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Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Work of the Bureau of the Committee on Housing and Land Management

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Recommendations of the Bureau on current and future work of the Committee on Housing and Land Management

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This note is based on the reports of the meetings of the Bureau of the Committee on Housing and Land management (CHLM) held in Geneva on 28 November 2012, 19 February 2013, 21 April 2013 and 22 May 2013. It reports on the work of the Bureau which is relevant to the work of the Committee and the future programme of work. It provides information supporting the annotated provisional agenda of the meeting (ECE/HBP/172) and the draft programme of work for 2014-2015 (ECE/HBP/2013/10), as well as implementation of the programme of work for 2012-2013 (ECE/HBP/2011/1).

I. Bureau meeting, 28 November 2012, Geneva

A. Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management 2014–2020¹

1. Bureau members had an in-depth discussion on changes needed to the content of the Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management. The first draft of the document (ECE/HBP/2012/3) was discussed at the seventy-third session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management. The Committee approved the structure of the Strategy and entrusted the Bureau with its further development.² In this regard, the Bureau discussed the content of the document. In particular, it decided to change the vision of the Strategy as well as the objectives and targets under each programme element.

2. Bureau members took into account the outcomes of the survey on “Challenges and Priorities on Housing and Land Management” (ECE/HBP/2013/2) as useful background information for the further development of the Strategy (ECE/HBP/2013/3) as well as for the preparation of the future programme of work for 2014-2015 (ECE/HBP/2013/10).

B. Preparation of the Committee’s Programme of Work 2014 – 2015

3. Bureau members discussed the programme of work priorities based on the outcomes of discussions held at a retreat in which they participated in July 2012 as well as on the outcomes of a survey (ECE/HBP/2013/2). In particular, the Bureau considered the following topics as being the highest priorities for the work of the Committee:

- Under the programme element, “Sustainable housing and real estate markets”:
 - Energy efficiency in housing;
 - Maintenance, management and refurbishment of the existing housing stock;
 - Housing affordability, social housing and low cost housing.
- Under the programme element, “Sustainable urban development”:
 - Resilience of cities to disasters;
 - Compact cities (increasing density and efficiency of urban areas);
 - Smart cities initiative, which addresses information, communication and technology in urban planning;
 - Low carbon cities and climate neutral development in cities.
- Under the programme element, “Land administration and management” the topic of “land registration” was considered as the highest priority. Bureau members asked

¹ Previously the document was named “Strategy and Targets for Sustainable Housing and Land Management” (ECE/HBP/2012/3). On 21 May, at its informal meeting the Committee on Housing and Land Management decided to take out “targets” from the title, since this was only one of the elements that the document contained, such as vision and objectives. The report is available at: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/sessions/docs2013/prep_mtg.report.pdf

² Report of the seventy-third session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management (ECE/HBP/170) available at: <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/2012/ece.hbp.170.e.pdf>

the secretariat to request an input from the Bureau of the Working Party on the priorities under this programme element.

- Under the programme element, “Country profiles on housing and land management”:
 - Development of Country Profiles based upon requests from Governments;
 - Monitoring of the implementation of the country profile recommendations;
 - Technical model projects to support the implementation of the recommendations.

4. Bureau members requested the secretariat to prepare a draft programme of work for 2014-2015 taking into account the above mentioned priority topics of work.

C. Follow-up to the outcomes of the seventy-third session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management

5. Bureau members considered the plan of activities and the calendar of meetings to be held in 2012 – 2013. In particular, the meeting discussed the preparations of the Second Housing Forum Europe and Central Asia to take place on 22-24 April 2013 in Geneva. Bureau members agreed to organize three seminars on the following topics- energy efficiency, informal settlements and disaster resilience.

6. In addition, Bureau members discussed the activities of the internal interdivisional group on sustainable urban development. This group consists of representatives from the ECE’s subprogrammes on: Economic Cooperation, Environment, Forestry and Timber, Housing and Land Management, Population, Statistics, Sustainable Energy, Trade and Transport. Coordination of work is provided by the Housing and Land Management Unit. Future joint activities could include the organization of seminars and conferences, the provision of advisory services and the preparation of guidelines and publications.

7. The Bureau discussed possible cooperation with strategic partners, such as UN-Habitat, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), etc. They also considered cooperation with UN-Habitat on the development of the State of Eurasian Cities reports for 2014 and 2016.

D. Information on the preparations for the Ministerial Meeting 2013

8. Bureau members approved the invitation letter to be sent to the Ministers together with an information note, guidelines for the speakers and the provisional programme for the Ministerial Meeting to take place on 8 October.

9. Bureau members discussed how the secretariat should proceed with the request of the seventy-third session of the Committee, “to collect national reports on the housing and land management situations in member States”.³ It was agreed that a template containing a questionnaire would be sent to ECE member State, once approved by the Committee. Since the Working Party is preparing a detailed Benchmarking study on land administration, the reports will focus on housing and urban development. Bureau members agreed that such a

³ Report on the seventy-third session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management (ECE/HBP/170, paragraph 29).

study could be an input of the Committee to the Habitat III Conference to take place in 2016.

10. The Bureau suggested that it could be helpful if, in the future, the Committee were to issue a comparative study on the housing situation in the ECE region. However, they agreed that such a study would require commonly accepted indicators. In this regard, there could be a necessity to set up a Working Group, if the Committee agrees, which could have for its scope to agree on the indicators. The Bureau agreed that the development of such a study should be postponed until after the Ministerial Meeting.

II. Bureau meeting, 19 February 2013, Geneva

A. Information on the preparations for the Ministerial Meeting 2013

11. The secretariat informed the Bureau that the Executive Committee of the Economic Commission for Europe (EXCOM) had formally approved the Ministerial Meeting on 24 January 2013. Following the decision of EXCOM, the secretariat sent the invitation letters to the Ministers and high level officials in charge of housing, land managements and/or urban development on 31 January 2013 through their respective Permanent Representatives in Geneva. It was further agreed that the secretariat would follow up on future possible Government changes in member States and, if necessary, would resend invitation letters to the relevant Ministers.

12. Bureau members also requested that the secretariat start preparing the template questionnaire for the national reports on housing and urban development. In addition, it was agreed that the secretariat would prepare draft outlines of the two publications to contain respectively, the national reports and the Ministerial statements. These outlines were to be presented at the seventy-fourth session of the Committee for its consideration.⁴ In addition, the possibility of having the two publications available only online was considered, as this would reduce the costs related to their printing.

13. The secretariat presented the planned side events to take place back-to-back to the Ministerial Meeting and the Committee's session. The Bureau agreed that, if sufficient funds are not available, it could be necessary to cancel some of the events.

14. Also, Bureau members emphasized the importance of starting the negotiations on a Framework Convention on Sustainable Housing in the ECE region as soon as possible. The secretariat explained that EXCOM would discuss this matter only after the sixty-fifth session of the Commission to take place in April 2013. Bureau members emphasized it was critical for such a decision to be made as soon as possible so that there is enough preparatory time for the meetings of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee as well as for the seventy-fourth session and the Ministerial Meeting.

B. Strategy 2014 – 2020

15. The Bureau discussed the revised text of the Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management for the period 2014-2020. The secretariat updated the document after: the Bureau meeting in November; the stakeholders meeting, the joint meeting of the Bureaux of the Committee and of the Working Party on Land Administration

⁴ These publications were requested by the Committee. Please see the report on the seventy-third session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management (ECE/HBP/170, paragraph 29).

(18-19 February 2013). Furthermore, the Bureau of the Working Party had sent additional comments to the objectives and targets under the topic of Land Management, which were also presented to the meeting.

16. Bureau members revised the updated draft text of the Strategy, including its introduction, objectives and targets. It was agreed that these revisions would be reflected in the draft text of the Strategy accordingly and sent to the Bureau for comments. After that, the secretariat would reflect these comments and would share the draft version of the document with all ECE member States via e-mail.

17. The meeting reaffirmed that, as agreed at the stakeholders meeting on 19 February, due to the fact that the Strategy would be presented to the Ministers for adoption on 8 October, it would be necessary to convene an informal session of the Committee in May or June. This would allow discussions of the final draft of this document to take place well before the Ministerial.

III. Bureau meeting, 21 April 2013, Geneva

A. Activities of the Working Party on Land Administration

18. The Chair of the Working Party on Land Administration presented the outcomes of the eight session of the Working Party, as well the results of a workshop on, “Land Administration in Central Asia”, which took place in Bishkek on 19-20 March, back to back with the Working Party session. He also reported on the preparations for the workshop on, “Collaborating for secured ownership”, to take place in Uppsala, Sweden on 29-31 May.

19. The Bureau welcomed the request for a country profile on land management received from the Government of Kazakhstan.

20. In addition, the meeting was reminded that, according to the ECE guidelines (ECE/EX/1), the mandate of a Working Party is reviewed by its parent body every five years. Although, the mandate of the Working Party on Land Administration was extended at the seventy-second session of the Committee in 2011, there might be a need to reconfirm the mandate further to the ECE 2013 review process. The Bureau agreed, if need be, this information could be reflected under item 5(c) “Land Administration and Management” of the provisional annotated agenda for the session.

B. ECE Strategy 2014 – 2020

21. The Bureau discussed the provisional agenda for the preparatory meeting on 21-22 May 2013. The meeting had been planned in order for member States to finalize the draft Strategy before it would be presented to the seventy-fourth session and the Ministerial Meeting.

22. The secretariat informed the Bureau that comments were received from ECE Environment Division after the deadline. Since the document was already distributed to member States, these suggestions were not reflected in the present draft of the document. At the same time, these comments would be presented at the preparatory meeting for discussion.

23. Bureau members agreed that these and other comments received after the deadline could be presented at the preparatory meeting for discussion and approval of the Committee.

C. Preparations for the Ministerial Meeting and the seventy-fourth session

24. Bureau members requested the secretariat to reflect under item 5(d) of the provisional annotated agenda for the session (ECE/HBP/172) their concern about possible overlaps with other organizations on tasks such as the development of the country profiles on housing and land management for the ECE region. It was noted that these studies have been developed under the flag of ECE since 1996. In this regard, Bureau members requested the secretariat to add in the provisional agenda an invitation to the Committee to elaborate recommendations on the development of the country profiles and to clarify the ECE mandate in this area.

IV. Bureau meeting, 22 May 2013, Geneva

A. Activities of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group (REM)

25. Bureau members discussed the draft decision on the renewal of the mandate of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group to be taken by the Committee at its seventy-fourth session⁵. In order to assess the work of the Advisory Group, the Committee would be presented with a report of the activities and accomplishments of the Advisory Group since the seventy-second session.⁶

1. Overview of activities, draft terms of reference and programme of work of REM

26. Bureau members discussed and approved the overview of activities of the Advisory Group (ECE/HBP/2013/4). They also reiterated the importance of the work of the Advisory Group and their support for the continuation of their activities for the next two years. At the same time, Bureau members provided the following guidelines for the future work of the Advisory Group:

- The Real Estate Market Advisory Group shall support the work of the Committee and the Working Party on topics requested by these bodies and is not to operate independently of these bodies;
- The Advisory Group should not undertake any activities not specifically approved by the Committee or its Bureaux;
- Workshops, seminars and round-tables of the Advisory Group should be organized only if requested by a member State and subsequently approved by the Committee or its Bureau;
- Members of the Advisory Group shall not request funding from Governments for current or proposed ECE activities without the consent of the Committee or its Bureau;
- The Committee will decide the membership of the group at its annual sessions;
- The servicing of the Advisory Group should take a minimum of secretariat time and resources.

⁵ See the ECE guidelines for establishment of Teams of Specialists (ECE/EX/2/Rev.1) and the report of the Bureau meeting of 21 April 2013

⁶ The decision of the Committee will be presented to the Executive Committee of ECE (EXCOM) for approval

27. The Bureau discussed also the draft terms of reference of the Advisory Group (ECE/HBP/2013/5), as well its draft programme of work for 2014-2015 (ECE/HBP/2-13/6). The meeting requested the secretariat to update these documents according to the above guidelines and to send them to the Bureau for final comments and approval before finalizing the documents for the seventy-fourth session of the Committee.

2. Draft studies to be prepared by the Advisory Group

28. The Bureau discussed the draft of the guidelines on real estate risk rating. The secretariat reported that several groups of real estate stakeholders, including the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and the International Valuation Standards Council, had expressed concerns with the opinions expressed in the current draft. Additional experts were being sought to provide input to the guidelines in order to better reflect various points of view on the subject.

29. The Bureau was presented information on the status of the development of guidelines for greening the real estate market as requested by the Committee at its seventy-third session. As part of the study, a questionnaire had been prepared in cooperation with the International Real Estate Federation (FIABCI) and sent to qualified real estate companies, associations and professionals; the secretariat presented preliminary results based on the 284 responses received thus far. In addition, a review and comparison of 30 worldwide certification systems for green buildings was being drafted; the secretariat presented an outline of this study. The following additional work would be carried out by the Advisory Group:

- The collection of additional survey responses;
- The expansion of the analysis of rating systems to include a more-in depth focus on those systems prevalent in ECE;
- The preparation of recommendations regarding follow up actions and the development of ECE standards.

30. Bureau requested that the focus of the study be on risk rating for housing. They requested that, when the Advisory Group prepares studies, they should present to the Committee proposals for the specific methodology to be used when carrying out the study before proceeding. They also requested that the Committee or its Bureau approve draft materials such as questionnaires before they are sent out.

B. Outcomes of the Preparatory Meeting of the Committee on Housing and Land Management

31. The Bureau revised the draft Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management 2014-2020 (ECE/HBP/2013/3) following the discussions at the preparatory meeting on 21 May 2013, where the Committee agreed on the text and title.

32. The Bureau requested the secretariat to edit and finalize the document for the Ministerial Meeting, where it is planned to be adopted.

C. Second Europe and Central Asia Housing Forum

33. The Bureau discussed the possibilities for cooperation with the ECE Convention on Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents as an outcome of the seminar (hub-session) on "Building safer homes in safer places: approaches to preventing risks from industrial sites to housing and land". This seminar took place as part of the Second Housing Forum for Europe and Central Asia and recommended to the Committee that it include the topic of

industrial accidents if it decides, at some time in the future, to update the guidelines on spatial planning. Bureau members took note of the information provided.

D. Preparations for the Ministerial Meeting and the seventy-fourth session of the Committee

1. Ministerial Meeting

(a) Participation, communications and side events

34. The Bureau discussed the possibility of having exposition stands to show the work of different organization, as well as of member States that might be interested in presenting their work during the seventy-fourth session and the Ministerial Meeting. Bureau members also suggested that the video exhibit of sustainable buildings be projected on a screen in front of the Meeting room.

(b) Publications

35. The Bureau was presented, for its consideration, with the draft outline of an electronic publication to contain statements delivered by Ministers at the Meeting on 8 October. The meeting approved this outline. Bureau members requested that the publication also be printed, if possible.

36. Bureau members were presented with a template to be sent to member States in order to collect national reports on housing and urban development, as well as an outline of the publication to contain these reports (ECE/HBP/2013/9). The publication will be elaborated as an outcome of the Ministerial Meeting. The Bureau approved this document and requested the secretariat to present it to the seventy-fourth session for approval before collecting the reports from member States.

2. Session of the Committee

(a) Composition of the Bureau

37. Bureau members expressed concern on the period of terms of office in the outcome document of the 2005 ECE review, which limited the terms of office to 4 years. The meeting discussed the possibility of the Committee adopting its own rules of procedure at its seventy-fifth session in order to avoid such a limitation to the terms of office. Bureau members requested that the secretariat reflects this matter on the agenda for the seventy-fourth session under the item on "Election of the Bureau".

(b) Country profiles

38. The Bureau agreed that the secretariat would send for its approval the draft guidelines for the methodology for the country profiles. This document is planned to be approved at the seventy-fourth session and will guide the preparation of country profiles in the future.

39. The Bureau was informed that:

(a) The draft Country Profile of Ukraine had been sent to the Government for its approval and comments and that it was planned to have the publication printed for the seventy-fourth session;

(b) The pre-mission for the Country Profile of the Republic of Moldova would take place in August 2013;

(c) The launch event for the Country Profile of Tajikistan took place on 13-17 May as part of the National Policy Dialogue on Sustainable Urban Development, Housing and Land Management.

(d). Other official documents

40. The Chair of the Working Party on Land Administration, presented the report of the activities of the Working Party since the seventy-second session (ECE/HBP/2013/7).

41. The secretariat presented the following documents: draft programme of work for 2014-2015 for housing and land management (ECE/HBP/2013/10), biennial evaluation plan (ECE/HBP/2013/11) and the list of publications (ECE/HBP/2013/12).

42. Bureau members approved these documents to be presented to the Committee at its seventy-fourth session.

E. Any other business

43. Bureau members welcomed the initiatives for cooperation with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), especially because disaster resilience and reduction was considered as highly important for ECE member States according to the recently conducted survey on challenges and priorities on housing and land management in the region (ECE/HBP/2013/2).

44. Bureau members identified that another priority topic identified from the results of the survey was “smart cities”. In this regard, the Bureau welcomed the funding proposal from the secretariat for a study on smart cities based on the work of the ECE interdivisional team on sustainable urban development.

45. The Bureau members also welcomed the announcement of the Fourth International Forum: Energy for Sustainable Development to take place on 17 - 19 September 2013.
