

Terms of Reference for the Working Group on a Possible Framework Convention on Sustainable Housing in the UNECE region¹

Purpose

1. The Working Group has been established to explore the potential added value of, and to define the scope, objectives and possible options for, a UNECE-wide legally binding instrument on affordable, healthy and ecological housing. In particular, the Working Group shall:

(a) Analyse the potential added value as well as the pros and cons of a possible framework convention on affordable, healthy and ecological housing, in the UNECE region, including the factors supporting or hindering the development of such a legal framework, and the implications it might have in relation to existing agreements, institutions and processes;

(b) If appropriate, describe possible options for a future framework convention, including the rationale for the development of a framework convention and its scope, objectives and core elements;

(c) Develop proposals for possible further steps.

Expected output

2. The Working Group shall produce a report on its findings, including:

(a) Analysis of the potential added value and implications of a framework convention on affordable, healthy and ecological housing;

(b) Proposals on possible options for a future framework convention and the process for establishing a framework convention, if appropriate;

(c) Proposals for further actions to be taken.

3. The Working Group shall present its final report for consideration and decision by the Committee on Housing and Land Management at its seventy-second session in 2011 on a possible UNECE-wide legally binding instrument on affordable, healthy and ecological housing.

Composition

4. The Working Group is open-ended and shall be composed of experts/representatives to be nominated by the member States of the UNECE.

5. The secretariat of the Committee on Housing and Land Management will service the meetings of the Working Group to provide support to the Chair and to assist the Group as required to enable timely completion of its work.

¹ The previous name of the group was Working Group on a Possible Legally Binding Instrument on Affordable, Healthy and Ecological Housing in the UNECE region. For further information please see the report of the Committee on Housing and Land Management (ECE/HBP/167).

Chair

6. The Working Group will be led by a Chair. The Chair will guide the process and moderate the Group meetings. In preparing for the meetings and in follow-up, the Chair will work closely with the members of the Group and the Committee on Housing and Land Management secretariat.

Process and working methods

7. There will be at least three meetings of the Working Group. The Chair, with the support of the members of the Group and the Committee secretariat, will decide on the timing, duration, venue and agenda of the Group's meetings. The Working Group should also work through electronic means.

8. The Working Group should submit, through its Chair, regular reports to the meetings of the Bureau of the Committee on Housing and Land Management in the intersessional period.

9. The Working Group shall carry out its work under the auspices of the Committee on Housing and Land Management and build on the background paper on "Principles and Goals for Affordable, Healthy, and Ecological Housing", the UNECE Strategy for a Sustainable Quality of Life in Human Settlements in the Twenty-first Century and relevant policy guidelines and recommendations developed by the Committee on Housing and Land Management. The Working Group shall also take into account comments to the background paper on "Principles and Goals for Affordable, Healthy, and Ecological Housing" provided by member States at the seventy-first session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management.

In October 2011, at its seventy-second session the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management:

“(a) Extended the mandate of the Working Group to continue its work in 2012 to develop the scope (subject and geographical coverage), and objective(s) of a possible framework convention on sustainable housing;

(b) Agreed to change the current name of the Working Group to “Working Group on a Possible Framework Convention on Sustainable Housing”;

(c) Invited the participation of legal experts in the Working Group;

(d) Requested the secretariat to present the findings of the Working Group at the next session of the Committee in 2012.²”

² Report of Seventy-Second Session of the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management (ECE/HBP/167), paragraph 54, 2011.