



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
29 September 2016

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe Committee on Housing and Land Management

Seventy-seventh session
Geneva, 13-14 September 2016

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

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I. Introduction

1. The Committee on Housing and Land Management (CHLM) held its seventy-seventh session in Geneva from 13 to 14 September 2016.

A. Attendance

2. Representatives of the following ECE countries participated: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, and Uzbekistan.

3. Representatives of the following United Nations (UN) programmes and specialized agencies attended: the Habitat III Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

4. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended: the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the European Union.

5. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations attended: the ASBA Foundation - National Social Housing Association, the Association for Farmers Rights Defense, the Centre for Socio-Economic Development (CSEND), Co-operative Housing International, Habitat for Humanity, Housing Europe and its members, the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, the International Council of Women (ICW), the International Property Registries Association (IPRA-CINDER), the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP), the International Union of Tenants (IUT), national housing cooperatives, social housing associations, and others.

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

B. Adoption of the agenda

7. The Chair of the Committee, Ms Elena Szolgayová (Slovakia), presented the provisional agenda (ECE/HBP/187), which was adopted without any changes.

C. Organizational matters

8. The Chair reported that 293 delegates from 45 countries had registered for the meeting.

9. She invited participants to an evening reception hosted by the Slovak Government.

10. The Executive Secretary of the UNECE, Mr Christian Friis Bach, welcomed the participants and highlighted the main issues to be covered during the session, including the approaches to the follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (the 2030 Agenda), the implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing (the Charter) and the establishment of Geneva UN Charter centres, the Smart Sustainable City Indicators, and energy-efficiency standards for buildings. Mr Bach underlined that the work on the implementation of the Charter, especially through the Charter centres which are being established, provides important support to the 2030 Agenda

in the area of sustainable cities and human settlements. Mr Bach thanked Albania, Estonia and the United Kingdom for the creation of Charter centres for the implementation of the Charter. He encouraged all to continue supporting the implementation of the Charter through the centres, by supporting the secretariat and the relevant activities. He also introduced the new Director of the Forests, Land and Housing Division, Ms Ivonne Higuero.

10. Mr Bach stressed the importance of the initiation of discussions by the Committee on the implementation of the draft New Urban Agenda to be adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in October 2016 in Quito, Ecuador.

11. He invited everyone to actively contribute to the preparations for the celebration of the seventieth anniversary of the Committee which will be organized during the Committee's seventy-eighth session in September 2017.

13. Mr Nicolaas Beets, Dutch Urban Envoy, Dutch Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Affairs, in his keynote address, reported on the adoption of the Urban Agenda for the European Union (EU). He underlined the importance of cooperation between EU member countries, and of the involvement of all relevant stakeholders. The Urban Agenda for the EU established four pilot partnerships on Urban Mobility; Digital Transition; Circular Economy and Jobs; and Skills in the Local Economy. The European Commission has published a €4.8 million tender to set up a Secretariat for the Urban Partnership to support the Urban Agenda from 2017 onward.

II. Conclusions of the European Habitat Conference, key messages of the Habitat III Regional Report for the UNECE Region, and the content of the draft New Urban Agenda¹ as inputs into the planning of the work of the Committee on Housing and Land Management

14. Ms Daniela Grabmüllerová, Director of the International Relations Department, Ministry for Regional Development of the Czech Republic, presented, on behalf of her Minister as Co-chair of the European Habitat Regional Consultation Meeting, the outcomes of the European regional consultation to Habitat III – European Habitat (Prague, 16 -18 March 2016).

15. The Habitat III secretariat informed the delegates about the preparations for Habitat III, the key messages of the Habitat III Regional Report on Housing and Urban Development for the UNECE Region, and the content of the close-to-final draft of the New Urban Agenda to be adopted by Habitat III.

16. The Committee took note of the information provided.

III. High-level Panel on the implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and the Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region for the Period 2014-2020

17. Representatives of Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Malta, and the Russian Federation reported on the progress in their countries of the implementation of the Charter. In addition, delegates were presented with draft Guidelines for it.

18. The Committee endorsed the Guidelines.

¹ <https://www.habitat3.org/node/529098>

IV. Activities on the implementation of the Programme of Work since the seventy-sixth session and recommendations for the direction of future activities

19. The Committee Chair informed the delegates about the main actions taken since the seventy-sixth session of the Committee (ECE/HBP/2016/1). She further noted that the predecessor of the Committee was established as an intergovernmental body in 1947 and the Committee is to celebrate its seventieth anniversary at its seventy-eighth session.

20. The secretariat presented the following proposals for activities to mark the seventieth anniversary of the Committee: the adoption of a Seventieth Anniversary Declaration at the next Committee session; the publication of a brochure with a timeline of the Committee's history; the preparation of a video with highlights of the Committee's work; the translation of the Charter into the national languages of the member States, to be made available on the Committee website; and a compilation of best practices of activities in countries which are in line with the Charter.

21. The delegate from Albania proposed organizing a Ministerial Segment during the next Committee session on the occasion of the anniversary. The representative from the ICW noted that the Women's Advisory Committee for Housing Construction in the Netherlands will also mark its seventieth anniversary in 2017, and that this organization is an example of how observer organizations are important to the activities of the Committee to promote sustainable housing.

22. It was further proposed to organize an informal meeting of the Committee in December 2016 to discuss the text of the proposed draft Declaration.

23. The Committee decided to organize a Ministerial Segment at the seventy-eighth session in 2017, and to adopt a Declaration on housing and urban development on the occasion of the Committee's seventieth anniversary.

24. The Committee took note of the proposals for the organization of the celebrations of the seventieth anniversary and requested the secretariat to organize an online consultation on the draft Declaration during October-December 2016 and an informal Committee session in December 2016 in Geneva in order to discuss the draft Declaration, the preparations for a Ministerial Segment, and the celebration of the seventieth anniversary.

25. The Committee Chair underlined the importance of the provision of financial support for the activities of the secretariat to support the work of the Committee, the celebration of the seventieth anniversary, and other projects implemented by the secretariat at the request of the Committee. The delegate from Albania proposed that the secretariat prepare a project proposal consisting of the Committee's activities which need financing and circulate it together with an official request for financial support to the Committee's focal points.

V. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and perspectives for its implementation in housing and urban development in the ECE region

26. Representatives of the ECE Sustainable Development and Gender Unit of the Office of the Executive Secretary and of the Statistical Division reported on the progress of the discussion at the global level on the development of approaches for the review and follow-up of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The delegates from Albania, Cyprus, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation and Uzbekistan highlighted the challenges of additional indicators to measure sustainability and data collection by member States. The Chair suggested that this topic should be discussed further, perhaps in a future workshop.

27. The Committee secretariat reported on the ongoing activities that could support the follow-up and review of the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 11 on Cities and Human Settlements. These include Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management, the UNECE/ITU Smart Sustainable City Indicators, regular surveys of member States organized by the secretariat to review the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Urban Development 2014-2020, and the Charter. The Committee requested its Bureau to recognize these instruments and to incorporate them as appropriate into the overall methodology for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda.

VI. Review of the implementation of the 2016-2017 Programme of Work

(a) Sustainable housing and real estate markets

(i) Implementation of the Charter

28. The Committee secretariat presented draft Guidelines for the implementation of the Charter (ECE/HBP/2016/2). Representatives of Albania, Estonia and the United Kingdom reported on the launch of Charter centres in their countries based on the recommendations endorsed by the Committee at its seventy-sixth session.

29. The Committee welcomed the countries' activities supporting the implementation of the Charter and the launch of the centres in the above-mentioned countries.

30. The Committee encouraged other member States, local governments and stakeholder organizations to support the implementation of the Charter through support to the secretariat and the establishment of Charter centres. The secretariat requested member States to translate the Charter into as many languages as possible. The delegate from Slovenia stated that it has been translated into Slovenian.

(ii) Achieving access to affordable housing and sustainable real estate markets

31. The secretariat provided an update on its activities on access to affordable housing, and presented preliminary outcomes of the study on housing migrants (Informal Note 3). Representatives of UN-Habitat and the IUT provided information on their activities and comments on the ongoing study. The secretariat invited representatives to give input to the Committee's project on "Addressing housing affordability issues in the UNECE region in the context of the economic, financial and migration crisis". The delegates from Albania and Austria stressed the importance of continuing the discussion on the issue of access to affordable housing.

32. The Committee welcomed the work on the important topic of housing migrants, and invited the secretariat to present the results of the study at the next Committee session.

(iii) Activities of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group (REM)

33. The REM Chair presented a report on REM activities since the seventy-sixth Committee session and the draft programme of work for 2017-2018 (ECE/HBP/2016/3).

34. The Committee welcomed the active involvement of the REM in the work of the Committee and adopted the Advisory Group's programme of work for the period 2017-2018.

(iv) Energy-efficient housing

35. A representative of the UNECE Sustainable Energy Division provided an update on the planning of activities of the Committee on Sustainable Energy, including the development of indicators in collaboration with the other Regional Commissions. The Chair stated that the work of the Joint Task Force on Energy-Efficiency Standards in Buildings

has not yet started due to lack of funds. She highlighted two important events, the 7th International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development in Baku, Azerbaijan, to be held in October 2016, and the 8th International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development planned for June 2017 in Kazakhstan. A representative of Co-operative Housing International apprised the delegates on the work of housing cooperatives regarding energy efficiency of residential buildings in various member States in the UNECE region.

36. A representative of Canada provided the Committee with an update on the cooperation with the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) on energy efficiency in buildings. He apprised the Committee of the organization of an exhibition and a video on “More heat with less wood”. He proposed a joint workshop in May 2017 in conjunction with the housing community in collaboration with the FAO and UNEP.

37. A representative from Habitat for Humanity stated that, in Eastern Europe, communities and home-owner associations must be engaged and reiterated the importance of raising awareness. The representative from Albania highlighted the need for legislation and policies to help low-income families, and capacity-building and training courses for local authorities.

38. The Committee took note of the information provided.

(b) Sustainable urban development

(v) Smart Sustainable City Indicators and Standards

39. The secretariat and experts presented the revised Key Performance Indicators on Smart Sustainable Cities to address the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (ECE/HBP/2016/4), and a report on activities under the United Smart Cities project. The secretariat informed the Committee about the launch of the global initiative, United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC).

40. The representative from Lithuania gave an update on the main priorities for decision makers in reference to the 2030 Agenda and the main pillars for sustainable and green cities. She also gave examples of successful energy-efficiency activities in Lithuania, and reiterated the importance of partnerships and U4SSC.

41. The Committee endorsed the revised Indicators and took note of the progress of the development of the Standards.

(vi) Urban planning

42. Representatives of the ECE and UN-Habitat reported on cooperation aimed at adapting the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning to the context of countries with economies in transition in the ECE region, and presented to the delegates a proposal for a joint UNECE-UN-Habitat programme on capacity-building for urban planners in countries with transition economies. The key messages from the CIS Cities: Towards Sustainable Future report were also presented. The delegates were informed of the proposal by the secretariat of possible joint activities with the Espoo Convention Secretariat on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in urban planning.

43. The Committee endorsed the proposal for joint capacity-building activities.

(c) Land administration and management

44. The Chair and the secretariat of the Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA) reported on the activities carried out by the Working Party since the last session of the Committee (ECE/HBP/2016/1). This included, among others, information on the progress of the preparation of potential technical guidelines on informal settlements in the ECE region, specifically on the completion of a report with a literature review on informal

settlements in countries with transition economies as input for the preparation of the guidelines (Informal Note 6). A representative of Montenegro reported on their country's experience with the regularization of informal settlements, including the recent law on the regularization of informal construction which was adopted in 2016, and its Action Plan. A representative of the Netherlands informed the delegates about the progress of a study on the advantages and disadvantages of the unification of land registries and cadastres. The WPLA secretariat informed the delegates about the activities for 2016-2017, including the preparation of the tenth session scheduled for March 2017.

45. The Committee took note of the information on the activities carried out by the WPLA since the last session of the Committee and its ongoing activities.

(d) Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management

46. The secretariat informed the delegates about the progress of the preparation of the Country Profiles, and reported on the results of an evaluation of them from 1996 to 2015, which was undertaken by an external consultant (Informal Note 7).

47. Representatives of Armenia and Uzbekistan presented key outcomes of the Profiles prepared for their countries. A representative of Kazakhstan provided an update on the preparation of the Country Profile of Kazakhstan.

48. The secretariat reminded representatives of the request by Belarus to conduct its Country Profile in 2017-2018.

49. The Committee took note of the results of the evaluation and requested the secretariat to prepare updated guidelines for the preparation of Profiles reflecting recommendations from the external evaluation. The Committee invited the secretariat to present the revised guidelines for consideration at the seventy-eighth session.

50. The Committee approved the Country Profile of Uzbekistan and its publication (ECE/HBP/185) and requested the secretariat to issue a corrigendum with the changes requested by the Government of Uzbekistan.

51. The Committee further approved the key outcomes and policy recommendations of the Country Profile of Armenia (ECE/HBP/2016/7) and requested the secretariat to finalize the draft and print it as an official publication.

52. The Committee took note of the preparation of the Country Profile of Kazakhstan and recommended reviewing Belarus next (second Profile).

53. It invited countries to provide financial and in-kind expert contributions to the next Profiles and to the implementation of the evaluation recommendations.

VII. Status of the Trust Fund on Human Settlements

54. The Director of the Forests, Land and Housing Division reported on the status of funding of the programme of work of the Committee. She thanked the Governments of Italy and of the Czech Republic for their contributions to the Trust Fund, and the Governments of the Russian Federation and Switzerland and the City of Vienna for their contributions to the Committee's projects. She also thanked the many organizations that have assisted the Committee with in-kind contributions and expert support.

55. She informed the Committee of the new tasks, including those related to the organization of the implementation of the Charter; the organization of the Ministerial Segment as part of the next Committee session; the establishment of the Task Force on Energy-Efficiency Standards in Buildings; studies; and capacity-building activities. As the work on the above-mentioned tasks is not covered by the regular budget, she invited member States and donors to provide financial support for these activities. The delegate

from the Czech Republic proposed sending a letter to Committee focal points announcing the Ministerial Segment of the seventy-eighth Session of the Committee and the need for funding of activities. The delegate from Albania requested that the secretariat use her project proposal as an annex to this letter. The Chair invited the member States to financially support the activities of the Committee.

56. The Committee took note of the information provided.

VIII. Election of the Bureau

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

58. The Committee elected the Bureau for its seventy-eighth session as follows:

- Elena Szolgayová, Slovakia (Chair)
- Alena Rakava, Belarus
- Daniela Grabmüllerová, Czech Republic (Vice Chair)
- Lise Nielsen, Denmark (Vice Chair)
- Nino Gventsadze, Georgia
- Stefano Scalera, Italy
- Vilma Vaiciuniene, Lithuania
- Inger Vold Zapffe, Norway
- Andrey Chibis, Russian Federation
- Nuria Raga Sastre, Spain
- Maria Ulfvarson, Sweden
- Nicky Heathcote, UK.

59. 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 WPLA.

60. The Committee elected the Bureau for its seventy-eighth session.

IX. Other Business

61. The representative from CSEND recommended aligning the Country Profiles with the Sustainable Development Goals. He also stressed the importance of continuing the work with housing cooperatives and civil society.

62. The representative from Habitat for Humanity drew attention to the Habitat III policy paper on housing, which could be considered in the further planning of the Committee's activities.

X. Adoption of the report and closing of the session

63. The Chair summarized the major decisions taken by the Committee.

64. The Committee adopted its report based on a draft prepared by the secretariat.

65. The Committee agreed on 11-13 September 2017, proposed by the secretariat, as the dates for the next Committee session, including the Ministerial Segment, in Geneva.

66. The Chair closed the session.
