr. Markku Markkula, Finland
- Ms. Ekaterina Meskhidze, Georgia
- Ms. Chryssy Potsiou, Greece
- Mr. James O’Boyle, Ireland
- Mr. Arturo Angelini, Italy
- Mr. Bakytbek Djusupbekov, Kyrgyzstan

XII. Date of the next Session

39. The Chair informed that the next Session is scheduled to take place in Spring 2017. He also invited member States to consider hosting the next Working Party Session in their country.

XII. Adoption of the report

40. The Working Party reviewed the session report based on a draft prepared by the secretariat and adopted it.

41. The meeting was closed by the Chair at 3.50 p.m. on 27 February 2015.

Annex I

High-Level Segment - Land and Sustainable Development Goals

Interventions by the governments:

Austria – Wernher Hoffmann, Head of the Federal Office of Metrology and Surveying (BEV)

Azerbaijan – Elshad Khanalibayli, Head, Investments, International Cooperation and Strategic Planning Department, State Committee on Property Issues of Azerbaijan, on behalf of Karam Hasanov, Chairman of the State Committee on Property Issues

Cyprus – Kyriakos Tsolakis, Acting Director, Department of Lands and Surveys

Czech Republic – Karel Štencel, Vice-president of the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre

Finland – Markku Markkula, Deputy Director General, National Land Survey of Finland, on behalf of Pia Viitanen, Minister of Culture and Housing

Germany – Peter Creuzer, Director, State Survey and Geospatial Information, State Agency for Geoinformation and State Survey Lower Saxony (LGLN)

Latvia – Elita Baklāne-Ansberga, Director General of State Land Service of Latvia, Presiding country of Permanent Committee on Cadastre in the European Union (PCC)

Lithuania – Arvydas Bagdonavicius, Deputy Director for Property Valuation, State Enterprise Centre for Registers, on behalf of Kestutis Sabaliauskas, Director, State Enterprise Centre of Registers

Malta – Michael Falzon, Minister, Parliamentary Secretariat for Planning and Simplification of Administrative Processes, Government of Malta

Romania – Victor Grigorescu, Director of Cadastre and Geodesy Directorate, National Agency for Cadastre and Land Registration, Romania

Russian Federation – Andrey Pridankin, Deputy Head of the Federal Service for State Registration, Cadastre and Cartography

Sweden – Bengt Kjellson, Director General & Chief Executive, Lantmäteriet

United Kingdom – Paul Dowse, Director of Strategy, Strategic Development, HM Land Registry.

Annex I

Programme of Work for 2016-2017

I. Capacity-building and international knowledge sharing

1. Objective: To increase the capacity of UNECE member States to formulate policies on land administration and management.
2. To achieve this objective, the Working Party will:
 - Organize four workshops in the UNECE region to allow for experience and knowledge sharing, to improve the human capital of stakeholders and enhance land management practices.
 - Present the work of the Working Party and provide advice on land management at workshops, conferences, seminars and other events focusing on land management.

II. Land administration reviews

3. Objective: To provide, upon the request of a member State, an assessment of member State land administration systems and to compile guidelines to enhance these systems.
4. To achieve this objective, the Working Party will, upon invitation by Governments and subject to the availability of funding, develop land administration reviews as part of the UNECE country profiles on housing and land management.

III. Studies on selected topics in land management²

5. Objective: To study issues in land management of interest to member States and to develop publications containing analyses of this issue to help member States better understand the current status of land management and thus formulate more targeted and effective policies.
6. To achieve this objective the Working Party will:
 - In cooperation with the Committee on Housing and Land Management conduct a study on the elaboration of Smart City Indicators (ECE/HBP/179, para 48). The study is part of the UNECE's project "United Smart Cities: Smart urban solutions for transition and developing countries".³

² Development of the studies is subject to the availability of funding

³ Please see the report of the Committee on Housing and Land Management on its 75th session, paras 46- 48, at http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/2014/ECE_HBP_179.en.pdf

- Organize the dissemination of conclusions and recommendations of the study “Informal Settlements: Challenges and Opportunities from South-East Europe”⁴ through the preparation of guidelines on informal settlements.
 - In cooperation with the Committee on Housing and Land Management conduct a study on “Cities and human settlements in coastal areas: preventing and mitigating the risks of impacts of natural and human induced disasters”. The Working Party will elaborate a classification system for cities in coastal zones as well as identify management options aimed at preventing or mitigating the risks of impacts in cities in coastal areas.
 - In cooperation with the Committee on Housing and Land Management Real Estate Market Advisory Group, develop a compendium of best practices and recommendations on land and property valuation.
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⁴ Outcomes of the study were presented at the WPLA workshop "The challenges of Informal Settlements" on 25 February 2015, materials of which are available at <http://www.unece.org/hlm/informalsettlements.html#/>