

**Minutes of the**  
**Meeting of the Bureau of the**  
**Committee on Housing and Land Management**  
**Geneva, Palais des Nations, 20 April 2007**

–

1. The following members of the Committee's Bureau attended the meeting: Ms. D. Andoni, Chairperson; Mr. P. Kreuzer; Mr. H. van Eyk; Mr. E. Hauri; Mr. A. Khanlarov; Ms. E. Szolgayova; Mr. M. Vaquer Caballeria. The meeting was also attended by Ms. C. Potsiou; Ms. S. Bamford; Mr. A. Elbers; Mr. C. Hachmann; Mr. H. Pfeiffer; and the UNECE secretariat.

**Agenda item 1: Adoption of the agenda**

2. The provisional agenda of the meeting was adopted.

**Agenda item 2: The sixty-second session of UNECE (25-27 April 2007)**

3. The secretariat provided information on the 60th Anniversary Session of UNECE to be held in Geneva from 25-27 April.

**Agenda item 3: Organization of the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee**

**Agenda and in-depth discussion**

4. The Bureau reviewed the draft agenda of the 68<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee and possible topics for the in-depth discussion. In view of the recent workshop in Greece, it was agreed to choose "Informal Settlements" as the theme for the in-depth discussion. The Bureau welcomed that this topic – from the land administration perspective – has also been chosen for the in-depth discussion at the WPLA plenary session, and expressed that this constitutes an opportunity to emphasize the linkages between housing and land management. A background paper will be prepared, based on a report provided by the delegation of Greece. Subsequent to the in-depth discussions, a joint CHLM/WPLA study on informal settlements will be elaborated. A reference group to review the work of the consultant(s) will be established. A draft outline of the study will be prepared by the secretariat.
5. The following topics were suggested for future in-depth discussions:
  - Citizen participation in urban development
  - Public/private partnerships
  - Housing and demographic challenges in the UNECE region
  - Provision and financing of communal services
  - Housing finance for vulnerable population groups
  - Community upgrading, sustainable urban development and urban poverty
  - Rent control and rent legislation

## **Country profiles on the housing sector**

6. The secretariat informed the Bureau on the progress of the country profiles on the housing sector. The draft study for Georgia was finalized and edited, and was sent to the host country for verification and acknowledgement. Selected findings and the implementation of the recommendations through a launching event were discussed. The pre-mission for the next country profile of Belarus will take place from 2-4 May 2007. Azerbaijan provided information on the progress of Government reorganization. The Bureau requested Azerbaijan to provide the secretariat with a detailed note on the current institutional set-up and responsibilities for housing and spatial planning, bearing in mind that a number of countries requested UNECE to carry out a country profile. The secretariat informed the Bureau about the planned self-evaluation of the preparation of the country profiles, with the aim to identify reasons for delays. It was highlighted that secretariat resources are extremely limited, and that a request for additional resources, e.g. through a Junior Professional Officer (JPO), will be addressed to the Committee. The Bureau welcomed the secretariat's proposal to explore the possibilities of strengthening the linkages between the country profiles and the environmental performance reviews, e.g. through carrying out joint reviews.

## **Improvement of urban environmental performance**

7. The secretariat presented the draft study on spatial planning. The Bureau agreed that this version reflects the needs of countries in terms of providing guidelines on instruments of spatial planning, division of responsibilities between different levels of government, as well as decision-making procedures. It was agreed by the Bureau to hold a discussion on spatial planning at the Committee session, based on these guidelines, including a short presentation of the study and presentations of good practices by selected countries (e.g. Belarus which will host a workshop on spatial planning in autumn 2007). The Bureau was invited to submit comments on the draft study (preferably by e-mail to Michael.Kunz@unece.org by 30 May 2007). An executive summary will be prepared by the secretariat.

## **Land registration and land markets**

8. The Bureau was informed on the outcome of the workshop on informal settlements in Greece, which achieved to bring together professionals from land administration, spatial planning and housing, as well as politicians. The event was perceived as very well organized, and as being a starting point for discussing and developing strategies for an important topic. The Bureau thanked the hosts for their work.
9. The Bureau was informed on the progress of the Land Administration Review of Azerbaijan. The next LAR will take place in Bulgaria (14-19 October). For 2008, it is envisaged to carry out an LAR in Latvia. The Bureau agreed to also strengthen the linkages between the land administration reviews and the country profiles on the housing sector.
10. Information on the preparations for the 5<sup>th</sup> session of the WPLA (19-20 November) and the upcoming WPLA workshops (Munich, 24-25 May; Dublin, 26-28 September) was provided.
11. The Bureau was informed on the outcome of a coordination meeting regarding the integration of real estate activities between the Committee, the Working Party, real estate experts and the secretariat on 30 March. It was agreed that a Real Estate Market Advisory Group (REM) to the WPLA would be established. The group should consist of 5-6 people who will be selected and invited in their personal capacity. Functional and geographical representation has to be considered in the selection

process. In line with UNECE guidelines on the establishment of expert groups (ECE/EX/2), NGOs as well as representatives from the private sector will be eligible for participation. REM exclusively reports to and is supervised by WPLA; representatives may participate in Bureau meetings as observers. REM activities have to contribute to the programme of work of the WPLA. The group can put forward proposals regarding the programme of work. The secretariat does not service meetings of REM, but provides the necessary administrative support once the activities are agreed upon by WPLA. Regarding the time frame, a formal proposal on the establishment of REM (including its Terms of Reference) will be submitted to the Committee, EXCOM and the WPLA plenary session. Thereafter, suitable experts will be reviewed and selected by WPLA, and their activities in support of the WPLA programme of work will be discussed.

### **Housing modernization and management**

12. Albania provided information on the workshop on social housing, housing finance and housing maintenance and management in Tirana (4-6 July).
13. HUMAN reported on the progress of the project dealing with the multi-family housing stock. Potential donor organizations are currently being approached. Further possibilities of fund-raising were discussed. HUMAN proposed to take over the operational project management as an in-kind contribution, taking into account the constraints in secretariat resources. HUMAN will prepare a written proposal, containing the different phases of the project. It was agreed that a preliminary phase of the project could be started after the Committee session, involving 4 pilot countries in which country profiles on housing had been carried out. The modalities will be discussed at the next Bureau meeting.

### **Reporting on programme performance**

14. The secretariat presented the budget reporting requirements for the 2006-2007 biennium. A summary of the questionnaire that had been distributed in 2006 was provided. It was concluded that the replies could constitute a basis for brief country presentations at the Committee session. The secretariat emphasized that the questionnaire is a major input for reporting on the activities of the Committee. It was agreed to revise and streamline the questionnaire, in particular to formulate more targeted and concrete questions. It is also envisaged to ask for voluntary examples of good practices and case studies that reflect specific activities in housing, spatial planning and land administration in the countries, which could be annexed to the questionnaire. These will be made available to the Committee and the public. The revised questionnaire will be distributed once again in 2007 to enable the secretariat to report at the end of the biennium. Countries that had completed the 2006 questionnaire will only be asked to update their reply as necessary. After that, the questionnaire will be sent out every two years.

### **Election of a new Bureau**

15. The Bureau discussed its future composition in view of the upcoming election at the Committee session, taking into account the need for both continuity and rotation.

### **Other business**

16. HUMAN announced that a proposal for member rotation within the advisory network would be put forward at the Committee session.

17. Spain invited the participants to a Spanish-Latin American conference on Urban Best Practices (25-27 June in Madrid). Spain was invited to present the outcomes of the conference at the Committee session.
18. The Bureau and HUMAN thanked Mr. Vinogradov for his work in the past years, prior to his retirement.
19. The next Bureau meeting will be held in Geneva the day before the Committee session (Sunday, 16 September 2007, at 2.30 p.m.).

\*\*\*