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For the past 65 years, the Committee has focused on a comprehensive review of housing-related trends and policies. After the Second World War, its activities largely concentrated on the reconstruction of Europe. It then broadened its area of work, covering other aspects of housing that contribute to the formulation of housing policies in many of its member States. After 1960, urban planning and land use were incorporated into its work. In 1996, the Committee established the subsidiary body, *Meeting of Officials on Land Administration*, to specifically deal with issues related to land management and real estate markets. In 1999, this body was given the new name, *Working Party on Land Administration*.

In 2000 and 2006 the 56 UNECE member States articulated and affirmed their vision of the role of the Committee and the scope of its activities. The 2000 Ministerial meeting on Human Settlements reviewed and appraised the implementation of the Habitat Agenda in the ECE region as a contribution to the special session of the General Assembly, Istanbul +5 held in 2001. (See the Report on the Ministerial Meeting and the annexed Ministerial Declaration). The objective of the meeting was to foster discussion on the vision and direction of future work to improve housing and urban conditions in the ECE region. As an outcome, the Ministers and Heads of States adopted the "ECE Strategy for a Sustainable Quality of Life in Human Settlements in the 21st Century". This document is based on the provisions of the Habitat Agenda and Agenda 21, with particular emphasis on issues of common interest and concern for all countries of the ECE region.

The goal of the Committee, as outlined in the strategy is **“to promote the sustainable development of human settlements in the ECE region while fostering economic and social prosperity and supporting democratic governance”**. The strategy’s goals and challenges were validated in 2006 when the Ministerial Declaration on Social and Economic Challenges in Distressed Urban Areas was adopted. This document considers that **“significant challenges have also been noticed in Western Europe”** and that **“Informal settlements and distressed urban areas reflect a lack of planning and adequate housing policies.”** The adopted 2006 Ministerial Declaration, along with the 2000 Strategy, guide the Committee’s work and reflect the experience, needs and approaches shaped by six decades of cooperation amongst the ECE Housing and Land Management community. To support this work: the Real Estate Advisory Group (2007) and the ad hoc Working Group on a Possible Framework Convention on Sustainable Housing (2010) have been established.

Since then, the Committee has further broadened its activities to better tackle **the emerging challenges** in the region on which **the housing sector has a great impact** such as: **climate change mitigation and adaptation**; **real estate market stability, informal settlements**. In order to better address all these issues and to identify the future actions needed, the Committee decided that the next Ministerial meeting will be held in 2013 (See Report of 72nd session).