

**Economic Commission for Europe**

Committee on Housing and Land Management

Eightieth session

Geneva, 2-4 October 2019

Item 2(b) of the provisional agenda

**Review of the implementation of the programme of work 2017-2018****Sustainable housing and real estate markets****Information on progress with the development of the Global Set of the  
Performance Based Standards on the International Fire Safety of Buildings****Note by the Secretariat***Summary*

The International Fire Safety Standards Coalition was launched with the support of ECE in Geneva at the Palais des Nations on 9 July 2018. The launch event brought together key organizations from around the world dealing with fire safety of buildings with the purpose to create a high-level overarching performance framework based on International Fire Safety Standards (IFSS) for fire safety design, engineering and construction, occupation and ongoing management.

The Committee at its seventy-ninth session was informed on the establishment of the International Fire Safety Standards (IFSS) Coalition and on the development of new, high-level set of international standards on fire safety for buildings (ECE/HBP/194). The Committee invited the Real Estate Market Advisory Board to include the activities on the development of the high-level standards in its work plan for 2019-2020 and invited the Bureau to assess the feasibility of adopting the IFSS Coalition global set of standards as a UNECE standard.

At its meeting on 20 March 2019, the Bureau was informed on progress made in the development of the IFSS; considered the IFSS development a very good initiative and recommended to the secretariat to invite a Coalition representative to report on the progress with the development of the standards at the Eightieth Committee session.

This Note provides information on the IFSS Coalition and the progress with the development of the high-level standards. In accordance with document ECE/HBP/200 item 2.b (iii), the Committee is invited to take note of the information provided and to recommend submitting the standard, upon its finalisation to the Committee for its consideration and possible adoption as an ECE standard.

## Background

The Grenfell Tower fire in London in June 2017 made the need for a coherent global approach to fire safety urgent. That fire that claimed 72 lives, was the worst in the UK for almost a century – and not only focused attention on building and fire safety in the United Kingdom but also exposed global inadequacies in how fire safety standards are set.

As the property market has become increasingly international with investments flowing across national borders, differences in materials testing and certifications for fire safety and in standards on how to manage buildings in use, remain. There are high uncertainty and risks to the public, with the loss of lives of people in extreme cases of fires in buildings.

The Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, which was endorsed by the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management in 2014, underlines the importance of improving the resilience of buildings to natural and human-generated hazards through safety planning, design and construction. The development of international fire safety standards is an important element for the implementation of the Charter.

To address the existing high risks of fires in buildings, following the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy in London, a group of international experts in fire safety established an [International Fire Safety Standards \(IFSS\) Coalition](#). The Coalition supports the creation, maintenance, and use of high-quality international standards through a transparent and inclusive standard-setting process to promote fire safety in buildings globally. The IFSS Coalition is a partnership of leading professional bodies and standards organisations from across the globe (Please see the Coalition composition in Annex).

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) serves as a secretariat to the IFSS Coalition. The Coalition website is available at <https://ifss-coalition.org/>.

[The Coalition launch event](#) was held on 9 July 2018 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. Following the launch, the IFSS Coalition has reached an agreement to create a high-level overarching performance framework based on International Fire Safety Standards (IFSS) for fire safety design, engineering and construction, occupation and ongoing management.<sup>1</sup>

The Coalition has also established its Standard Setting Committee (SSC), a group of international technical fire experts who started their work on the development and writing the high-level standards to ensure they are fit for purpose across global markets.

Information on the development of the global set of the standards was presented at the seventy-ninth session of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (ECE/HBP/194). Following the presentation, the Committee invited the Real Estate Market Advisory Board to include the activities on the development of the high-level standard in its work plan for 2019-2020 and the Bureau to assess the feasibility of adopting the IFSS Coalition standard as an ECE standard.

## Update on the development of the International Fire Safety Standards since the Committee's seventy-ninth session

The Committee Bureau at its meeting on 20 March 2019 was informed on progress made with the development of the high-level standards. The Bureau was informed about the meeting of the IFSS Standard Setting Committee held on 24-25 January 2019 in London which agreed on the next steps for the development of the global set of the IFS standards. Specifically, the SSC will continue working to establish universal rules that define classification, definition, analysis and presentation of fire safety standards at a project, state, national, regional or international level.

The IFSSs are expected to be developed through the following steps:

- a. The International Fire Safety Standards Coalition (IFSSC) Standard Setting Committee (SSC) will map existing relevant fire safety standards and create a taxonomy of Fire Codes for Buildings to identify best practice and to understand market needs.
- b. Further to the research undertaken the IFSSC will first draft a Conceptual Framework which will guide the drafting the standards into the future.
- c. IFSSC will establish a common set of internationally accepted performance-based principles for fire safety aspects of design, engineering and construction, occupation and ongoing management. It will be relevant to

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<sup>1</sup> Please see more at <https://ifss-coalition.org/the-standards/>

all property classes and all regions and nations regardless of the differing political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal differences between nations.

- d. IFSS will be focusing on life safety initially, though future editions of the principles, which will allow to address the issue of property protection, recognising the impact on society of the loss of a building (e.g. contents, operations).
- e. IFSS will be linked to International Ethical Standards ([www.iesc-coalition.org](http://www.iesc-coalition.org)) and other relevant international standards that exist.

## **Conclusions**

The global set of the International Fire Safety Standards is expected to be developed within the next year. The Committee Bureau at its meeting on 20 March 2019 recommended to the secretariat to invite the Coalition secretariat representative to report on the progress with the development of the standard at the Eightieth Committee session. This Information Note serves as a background document for the discussion on the progress with the development of the IFSS at the Eightieth Committee session.

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## Annex 1. Members of the IFSS Coalition

Updates are available at <https://ifss-coalition.org/coalition-organisations/>

- [ABC – Association of Building Compliance \(NZ\)](#)
- [ACAI – Association of Consultant Approved Inspectors](#)
- [AEEBC – The Association of European Experts in Building and Construction](#)
- [API – Australian Property Institute](#)
- [APS – Association for Project Safety](#)
- [BAFE – British Approvals for Fire Equipment](#)
- [BCA – Building Control Alliance](#)
- [BSSIG – Building Surveyors Special Interest Group \(South Africa\)](#)
- [CABE – Chartered Association of Building Engineers](#)
- [CASLE – Commonwealth Association of Surveying & Land Economy](#)
- [CEBC – Consortium of European Building Control bodies](#)
- [CFPA-Asia – Confederation of Fire Protection Associations – Asia](#)
- [CIAT – Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists](#)
- [CIBSE – Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers](#)
- [CIOB – Chartered Institute of Building](#)
- [CIRIA – Construction Industry Research & Information Association](#)
- [CTBUH – Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat](#)
- [CTIF – International Association of Fire & Rescue Services](#)
- [Efectis](#)
- [Engineers Australia](#)
- [EPIC – Engineering Panels in Construction](#)
- [FIA – Fire Industry Association](#)
- [FIG – Federation International de Geometre](#)
- [FPA – Fire Protection Association](#)
- [FPA Australia – Fire Protection Association Australia](#)
- [HKIS – Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors](#)
- [ICC – International Code Council](#)
- [IFE – Institution of Fire Engineers](#)
- [IWFM – Institute of Workplace and Facilities Management](#)
- [IPREA – Institute of Philippine Real Estate Appraisers](#)
- [LABC – Local Authority Building Control](#)
- [NFIA – National Fire Industry Association \(Australia\)](#)
- [NFPA – National Fire Protection Association](#)
- [NHBC – National House Building Council](#)
- [NIFHA – Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations](#)
- [NZIBS – New Zealand Institute of Building Surveyors](#)
- [PAM – Malaysian Institute of Architects](#)
- [PIMA – Polyisocyanurate Insulation Manufacturers Association](#)
- [RIBA – Royal Institute of British Architects](#)
- [RICS – Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors](#)
- [RMIT University](#)
- [RTPI – Royal Town Planning Institute](#)
- [SCDF – Singapore Civil Defence Force](#)
- [SCSI – Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland](#)
- [SFPE – Society of Fire Protection Engineers](#)
- [SGSA – Sports Ground Safety Authority](#)
- [SIA – Singapore Institute of Architects](#)
- [SIBL – Singapore Institute of Building Ltd](#)
- [The World Bank](#)
- [Underwriters Laboratories Inc](#)
- [United Nations](#)

