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COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND LAND MANAGEMENT

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DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2007–2008

This note provides information to assist the Committee in establishing its programme of work, the duration of each activity, and its methods of work. The note takes into account related decisions of the Work Plan on UNECE Reform and the sixty-first session of the Commission. The Committee's Bureau met twice – in February and May 2006.

In conjunction with the sixty-seventh session of the Committee, a High-level Meeting will be held on 19 September 2006. The meeting will focus on two subjects related to the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals: (a) social and economic integration through human settlements development policies, and (b) management of the multi-family housing sector. The High-level Meeting will adopt a Declaration. The Committee may wish to bear in mind the outcome of the Meeting, as well as its Declaration, when discussing its programme of work.

The draft programme of work for 2007–2008 constitutes the main part of this document. When discussing its programme activities, the Committee may wish to keep in mind that the programme should reflect the real commitments of member countries and their willingness to contribute to the programme's implementation in terms of expertise and human and financial resources.

The annex to this document contains draft terms of reference for the Housing and Urban Management Advisory Network.

SUBPROGRAMME 10: HOUSING, LAND MANAGEMENT AND POPULATION

10.1.1 Country profiles on the housing sector

Description: The housing sector plays a critical role in ensuring the success of economic and social development in the UNECE region and the reform process in countries in transition. At the same time, the transition to a market economy has had a profound impact on housing policy implementation and management. This item of the Committee's programme of work enables Governments to analyse their housing policies, strategies and institutional and financial frameworks for the housing sector and to compare these with progress made internationally. The country profile is a process-oriented activity. At its core is an analytical study on the housing sector, drafted by international experts and members of the secretariat. Recommendations for improving policies and practices are an essential part of this activity. It also aims to provide housing-related information to potential investors.

Work accomplished: The country profiles on the housing sectors of Bulgaria, Poland, Slovakia, Lithuania, Romania, the Republic of Moldova, Albania, Armenia, the Russian Federation, and Serbia and Montenegro have been published. The preparation of the study on the housing sector of Azerbaijan was postponed because of an institutional reorganization in the country which took place in early 2006. The study for Georgia is under preparation; a research mission took place in May 2006.

The concept of the country profiles has been revised to strengthen the focus on thematic areas, which are of particular concern for the country under review. Another innovation is shortening the informative part of the study and strengthening the analytical component with conclusions and recommendations. Another new element is the organization of an inter-ministerial meeting in the host country, with a presentation of the main findings of the research mission. Such meetings are useful for strengthening coordination and cooperation between all stakeholders. Follow-up activities related to the implementation of the recommendations made in the country profiles were organized in Albania in 2004 and in Armenia in May 2005. The follow-up workshop in Albania was held to disseminate the results of the country profile study among relevant ministries, while the workshop in Armenia brought together all stakeholders to discuss and agree on priorities in preparation for the national housing policy framework.

Work to be undertaken: The Committee will continue its activities to prepare country profiles on the housing sector, also taking into account demographic aspects, through cooperation with the population unit of the secretariat. The research mission to Azerbaijan will take place once the responsibilities for the housing sector are clearly assigned among relevant authorities. Belarus, Ukraine, and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have expressed interest in having a country profile carried out. Further follow-up workshops and meetings of experts will be held to discuss the results of the studies and the implementation process. Cooperation with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Union, the World Bank will be maintained and strengthened. Especially important is the collaboration with UN-HABITAT to organize follow-up activities and work to implement related recommendations.

10.1.2 Improvement of urban environmental performance

Description: Cities and towns are efficient starting points for promoting sustainable quality of life. Numerous initiatives have already been launched in cities and towns to raise public awareness of the environmental impact of individual consumption behaviour, as well as to promote environmentally sound goods and services and sustainable use of energy, water, raw materials and land by individuals and communities. The spatial planning process focuses on a broad range of issues and factors, including social, economic, environmental, financial and cultural ones. It is important to develop an effective local planning process as an integral part of strategic national and regional development planning.

Work accomplished: A workshop on spatial planning systems at the local level was held in Warsaw on 19–21 June 2005 to discuss practical experiences with the functioning of spatial planning systems, bottlenecks and effective solutions and methods. The results of a questionnaire, case studies and lessons learned were reviewed during the workshop. The workshop also considered the extended outline for the study on spatial planning at the local level. A first meeting of the reference group on the study was held in Warsaw on 22 June 2005, and the second meeting was held in Geneva in January 2006. The Tenth Conference on Urban and Regional Research took place in Bratislava (Slovakia) on 22 and 23 May 2006. The conference was organized in conjunction with the Council of Europe's Conference of Ministers Responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT). The basic objective of the conference was to use the results of research for guidance on what practical steps should be taken to deliver more viable cities. The conference explored and discussed the driving forces of successful contemporary cities and the merits of polycentricity as a means to redistribute urban energies at the regional level.

Work to be undertaken: With the assistance of a reference group, a consultant will prepare a study on spatial planning at the local level, also taking into account the results of the Tenth Conference on Urban and Regional Research. The Committee will consider its possible involvement in the UNECE/WHO Pan-European Programme on Environment, Health and Transport (THE PEP). In this context, a workshop on sustainable transport and land-use planning will be held in Georgia in October 2006.

10.1.3 Land registration and land markets

Description: Proper land registration is crucial for security of tenure and property rights, effective housing policies and the promotion of reforms in economies in transition, as well as in the context of European integration and implementation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The activity is aimed at providing assistance to countries in transition in reforming cadastral and land registration systems and sharing information and experience regarding the modernization of land administration systems in the more advanced economies through education and training; research and development; exchange of experience; transfer of technology; and standardization.

Work accomplished: The fourth session of the Working Party on Land Administration was held in Geneva on 21 and 22 November 2005. The study *Land Administration in the UNECE Region: Development Trends and Main Principles* was prepared in 2005 (ECE/HBP/140), and the

delegation of the Russian Federation arranged for the translation of the study into Russian. The Working Party on Land Administration also prepared a study on public/private partnerships in land administration. An international team of experts undertook a land administration review of Lithuania, which was published in 2005 (HBP/WP.7/2005/3). A research mission for the land administration review of Azerbaijan was held in May 2006. A workshop on institutional aspects of land administration was held in Tbilisi (Georgia) in May 2005.

Work to be undertaken: A workshop on land administration and e-society will be held in Prague (Czech Republic) on 26 and 27 October 2006; a workshop on land administration and informal settlements will be held in Athens (Greece) on 28–30 March 2007; and a workshop on sustainable land management will be held in Munich (Germany) on 24 and 25 May 2007. It is expected that a study on informal settlements will be initiated after the workshop in Greece. The team of international experts will finalize the land administration report on Azerbaijan by the end of 2006. It is expected that Latvia will be the next country to undertake a land administration review (in 2007). The fifth session of the Working Party will be held in autumn 2007. Cooperation with key partners, such as the World Bank, the Permanent Committee on Cadastre in the European Union and EuroGeographics, will be further developed.

10.1.4 Housing modernization and management

Description: This activity mainly aims to identify and provide tools for tackling problems related to the housing stock and its management. Housing systems are an important factor in safeguarding social cohesion in the UNECE countries. The activity also provides an opportunity to look at urban renewal policies and at existing and emerging housing problems, especially regarding housing financing. As a result of privatization in countries in transition, the proportion of owner-occupied dwellings in multi-family housing has increased considerably. It is therefore important to establish property rights, define mixed ownership, and establish a legal and institutional framework for operating housing condominiums. This programme element also focuses on the basic mechanisms for social housing development.

Work accomplished: The study on *Housing Finance Systems for Countries in Transition* (ECE/HBP/138) and *Guidelines on Social Housing* (ECE/HBP/137) were published. The Committee and its Bureau promoted the practical application of the *Guidelines on Condominium Ownership of Housing for Countries in Transition* (ECE/HBP/123) and widely disseminated it in countries in transition.

Work to be undertaken: A workshop on social housing will be held in Albania in 2007. The Committee will consider a project proposal on the management of the multi-family housing stock.

Annex**DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE OF
THE HOUSING AND URBAN MANAGEMENT ADVISORY NETWORK**

1. The Housing and Urban Management Advisory Network of the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management consists of experts from the private sector, financial institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), professional associations, research institutions and local authorities dealing with housing, spatial planning and land administration. On the recommendation of the Advisory Network, the Bureau of the Committee on Housing and Land Management invites these experts to become members of the Network in their personal capacity. The Advisory Network works in close cooperation with the secretariat and the Committee's Bureau and participates in its meetings. The objectives of the Advisory Network are to:

(a) Advise the Committee and UNECE member States on practical arrangements for the implementation of policy recommendations and specific activities to achieve optimal results in member countries;

(b) Assist the Committee in capacity-building activities and in dissemination of information, best practices and know-how in UNECE member countries in those specific policy areas which are the most important for practical activities and projects in individual countries;

(c) Expand the contacts of the Committee, the Bureau and the secretariat through networking with global and regional financial institutions, lender and donor organizations, NGOs and the business community, with a view to making the Committee's activities and its assistance to the UNECE member countries more efficient and practical; and

(d) Submit to the Committee an annual progress report.

2. The Network's activities have no financial implications for the United Nations.