



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
30 October 2013

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Housing and Land Management

Seventy-fourth session
Geneva, 7–9 October 2013

Report of the Committee on Housing and Land Management on its seventy-fourth session

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	1–11	3
A. Attendance	2–4	3
B. Adoption of the Agenda.....	5	3
C. Organizational matters	6–11	3
II. Follow-up to the sixty-fifth session of ECE	12	4
III. Work of the Bureau of the Committee on Housing and Land Management	13–14	4
IV. Strategy 2014-2020	15–18	4
V. Review of the implementation of the programme of work 2012-2013	19–62	5
A. Sustainable housing and real estate markets	20–34	5
B. Sustainable urban development	25–40	6
C. Land administration and management	41–51	7
D. Country profiles on housing and land management	52–62	8
VI. Ministerial meeting	63–91	9
A. Opening of the Ministerial and adoption of the agenda.....	63–65	9
B. Review of the progress made and future challenges in housing and land management	66–89	9
1. Housing	66–78	9
2. Land management	79–83	10
3. Urban development	84–89	11
C. Adoption of the Strategy 2014-2020	90	11

D.	Closing of the Ministerial Meeting	91	11
VII.	Outcomes of the Ministerial Meeting.....	92–95	12
VIII.	Programme of Work for 2014-2015	96–108	12
IX.	Inter-divisional and inter-agency activities	109–115	13
X.	Other business	116	14
XI.	Election of the Bureau.....	117–118	14
XII.	Closing of the session.....	119–121	14
Annex 1	Speakers at the Ministerial meeting		15
Annex 2	Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region for the period 2014-2020		17

I. Introduction

1. The Committee on Housing and Land Management held its seventy-fourth session from 7 to 9 October in Geneva.

A. Attendance

2. Representatives of the following countries participated: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uzbekistan.

3. Representatives of the following United Nations programmes and specialized agencies attended the session: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).

4. Representatives of the following intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations also attended the session: le Comité Européen de Coordination de l'Habitat Social (CECODHAS Housing Europe), International Federation of Surveyors, International Union of Tenants, Habitat for Humanity, National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO), Norwegian Refugee Council, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, International Council of Women (ICW), National Water Partnership of Georgia and the United Nations Foundation. Private-sector representatives, experts and academics from universities and research institutions also attended the session.

B. Adoption of the Agenda

5. The Chair of the Committee, Mr. Wolfgang Förster (Austria), presented the provisional agenda (ECE/HBP/172), which was adopted with the following changes to the order of the items to be discussed: Item 3 (Work of the Bureau of the Committee on Housing and Land Management) and Item 4 (Strategy 2014-2020) of the provisional agenda were moved to after Item 5 (Review of the implementation of the programme of work 2012-2013); and the discussion of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group, under Item 5(a), was moved to the second day of the session on 9 October 2013.

C. Organizational Matters

6. The Chair opened the meeting.

7. The Chair reported that 240 delegates had registered for the meeting.

8. The Chair also noted that 7 October 2013 was World Habitat Day, and invited participants to a lunchtime press conference and reception as well as a cocktail reception to be held that day. He also thanked the Government of Canada for sponsoring these events.

9. UNECE Executive Secretary, Mr. Sven Alkalaj, welcomed the participants and highlighted the main issues to be covered during the session, including the draft Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region for the Period 2014–2020.

10. He also announced the World Habitat Day celebration to be held at the exhibition of “Disaster Relief Homes” from the ECE region. The exhibit was organized in front of the Palais des Nations from 10 September to 10 October. As part of the exhibition, houses provided by Canada and Estonia showcased some of the most recent developments in low-cost, quick-build, short-term housing for those displaced by disasters.

11. Ms. Margareta Wahlström, United Nations Special Representative on Disaster Risk Reduction, delivered a keynote speech outlining the progress made and remaining challenges in disaster risk reduction. She noted the importance of preventing or mitigating the effects of environmental or human-caused disasters, which can very negatively affect lives in both developed and developing countries. She also noted: the importance of exchanging experiences in improving national capacities; the importance of attracting private-sector investment to disaster preparedness infrastructure; and cooperation in preparing for disasters for which the effects cross national boundaries. She invited the Committee to cooperate with UNISDR to help member States to better prepare for potential disasters.

II. Follow-up to the sixty-fifth session of ECE

12. The Executive Secretary reported on the results of the review of the Committee’s work by the UNECE Executive Committee. The Committee was evaluated as producing useful, concrete results and it was recommended that it continue its work. The Executive Secretary thanked the members of the Committee for their support during this evaluation process.

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

13. The Chair of the Bureau reported on its work since the seventy-third session of the Committee, including its meetings (ECE/HBP/2013/1).

14. The Committee took note of this information.

IV. Strategy 2014-2020

15. The secretariat presented the report “Challenges and Priorities in Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region” (ECE/HBP/2013/2). The Committee took note of this information.

16. The secretariat presented the “Draft strategy for sustainable housing and land management in the ECE region for the period 2014 - 2020” (ECE/HBP/2012/3), which had been requested by the Committee at its seventy-third session.

17. The Chair thanked all of those who had contributed to the preparation of the Strategy.

18. The Committee took note of the information provided and recommended the draft strategy for adoption at the Ministerial Meeting.

V. Review of the implementation of the programme of work 2012-2013

19. The Committee reviewed progress made in the implementation of the programme of work for the period 2012-2013, approved at its seventy-second session (ECE/HBP/2011/1).

A. Sustainable housing and real estate markets

20. During a thematic discussion panel on the topic "Energy efficiency in housing" (informal notice 3), a representative of the Institute for Urban Economics presented the draft publication "Good Practices for Energy-efficient Housing in the ECE region" (informal notice 2), requested by the Committee at its seventy-third session. The publication was prepared jointly by UN-Habitat and the City of Vienna, Austria. Representatives of the United Nations Foundation and civil society participated in the discussion.

21. During this thematic discussion, other speakers highlighted the principle challenges and opportunities to increase energy efficiency in multi-family housing blocks, as well as the main lessons learned by countries with economies in transition in the UNECE region. Speakers emphasized the need for: awareness-raising among property owners; effective property management; and appropriate legislation and financial instruments to implement energy efficiency measures. Speakers further noted that financial and legal barriers were the primary obstacles to implementing energy-efficiency measures. In addition, speakers stressed the benefits of energy savings for improving the quality of life and fighting energy poverty and; therefore, the importance of related awareness rising, training and capacity building. Speakers further highlighted that energy-efficiency measures were the least costly way to meet society's energy needs.

22. Based on this information, the Committee was invited to make recommendations for future activities to encourage energy-efficient housing.

23. The secretariat reported on the status of national and regional training workshops on energy efficient and affordable housing. The workshops originally planned for the past year in Armenia and Kyrgyzstan did not take place due to a lack of funding; the workshop in Armenia will be held in 2014 and financed by the United Nations Development Fund.

24. Member States were invited to propose the organisation of training workshops in their countries or to support workshops in other countries financially or by providing experts in energy efficiency.

25. The delegation of Georgia reported on the status of the development of a national action plan for energy-efficiency measures in the residential sector of Georgia, to be based on the, *Action Plan for Energy-Efficient Housing in the UNECE Region* (ECE/HBP/164).

26. The delegation of Georgia also reported on a national workshop on energy-efficient housing that was organised by the Government of Georgia with the support of ECE on 19 September 2013, in order to discuss the major challenges that they face in developing an energy-efficient housing-sector. Once funding can be identified, the results from this workshop will be used as input to the Government in establishing the next steps for developing a draft National Action Plan.

27. The representative of Georgia expressed the continued interest of the Government in the development of a national action plan for energy efficiency in Georgia, subject to the availability of funding, and thanked the Committee and the secretariat for their support in planning the development of an action plan and the national workshop.

28. Other delegations were invited to express their interest in having a national action plan on energy-efficient housing prepared for their country.

29. To continue providing ECE member States with high-quality and effective policy advice on energy efficiency, even in times of limited financial resources, the secretariat has created an informal expert network for energy efficiency in buildings. The Committee was informed about the objectives of this informal network and was invited to nominate experts.

30. The Committee:

- Took note of this information.
- Approved the publication on good practices in energy efficient housing in the residential sector.
- Invited member States and international partner organizations to provide support for the implementation of training workshops and the development of national action plans on energy efficiency in the residential sector, including for Georgia.

31. A representative of academia noted the importance of work to promote affordable housing.

32. The Chair of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group and the secretariat informed the Committee about the work undertaken by the Advisory Group since the seventy-third session as well as activities planned for 2014-2015.

33. The Committee expressed their appreciation for the work of the Advisory Group, including their work on the studies of real-estate risk rating systems (informal notice 5) and greening the real estate markets (informal notice 4), and took note of the information provided in these studies.

34. The Committee discussed the renewal of the mandate of the Advisory Group as well as its terms of reference. Several delegations expressed a desire to see the membership in the Advisory Group enlarged and its role and activities more closely linked to the work the Committee and the Working Party. In this regard, the Committee agreed to recommend to EXCOM the renewal of the mandate of the Advisory Group for one year and, meanwhile, to entrust the Bureau with drafting new terms of reference to be adopted at the seventy-fifth session of the Committee.

B. Sustainable urban development

35. The secretariat reported on ECE participation in workshops related to smart cities and on proposals to the Committee to hold smart-cities related events in 2014-2015, including workshops to promote smart-city concepts. Guidelines for developing smart cities were identified as a priority in the report "Challenges and Priorities in Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region" (ECE/HBP/2013/2)

36. The representative of St. Petersburg University made a presentation on how the smart-city concept can be applied to cities to reduce risk and mitigate the effects of disasters and climate change.

37. A thematic discussion was held on ageing and accessibility in cities (informal notice 6). Speakers discussed current and future demographic trends in the wider European region and how these will affect housing demand and the urban infrastructures. The discussion emphasized the changing needs of an ageing society in the region. Challenges discussed included the provision of affordable housing for the elderly and increasing building accessibility. The discussion explored solutions implemented by national and local governments to accommodate an aging population. These included changes in the housing

stock, for example, through the use of universal design, as well as awareness programmes to encourage a healthier lifestyle for older people.

38. It was noted that the ECE has a subprogramme dedicated to helping ECE member States create policies to respond to demographic change, including an ageing population.

39. Representatives of Denmark, the ECE, the City of Vienna and civil society participated in the discussion.

40. The Committee took note of this information.

C. Land administration and management

41. The Chair of the Working Party on Land Administration introduced the role of the Working Party and reported on its activities carried out since the last session of the Committee (ECE/HBP/2013/7).

42. In particular, the Chair reported on the eighth session of the Working Party (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2013/6), held in Kyrgyzstan on 18 March 2013.

43. He also reported on the session “How can property registration help in post financial-crisis recovery”, organized by the Working Party as part of the World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty held from 8 to 11 April 2013 in Washington, D.C.

44. An important new development was the formation of task groups of Bureau members in order to more efficiently carry out the work of the Bureau.

45. The delegation of Ireland reported on the benchmarking study of land administration systems and on the publication to follow from this study (informal notice 7).

46. The Committee was informed about the outcomes of Working Party workshops held since the seventy-third session, including:

- “Supporting Global Economic Recovery”, held in the United Kingdom from 10 to 13 October 2012.
- “Informal Development, Property and Housing” held in Greece on 13 and 14 December 2012.
- “Land Administration in Central Asia” held in Kyrgyzstan on 19 and 20 March 2013.
- “Collaborating for Secured Ownership” held in Sweden from 29 to 31 May 2013.

47. The Chair announced that in 2014-2015, workshops will be held in Denmark (May 2013), Austria (Fall 2014) and Azerbaijan (Fall 2015). An additional workshop may be held in a location to be determined.

48. The delegation of Ukraine reported on the status of land administration and land management reforms in Ukraine.

49. The Chair of the Working Party invited input from the meeting to the future work of the Working Party.

50. The delegation from Ukraine expressed an interest in hosting a workshop on land policy in Ukraine in cooperation with the Working Party in Spring 2015.

51. The Committee:

- Took note of this information.

- Approved the publication of the study on the benchmarking of land administration systems.

D. Country profiles on housing and land management

52. The secretariat presented draft guidelines for the preparation of country profile studies, which had been prepared upon the request of the Committee, made at its seventy-third session (ECE/HBP/2013/8).

53. The secretariat reported that one outcome of this study was the importance of developing national action plans to help countries to follow-up on country profile recommendations.

54. The chair invited suggestions from the meeting on activities related to the production of country profiles.

55. The delegation of Ukraine presented the draft country profile on housing and land management for Ukraine (ECE/HBP/176) and its key recommendations.

56. The delegation of the Republic of Moldova reported on the progress made in researching and developing the planned country profile for the Republic of Moldova.

57. The delegation of Tajikistan reported progress made in implementing the recommendations in the country profile for Tajikistan (ECE/HBP/163).

58. The delegations of Croatia reported on the progress made in the preparation of the proposed country profile for that country and on Croatia's continued interest in this project even though it could not provide funding for the profile.

59. The delegations of Armenia requested the preparation of a new country profile for that country.

60. The Chair reported that Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation also had requested country profiles for these countries. In addition, the secretariat had been informed that Latvia would be submitting a request in the near future. The Chair further noted that in spite of the interest by many countries in having country profiles, they could only be prepared if extrabudgetary funds became available.

61. It was noted that, while country profiles exist for Armenia, Moldova and the Russian Federation, new profiles had been requested due to the changes in policies and institutions that had occurred since the profiles were issued.

62. The Committee:

- Approved the draft guidelines on the preparation of country profiles on housing and land management (ECE/HBP/2013/8);
- Approved the country profile on housing and land management for Ukraine and its publication.
- Approved the preparation of country profiles for Armenia, Croatia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation, provided that extrabudgetary resources became available.

VI. Ministerial meeting¹

A. Opening of the Meeting and adoption of the agenda

63. The meeting adopted the agenda for the Meeting.
64. The Deputy Executive Secretary of ECE, Mr. Andrey Vasilyev, made opening remarks to the meeting on behalf of the Executive Secretary of ECE.
65. The Chair of the Committee reported on the objectives and expected outcomes of the Ministerial Meeting, including the discussion for possible approval of the Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management 2014-2020.

B. Review of the progress made and future challenges in housing and land management in ECE member States

1. Housing

66. Noting the important contributions of Norway and Slovakia to the work of the Committee, the Chair invited the delegates from these countries to co-chair the discussion on progress and challenges in housing, and they accepted.
67. Member State delegations discussed the challenges, progress made, and actions taken with regard to housing in their countries.
68. Delegations emphasized the importance of developing energy-efficient housing as part of an overall national energy strategy. This included setting standards for new residences as well as refurbishing existing residences. Many countries had state funds to support refurbishment, but the most important source of potential funding for these initiatives remained the private sector.
69. It was noted that, in many cases, even when population growth was low, the demand for housing was increasing. This resulted from higher incomes, smaller household sizes, and, sometimes, an influx of migrants or refugees. This increased demand often resulted in housing shortages and increased housing prices. Member States were meeting this challenge by attempting to encourage private sector investment in the housing sector.
70. At the same time, it was noted that growth in the housing stock had to be well-planned. The 2008 crisis had shown that an over-reliance on housing development to stimulate the economy combined with unsustainable financing methods could have very negative economic effects and, in some countries, there were still undesirably high levels of mortgage debt.
71. In a number of countries, the increase in demand described above, and resulting price increases, had created a serious problems of access to housing for the poor and other vulnerable groups. This challenge was being met with a combination of state-funded programmes and efforts to attract private sector investment in more affordable housing.
72. Member States also discussed informal settlements, which posed a major housing challenge in some areas of the ECE region. Informal settlements are largely unregulated, the resulting housing cannot be bought or sold in the formal housing market and the land in question cannot be used to its full potential as a resource for growth. To address this issue,

¹ Annex 1 contain all speakers which delivered a statement during Ministerial Meeting 2013

several member States were pursuing regularization programmes in order to incorporate some of this informal housing into the formal economy.

73. In some countries with formally centrally planned economies, it was noted that developing efficient management systems for multi-family dwellings and communal properties remained a challenge.

74. Some member States reported on the negative effects of natural disasters on citizens and homes, and noted the importance of developing disaster-resilient housing as well as improved land management and urban planning.

75. In particular, the Russian Federation highlighted the impact of the floods in the Russian Federation from July to September 2013. These floods affected 8 million square kilometres of land and more than 120,000 people and damaged approximately 12,000 residential buildings in the Russian Far East Federal District. In a number of cities, the water level was up to nine meters high.

76. A number of delegations referred to their countries' cooperation with international organizations in order to improve their housing sector. These programmes included partnerships: with UNISDR to improve disaster preparedness; with the United Nations Development Programme to improve housing energy efficiency; and with the ECE to identify priority areas for improvement in housing and land management.

77. Several member States expressed their support for the Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region 2014-2020 (ECE/HBP/2013/3).

78. Member States also emphasized the importance of participation in the international community in order to exchange experiences; and noted the role of the ECE in coordinating policy discussions and advising member States.

2. Land management

79. Noting the important contributions of Azerbaijan and Montenegro to the work of the Committee, the Chair invited the delegates from these countries to chair the discussions on progress and challenges in land administration and urban development, and they accepted.

80. Member State delegations discussed the challenges, progress made, and actions taken with regard to land management in their countries.

81. Member States reported significant changes to the structure and operation of land administration agencies in recent years. These organizations had increased the number of services and amount of data available online, often while streamlining their operations and reducing costs. The changing roles of the public and private sector in land registration and mapping were noted. This was, in part, due to the recent financial crisis, which had reduced Government budgets, leading, in some cases, to the outsourcing of some operations and services.

82. Several delegations reported changes in their formatting of geospatial reference data. In European Union countries, these changes were made to bring geospatial referencing in line with the requirements outlined in the Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (INSPIRE), established by directive 2007/2/EC of the European Parliament. In countries which recently established private-property ownership, these changes were made to standardize property boundaries and to create some of the basic data required for the regularization of informal settlements.

83. Member States also noted the importance of international cooperation and the importance of data interoperability between countries.

3. Urban development

84. Member State delegations discussed the challenges, progress made, and actions taken with regard to urban development in their countries.

85. Member States noted that effective spatial planning was essential for improving citizens' quality of life and developing sustainable housing; nonetheless, different spatial-planning approaches might be necessary for different countries, based on their unique socioeconomic conditions.

86. Planning for housing was highlighted as an essential component of spatial planning. Member States discussed how spatial planning policy was used in their countries to encourage energy-efficient housing, the modernization of building stock and the provision of affordable housing.

87. Urban sprawl was highlighted by a number of delegations as a problem for city management and a cause of diminishing agricultural land. New spatial planning policies were being developed to meet this challenge.

88. Several member States expressed support for the Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region 2014-2020 (ECE/HBP/2013/3). They also expressed appreciation for the work of the Committee in providing a platform to allow member States to discuss housing, land management and spatial planning.

89. The representative from the International Council of Women noted that adequate and appropriate housing and spatial planning that took into account the needs of young families and the elderly was of particular importance for women.

C. Adoption of the Strategy 2014-2020

90. The Chair of the Committee and the secretariat introduced the draft Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region for the period 2014-2020 (ECE/HBP/2013/3). The Committee was reminded that the strategy had been developed at the request of the Committee during its seventy-third session and had gone through a long consultation process, including its approval at an informal session of the Committee in May 2013. The Ministerial Meeting adopted the Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region for the period 2014-2020².

D. Closing of the Ministerial Meeting

91. The Chair of the Committee summarized the discussions of the meeting and noted the importance of the adopted Strategy as a set of policy objectives for the region and as a guide for the work of the Committee during the coming years. He then thanked the speakers and closed the Ministerial Meeting.

² Annex 2 contains the adopted by the Ministerial meeting Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region for the period 2014 - 2020

VII. Outcomes of the Ministerial Meeting

92. The Committee discussed the outcomes of the Ministerial Meeting and, in particular, the implementation of the Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management, which had been approved at the Ministerial.

93. The secretariat presented an outline of an electronic publication on the ministerial reviews of housing and land management in the ECE region, based on statements given at the ministerial meeting (informal notice 8).

94. The secretariat presented the draft outline of the publication, "Challenges and Priorities in Housing and Urban Development in the ECE Region" (ECE/HBP/2013/9).

95. The Committee:

- Approved the outline of the publication on ministerial reviews of housing and land management and invited the secretariat to finalize the electronic publication before the seventy-fifth session to take place in October 2014;
- Approved the publication of, "Challenges and Priorities in Housing and Urban Development in the ECE Region".

VIII. Programme of work for 2014-2015

96. The Chair reminded the Committee of the decision taken at its seventy-third session (ECE/HBP/179) to recommend to EXCOM the negotiation of a Framework Convention on Sustainable Housing in the ECE Region, and opened a discussion on the possible development of a charter on sustainable housing in the ECE region as a preliminary step toward the development of the framework convention.

97. Some delegations reported that they were not ready to make a decision on the matter, as a discussion on a possible charter had not been included in the agenda for the Session and a decision on the framework convention from EXCOM was still pending.

98. The Chair clarified that there was no intention to reopen a decision already made by the Committee at its seventy-third session and that a decision on the matter should be taken by the relevant intergovernmental body, i.e. EXCOM.

99. However, noting the interest of some member States in a charter on sustainable housing, the Committee agreed to request the Bureau to provide further information and, if appropriate, in the light of decisions made by EXCOM, to develop elements of the proposed charter, for consideration by the Bureau and subsequent consideration by the Committee.

100. The secretariat presented the draft programme of work for 2014-2015 of the housing and land management component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme (ECE/HBP/2013/10).

101. A representative of the private sector made a presentation on measures to improve energy-efficiency in residential housing in the ECE region.

102. A representative of Italy made a presentation on the use of public land in Italy.

103. A representative of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy made a presentation on the state of the real estate market in the Russian Federation.

104. The delegation from the Netherlands reported on a planned research project of the Working Party on Land Administration on the possible advantages and disadvantages of combining national cadastres and land registries within the same agency.

105. A representative of the private sector made a presentation on how Geographic Information Systems can be used to improve land management in the ECE region.

106. The secretariat presented information on: the biennial evaluation plan for 2014-2015 (ECE/HBP/2013/11); the list of publications for 2014-2015 (ECE/HBP/2013/12); and the status of the Trust Fund on Human Settlements.

107. The Chair invited member States to contribute to the Trust Fund in order to support the studies and other work requested by member States.

108. The Committee:

- Took note of this information.
- Approved the draft programme of work for 2014-2015.
- Approved the biennial evaluation plan for 2014-2015.
- Requested that the study on the benchmarking of land administration systems, originally forecast for 2014-2015, be published in 2013, in place of a scheduled country profile study which was not yet ready for publication and be replaced by a publication with policy guidelines on a topic to be determined. With this amendment, the Committee approved the list of publications for 2014-2015.
Inter-divisional and inter-agency activities

IX. Inter-divisional and inter-agency activities

109. A representative of UN-Habitat reported on the preparation of the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) and on the coordination of United Nations agencies to prepare the conference. The representative also invited housing ministries to participate in the national UN-Habitat Committees.

110. A representative of UN-Habitat reported on the UN-Habitat report on European cities in transition.

111. A representative of UNISDR presented a report on the impact of disasters on Europe and on its activities to promote disaster-resilient sustainable development. He also described the process leading up to the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015, which will adopt a disaster-risk reduction framework for post-2015. He also invited ECE member States to participate in the multi-stakeholder national platform for disaster risk reduction.

112. A representative of the Norwegian Refugee Council reported on its activities to promote secure housing and housing tenure for internally displaced people in urban areas in the ECE region.

113. A representative of the Working Party reported on the ongoing Working Party study on best practices for solving the challenge of informal settlements. This project is carried out in cooperation with the International Federation of Surveyors.

114. A representative of academia encouraged an increased focus on urban sprawl in the work of the Committee.

115. The Committee:

- Took note of this information;
- Approved the progress made in the study on informal settlements (informal notice 9) and delegated to the Bureau of the Working Party approval of the finished work, to be published in 2014;

- Requested that organizations with other proposals on collaboration send these proposals to the secretariat for their consideration by the Bureau.

X. Other Business

116. The Chair opened the floor to the discussion of any other matters relevant to the work of the Committee.

XI. Election of the Bureau

116. The Committee elected the Bureau for its seventy-fourth session, as follows:

- Mr. Elena Szolgayova (Slovakia), Chair
- Mr. Ali Jafarov (Azerbaijan)
- Ms. Alena Rakava (Belarus)
- Mr. Mark Vézina (Canada)
- Ms. Daniela Grabmüllerová (Czech Republic)
- Ms. Lise Nielsen (Denmark)
- Mr. David Gigineishvili (Georgia)
- Ms. Shulamith Gertel (Israel)
- Mr. Stefano Scalera (Italy)
- Ms. Vilma Vaiciuniene (Lithuania)
- Ms. Inger Vold Zapffe (Norway)
- Ms. Maria Jose Festas (Portugal)
- Ms. Svetlana Ristic (Serbia)
- Mr. Abduvali Komilov (Tajikistan)
- Mr. Alexander Nepomnyaschiy (Ukraine)
- Mr. Ed Lester (United Kingdom)

118. The Chair also welcomed Mr. Elshad Khanalibayli as an ex officio member of the Bureau of the Committee in his capacity as Chair of the Working Party on Land Administration.

XII. Closing of the session

119. The chair announced that the seventy-fifth session of the Committee will take place from 6 to 8 October 2014.

120. The Committee then reviewed and adopted this report in session.

121. The meeting was closed by the chair at 17:30 on 9 October 2013.

Annex 1

Speakers at the Ministerial Meeting, 8 October 2013

Review of progress made and future challenges in housing

Ms. Filoretta Kodra, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Albania to the United Nations Office and other international organizations

Mr. Samvel Tadevosyan, Minister of Urban Development, Armenia

Ms. Alena Rakava, Deputy Head of Regional and Urban Planning Department, Ministry of Architecture and Construction, Belarus

Mr. Sylvain Labbe, Chief Executive Officer, Quebec Wood Export Bureau, Canada

Mr. Borka Bobovec, Head of Sector, Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning, Croatia

Mr. Jouni Parkkonen, Special Advisor to Minister of Environment, Finland

Mr. Terence Dunne, Principle Officer, Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, Ireland

Ms. Tania Berg Ragaeli, Counselor, Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations Office and other international organizations

Ms. Daiva Matoniene, Vice-Minister, Ministry of Environment, Lithuania

Mr. Michael Farrugia, Parliamentary Secretary, Office of Prime Minister, Malta

Mr. Anatolie Zolotcov, Vice Minister of Regional Development and Construction, Republic of Moldova

Mr. Marko Canovic, Vice-Minister for Tourism and Environmental Protection, Montenegro

Mr. Roderick Van Schreven, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva

Ms. Liv Signe Navarsete, Minister for Local Government and Regional Development, Norway

Mr. Yuri Osipov, Advisor to Minister for Regional Development, Russian Federation

Mr. Milan Milevic, State Secretary, Ministry of Construction and Urbanism, Serbia

Mr. Frantisek Palko, Secretary of State, Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development, Slovakia

Mr. Ernst Hauri, Director, Federal Office for Housing, Switzerland

Mr. Abduvali Komilov, Director, Agency of Construction and Architecture under the Government, Tajikistan

Ms. Nataliia Oliinyk, Director for Reformation Strategy and Communal Services Development, Ministry of Regional Development, Construction and Municipal Development, Ukraine

Review of progress made and future challenges in land administration

Mr. Rafiq Jalilov, Deputy Chair, State Committee on Property Issues, Chairman of State Committee on Property Issues, Azerbaijan

Mr. David Jandieri, First Deputy Minister of Justice, Georgia

Mr. Peter Kreuzer, Director, State Survey and Geospatial Information, Germany

Mr. Erlan Saparbaev, Head, State Registration Service, Kyrgyzstan

Mr. Miguel de Castro Neto, Secretary of State of Spatial Planning and Nature Conservation, Portugal

Mr. Ed Lester, Chief Executive, Her Majesty's Land Registry of England and Wales, United Kingdom

Mr. Roger Ekman, Senior Advisor, Lantmäteriet, Sweden

Review of progress made and future challenges in urban development

Ms. Desislava Terzieva, Minister of Regional Development, Bulgaria

Mr. Daniel Braun, First Deputy Minister, Ministry of Regional Development, Czech Republic

Mr. Siim Kiisler, Minister for Regional Affairs, Estonia

Ms. Tanja Bogataj, Director General, Spatial Planning Directorate, Ministry of Infrastructure and Spatial Planning, Slovenia

Mr. Kairbek Uskenbayev, Vice Minister of Regional Development, Kazakhstan

Annex 2

Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE region for the period 2014 – 2020

Adopted by the Ministerial Meeting on Housing and Land Management on 8 October 2013 in Geneva

I. Vision, objectives and targets

1. In line with the Committee's mandate and mission, the following vision, objectives and targets by the year 2020 have been developed to guide the Committee's work in support of member States efforts to achieve sustainable housing and land management.
2. Vision: By 2020, the ECE region continues to be in the forefront of promoting sustainable housing and land management. Green, inclusive, compact and resilient cities are a priority in national policies and in regional cooperation. Investment in the housing sector is encouraged by transparent and efficient land use, property registration and a sound financial system. The housing sector offers a range of options, including for those with special needs and other vulnerable population groups.

A. Sustainable housing and real estate markets

1. Environmental dimension

(a) Objective (A)

To reduce energy use in the housing sector as compared to 2012 and continue the downward trend

Targets: By the year 2020

- A1. Policies and legal frameworks are in place to support and stimulate retrofitting of the existing residential housing stock in order to reduce its ecological footprint and make it more energy-efficient, making use of traditional knowledge and local building materials when possible.
- A2. Energy performance requirements and legislation are in place for the issuance of energy performance certificates for new and existing residential buildings.

(b) Objective (B)

To reduce the impact of the residential sector on the environment, taking into account the life cycle of buildings

Targets: By the year 2020

- B1. The life-cycle approach is integrated into housing and building legislation
- B2. All new housing construction is designed and built according to the life-cycle approach

(e) Objective (C)

To improve the resilience of buildings to natural and human-generated disasters

Target: By the year 2020

- C1. Building regulations are reviewed and adapted to better respond to seismicity and the effects of climate change and climate variability

2. Social dimension**(d) Objective (D)**

To improve the overall access of all to adequate, affordable, good-quality, healthy and secure housing and utility services, with particular attention to young people and vulnerable groups

Targets: By the year 2020

- D1. Investments in social and/or affordable housing are increased, as appropriate
- D2. Policies are established for supporting access to affordable and secure housing, especially for socially and economically vulnerable groups
- D3. Policy instruments are in place which ensure an adequate contribution of new residential construction to social and affordable housing
- D4. Strategies are in place and investments provided for reducing the gaps between urban and rural areas in the provision of infrastructure and services
- D5. Regulations are in place to ensure the legal security of tenure for all, regardless of the type of tenure, including rules and procedures with regard to evictions, and based on international standards and guidance³

(e) Objective (E)

To improve the access of persons with disabilities to barrier-free housing

Targets: By the year 2020

- E1. Universal design⁴ criteria are included in national standards systems
- E2. New buildings apply universal design criteria
- E3. Existing public housing is adapted, to the extent possible, to universal design criteria

³ See the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, general comment 7, "The Right to Adequate Housing: Forced Evictions" (available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/comments.htm>), and "Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-Based Evictions and Displacement", Annex 1 to A/HRC/4/18 (available at <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G07/106/28/PDF/G0710628.pdf?OpenElement>).

⁴ "Universal design" means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. (Article 2 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, available at <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>)

3. Economic and financial dimension

(f) Objective (F)

To support and encourage private investment in the housing sector;

Targets: By the year 2020

- F1. Policies are approved that stimulate employment through investments in the green economy and innovation in technology in the field of housing and urban planning
- F2. Appropriate financial regulations and valuation of the risk of real estate assets backing financial products are supported and encouraged

(g) Objective (G)

To ensure efficient management of the housing stock

Targets: By the year 2020

- G1. Legislation is in place to establish, regulate and manage condominium housing, including appropriate aspects of establishing and operating condominiums
- G2. Instruments and incentives are in place to support public, private and community partnerships in order to increase investments in sustainable housing and retrofitting projects

(h) Objective (H)

To contribute to well-functioning efficient, equitable and transparent housing and land markets which respond to different types of housing demand

Targets: By the year 2020

- H1. Easy, clear and transparent procedures, as well as appropriate institutions are established for ensuring efficient housing and land markets
- H2. Legislation and flexible tools are approved, which provide opportunities for the use of instruments that promote and stimulate public private partnerships for housing development
- H3. Policies that support a functional non-profit housing sector are in place

B. Sustainable urban development

(i) Objectives (I)

To balance the competing demand for and limited supply of available land, minimise the loss of rural land and increase the efficient use of urban land

Targets: By the year 2020

- I1. Strategic directions/policies for the sustainable spatial development of the entire territory are developed with the participation of all stakeholders
- I2. Territorial plans and/or other instruments to enforce regulations are developed, at least for the following:
 - Areas prone to natural and human generated disasters
 - Attractive areas for private investments

- Ecologically sensitive areas and heritage sites
- Inner-city densification, urban regeneration, mixed-use development, re-use or redevelopment of blight areas and brownfield sites.

C. Sustainable land administration and management

(j) Objective (J)

To have in place an efficient, accessible and transparent land administration system, which provides all with security of tenure and real property rights, facilitates real estate investments and transactions and ensures effective and transparent property valuation, land-use planning and sustainable land development

Targets: By the year 2020

- J1. Efficient, accessible, transparent and non-discriminatory land registration systems with adequate appeal mechanisms that cover all the national territory are in place that ensure security of tenure and property rights and reduce: conflicts over land and housing claims; insecurity in real property transactions; and corruption related to real property registration
- J2. Policies are in place that ensure security of tenure
- J3. Policies are in place to provide secure tenure solutions for those living in informal settlements

(k) Objective (K)

To set up, or improve the performance of those organizations, such as land registries, cadastre agencies, courts and other public authorities which are essential for a well-functioning land administration system

Targets: By the year 2020

- K1. Up-to-date data are easily accessible to all users
- K2. Mechanisms and policies are in place to facilitate data-sharing among public authorities through a national spatial data infrastructure
- K3. Information related to land administration is publicly accessible through electronic databases

D. Cross-cutting themes

(l) Objective (L)

To ensure investment in innovation and research, with particular attention to energy savings, social innovation, green, compact, inclusive and smart cities

Targets: By the year 2020

- L1. Investment in research and innovation is encouraged, specifically in the areas of energy saving, social innovation and green economy in the housing sector
- L2. Implementation of innovative projects in the above areas is reported by member States in order to share experiences and best practices with others

(m) Objective (M)

To support good governance, effective public participation and the rule of law in the areas of housing, urban planning and management and land administration

Targets: By the year 2020

- M1. Legal and administrative measures are in place which ensure consultation with and the participation of all stakeholders in transparent and opened decision-making processes
- M2. Policies are in place for building or improving the capacities of the public sector in housing and land management at national, regional and local levels
- M3. Horizontal and vertical coordination and cooperation between different levels of public administration are strengthened

(n) Objective (N)

To ensure that specific provisions on non-discriminatory processes are duly reflected in existing housing, urban planning and land management legislation

Target: By the year 2020

- N1. Laws that ensure equal treatment and non-discrimination, especially for women and minority groups, are part of national legislation on housing; urban planning and management; and land administration and procedures to ensure their implementation and enforcement are established

(o) Objective (O)

To intensify the regional and international exchange of experience and cooperation in the areas of housing, urban planning and land management

Targets: By the year 2020

- O1. Exchanges of experience and knowledge between countries are intensified
- O2. Cooperation, networks and synergies between international organizations are strengthened

II. Activities

To assist member States in achieving these targets, the Committee will implement this Strategy based upon an Action Plan that will be developed to cover the period from 2014 to 2020 and the activities to be included in the programme of work. The Committee will build on its own strengths by:

- Providing member States with country-specific policy guidance and recommendations on challenges related to housing and land management in the ECE region.
- Issuing in-depth assessments and flagship reports, including a series of Country Profiles on the housing and land administration sectors.
- Providing a platform for dialogue between Governments to facilitate the exchange of experience and the sharing of good practices by creating regional networks of experts, organizing workshops, and managing study trips.

- Promoting capacity development through high-quality training courses, advisory services and publications.
- Harmonising methodologies and definitions in the area of housing and land management at the regional and international level and supporting the development of common terms, language definitions and standards.

Cooperating with relevant United Nations programmes, agencies and bodies and other stakeholders to ensure consistency and complementarity and allow collaboration on housing and land-related issues.
