



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
22 March 2017

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Housing and Land Management

Working Party on Land Administration

Tenth session

Geneva, 8-9 March 2017

Report of the Tenth Session of the Working Party on Land Administration

I. Introduction

1. The Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA) held its tenth session in Geneva on 8-9 March 2017.

A. Attendance

2. Representatives of the following countries participated: Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

3. Representatives of the following United Nations organizations and programmes attended: the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat) and the International Labour Organization.

4. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended: EuroGeographics and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

5. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations attended: the Community Foundation Genius Loci, European Land Information Service (EULIS), the International Association TIP, the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) and the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP).

6. Private sector representatives, experts and academics from universities and research institutions also attended the session at the invitation of the secretariat.

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B. Organizational matters

7. The Chair of the Working Party, Mr. Elshad Khanalibayli, opened the session, and Mr. Andrey Vasilyev, Deputy Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, welcomed the participants.

8. The Working Party adopted its provisional agenda as contained in document ECE/HBP/WP.7/2017/1.

II. Matters arising from the seventy-seventh session and Special Session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management of the Economic Commission for Europe

9. The secretariat informed the Working Party about decisions taken by the Committee on Housing and Land Management (CHLM) at its seventy-seventh session held in September 2016 (ECE/HBP/188), and its Special Session (ECE/HBP/S/2016/3) held in December 2016, and by the Executive Committee (EXCOM) on 1 February 2017, noting the approval by the latter of the renewal of the mandate and the revised Terms of Reference of the Working Party for the period 2016-2020 (ECE/EX/2017/L.1) as endorsed by the Committee in December 2016.

10. The Working Party took note of the information provided.

III. Keynote segment: Land, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda

11. The keynote segment consisted of a high-level dialogue on the role of land administration and management in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA). The main land administration and management-related development challenges in the region and how sound land administration, proper land management and sustainable real estate markets can help the transition towards better, safer and more resilient human settlements and sustainable cities, were discussed. Speakers and prominent actors in land markets and land tenure, Mr. Peter Creuzer, Mr. Martin Dubbeling, Mr. Stig Enemark, Ms. Nicky Heathcote, Mr. Oumar Sylla and Mr. Jacques Vos gave presentations on how to promote good governance in the UNECE region for the implementation of the Agendas.

12. The following key items were highlighted during the keynote segment:

- The importance of land administration and management to the implementation of the NUA, the 2030 Agenda and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Although targets are yet to be defined for the NUA, targets for the SDGs exist, and emphasis was put on the need to have measurable indicators so that they can be monitored. In turn, the appropriate means to gather spatial data is required. Further, society requires a fit-for-purpose land administration to meet its changing needs.
- There is a paradigm shift from the rural and urban divide to thinking of rural-periurban-urban linkages. Sustainable land management is an opportunity for innovation but it also brings challenges due to rapid urbanization which, at times, causes informality. It also sometimes brings the need to manage conflicts and migration. Land information systems are key to managing these conflicts and offering solutions.

- Fraud in land administration is still a very relevant issue to address in order to ensure secure access to land for all. It was suggested to evaluate the need to update the Study on the Challenges of Fraud to Land Administration Institutions (2011) to highlight the new issues confronting land administration systems.
 - Public private partnerships (PPPs) in land administration were presented as one of the means for cooperation to ensure efficient governance in land administration. There is a need to include open data and use technology with geo-referenced data. It was proposed to evaluate the need to update the Guiding Principles for PPP in Land Administration (2004) to integrate the new drivers and challenges.
 - All speakers expressed the need for comprehensive cooperation between the UN agencies and programmes, international organizations and national governments for effective knowledge-sharing to achieve sustainable land management.
 - The ECE secretariat stressed that the role of the regional commissions is to serve as a platform for member States and international organizations, and that it is successfully cooperating with UN-Habitat and the International Telecommunication Union. It also underlined the importance of working together to translate the global goals into new agendas at regional and national levels.
13. The Working Party agreed to take into consideration the issues raised when discussing its future activities and programme of work.

IV. Review of the programme of work for 2016-2017

14. The secretariat and members of the Bureau presented a short overview of the progress made in the implementation of the programme of work for the period 2016-2017 (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2017/2).

(a) Capacity-building and international knowledge-sharing

15. The Working Party was informed of the outcomes of the workshops held since its ninth session.

16. The representative of the Russian Federation, Deputy Head of Rosreestr, Mr. Andrey Pridankin presented the main outcomes of the workshop, “Real Estate Rights and Cadastre Registration as an Element for Development of Land Management Systems”, held in Moscow, Russian Federation, on 25-26 June 2015. He recalled that the workshop addressed issues of registration and cadastral system development, the use of information technologies aimed at improving the mentioned systems, and issues of information interaction between subjects of land administration. He further informed the Working Party about the activities implemented by Rosreestr to combat fraud, which included sharing the results of the work of the “Electronic registration of rights” service. He also gave a presentation on measures being taken by Rosreestr to prevent fraud and to detect errors in delimitation and technical plans. The Acting Head of the Federal Cadastral Chamber of Rosreestr, Mr. Konstantin Litvintsev reported on the new technologies in real property rights and the cadastre registration system of the Russian Federation including: informatization, contact-free technologies, information exchange without the need for the applicant’s participation, public cadastral map, state land supervision, comprehensive cadastral works and unified procedures and register. The Chair of the Committee on Housing Policies and Communal Services, State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Ms. Galina Khovanskaya presented new trends in the privatization of real estate property and two new initiatives of the Russian Federation: a national project on

comfortable urban environment and a programme on the renovation of low quality housing stock.

17. The delegate of Norway, Mr. Helge Onsrud commented that the Russian Federation had achieved a lot for its citizens in relation to the land sector in a short amount of time, emphasizing that political will and leadership were critical to achieving this.

18. The Chair of the Working Party (Azerbaijan), Mr. Elshad Kahanabayli provided a brief overview of the workshop on the “Development of key registers in land administration in the ECE region”, held in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 28-30 October 2015. The workshop was organized in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and other partners. It brought together more than 31 member States in the ECE region to explore different practices in key register enhancement within the framework of land administration. A masterclass on the innovative free and open source software for land assessment and monitoring, integrating Google technologies and freely available satellite images, was also held.

19. The representative from Spain, Ms. Nuria Raga Sastre presented the conclusions of the workshop on “State and Market: Cadastres and Property Right Registers”, held in Madrid, Spain, on 24–25 November 2016. She reported that, during the workshop, participants shared experiences and practices in cadastre and property rights registry. They discussed the functions of cadastres and registries in relation to the State and the real estate and mortgage markets, and ways of interaction to satisfy social and economic needs. The guarantee of the accuracy of data and reliability of information by the State was identified as a key element in providing clear entitlements with the guarantee of property rights as a human right. How to achieve this accuracy and reliability has been raised as the next issue to address.

(b) Land administration reviews

20. The representative from the Kyrgyz Republic, Mr. Kadyrbek Baitileshov, Deputy Director of the Department of Cadastre and Registration, State Registration Service, informed the Working Party of the progress in land administration and management services in the Kyrgyz Republic, including the unification of cadastre and registration under one agency, the development of the Kyrgyz Land Information System, the simplification of registration procedures, the opening of local registration offices, and GNSS/GPS development. The land administration reviews for Armenia and the Republic of Moldova were developed after the ninth session and their recommendations were presented by the ECE secretariat. The review for the Kyrgyz Republic was published in 2010, the Republic of Moldova in December 2015, and Armenia in March 2017, and may be found in their respective Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management.

(c) Studies on selected topics in land management and land administration

21. The Working Party was informed about the outcomes of studies developed since the ninth session.

22. The representative of Ireland, Mr. James O’Boyle, WPLA bureau member, presented the preliminary findings (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2017/5) of the follow-up “Survey on Land Administration Systems in the ECE Region” (ECE/HBP/180) which was carried out in 2016-2017. Findings reflected responses from 28 countries, and reinforced the findings of the 2014 survey. The speed of registration and access to information reflect the increased availability of information online. The findings are largely similar to that of the previous survey.

23. The representative from the Netherlands, Mr. Rik Wouters, WPLA Vice-Chair, gave an update on the status of the research on mergers of cadastres and land registries

(ECE/HBP/WP.7/2017/4), which presented the results of the follow-up study on “Land Registration and Cadastre: One or Two Agencies?” (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2015/3) which was carried out in 2016. The new research focused on the transitional aspects of merging cadastres and land registries. Twenty countries participated in the study, of which 12 are merged countries and 8 not merged. The results showed several challenges, such as the stimulation of internal drivers towards mergers and the internal organization of the systems.

24. The progress on the dissemination of the conclusions and recommendations of the “Formalizing the Informal: Challenges and Opportunities of Informal Settlements in South-East Europe” study was presented to the Working Party by Chryssy Potsiou, President of FIG. She described the Fit for Purpose Formalization of Informal Settlements and indicated that the framework of the technical guidelines project should be defined. The formalization of informal constructions is the most important step towards the formalization of real property markets, and so the guidelines might be very useful to governments and professionals.

25. The Literature Review “Informal settlements in countries with economies in transition in the UNECE region” was presented by Ms. Orna Rosenfeld, Associate Professor at Sciences Po-Paris. She highlighted the need to re-assess the continued use of the term “informal settlements”. The future technical guidelines should take into account the variety of types of informal housing, guide legislation to target those in greatest need, and help tackle the lack of tenure security and the lack of access to affordable housing. It should also permit the integration of initiatives, policies and disciplines.

26. These two resources on informal settlements will be used in addition to others for the development of technical guidelines on informal settlements for the ECE region.

27. The Working Party took note of the progress achieved and discussed the next steps needed for the completion of the remaining activities for 2017.

V. Report on the work of the Bureau of the Working Party

28. The Working Party Chair reported on the meetings and the work of the task groups of the Working Party since its ninth session. He drew attention to changes in the task groups to better carry out the activities in the programme of work.

29. The Chair of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group (REM) reported on the work done in the framework of the cooperation between the Working Party and the REM. He highlighted the activities that are proposed for 2017 and noted these would be carried out depending on the availability of resources.

30. The Working Party took note of the information provided.

VI. Cooperation with international organizations/agencies working in land administration and land management

31. The Working Party was informed about the discussions of the international organizations working in land administration and land management, with a view to identifying linkages between mandates and projects, and how to promote synergies as opportunities for cooperation and increased efficiency.

32. The representative of the OECD, Mr. Abel Schumann, Economist, Regional Development Policy Division, Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, gave a presentation on the work being done in the ECE region with regards to land governance, highlighted the fiscal and tax systems that should be encouraged, and indicated

that those incentives need to be better aligned with land use objectives. He reiterated OECD's willingness to work with the WPLA.

33. The representative from EuroGeographics, Mr. Mick Cory, Secretary-General and Executive Director, spoke about the work of EuroGeographics and the current cooperation in the sphere of land management and administration. Mr. Daniel Steudler, Chair of EuroGeographics CLRKEN, reported on the CLRKEN activities and preparations for the WPLA/CLRKEN Joint Workshop in Lausanne, Switzerland, to be held on 21 April 2017. The workshop will address aspects of the contribution of enhanced land administration functions to efficient land management, essentially through capitalizing on technological advancements and digital opportunities.

34. Representatives of the ILO, the FIG, EULIS, the PCC and academia gave presentations on current cooperation in the field of land administration and management and proposed cooperative projects with the Working Party.

35. The Working Party discussed possible joint activities by the different organizations on the following topics:

- Relationship of the SDGs and the NUA with land administration;
- Fraud in land administration;
- Sustainability in the real estate market: informal and formalization;
- Further collaboration on the work of marine cadastres;
- Glossaries;
- Support for the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) project; and
- Development of technical guidelines for the NUA.

36. The Chair solicited additional proposals from the participants to be sent to the ECE secretariat. The Working Party decided, as a next step, to carry out a scoping exercise to identify priority activities and the resources needed to carry them out.

37. The Working Party was informed about the activities of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) Europe and the Fourth High Level Forum on UN-GGIM by Mr. Tomaž Petek, Executive Committee, UN-GGIM Europe. He highlighted the objectives of the Expert Group meeting on Land Administration and Management (EG-LAM) and how member States could benefit from the activities. He emphasized the importance of geospatial information management for achieving the SDGs and of regional organizations in the coordination role. UN-GGIM Europe particularly wish to play a leading role at the policy level by raising awareness and encouraging the use of geospatial information management for land administration purposes. Mr. Rik Wouters, Member of the Expert Group on LAM, described the composition of the EG-LAM, the themes of the Land Tenure Atlas of the World, and the activities in the coming year, including the upcoming the First EG-LAM in Delft, the Netherlands, in March 2017.

VII. Presentation of the programme of work for 2018–2019

38. The Chair presented the draft programme of work for 2018-2019 (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2017/3).

39. The Working Party commented on the document and discussed how to reflect the outcome of the keynote segment and the ensuing discussion in the 2018-2019 programme of work.

40. The Working Party reviewed and endorsed its programme of work for 2018-2019 (Annex I) and recommended it be submitted to the CHLM for adoption at its seventy-eighth session in November 2017.

VIII. Any other business

41. No matters were raised under this item.

IX. Election of the Bureau

42. The Chair invited the member States' representatives to present nominations for the Bureau members.

43. The Working Party elected by acclamation, the Bureau for its eleventh session, as follows:

- Mr. Fredrik Zetterquist, Sweden (Chair)
- Mr. Rik Wouters, The Netherlands (Vice-Chair)
- Mr. Julius Ernst, Austria
- Mr. Markku Markkula, Finland
- Ms. Roberta Marconi, Italy
- Ms. Mari Khardziani, Georgia
- Ms. Chryssy Potsiou, Greece
- Mr. Bakytbek Djusupbekov, Kyrgyzstan
- Ms. Tatjana Cenova Mitrevska, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Ms. Elena Busch, Norway
- Mr. Konstantin Litvintcev, Russian Federation
- Ms. Beatriz Corredor Sierra, Spain
- Mr. Howard Bushell, United Kingdom

X. Date of the next session

44. The Chair informed that the next session is scheduled to take place in spring 2019. He also invited member States to consider hosting the next Working Party session in their country.

XI. Adoption of the report

45. The Working Party reviewed the session report based on a draft prepared by the secretariat, and adopted it.

46. The meeting was closed by the Chair at 13.05 on 9 March 2017.

Annex I

Programme of Work for 2018-2019

I. Capacity-building and international knowledge-sharing

1. Objective: To increase the capacity of UNECE member States to formulate policies on land administration and management.
2. To achieve this objective, the Working Party will:
 - (a) Organize four workshops in the ECE region to allow for experience and knowledge-sharing, to improve the human capital of stakeholders, and to enhance land management practices;
 - (b) Contribute, as requested and available, to UNECE Real Estate Market Advisory Group roundtable discussions;
 - (c) Present the work of the Working Party and provide advice on land management at workshops, conferences, seminars and other events focusing on land management; and
 - (d) Contribute, as requested, to the work of the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management, in line with Economic and Social Council Resolution E/RES/2016/27¹, including the United Nations Expert Group on Land Administration and Management.

II. Land administration reviews

3. Objective: To provide, upon the request of member States, an assessment of member States' land administration systems, and guidelines to enhance these systems.
4. To achieve this objective, the Working Party will, upon invitation by governments and subject to the availability of funding, develop member State land administration reviews as part of the UNECE Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management.

III. Studies on selected topics in land management

5. Objective: To study issues in land management of interest to member States and develop publications containing analyses to support member States better understand the current status of land management and thus formulate more targeted and effective policies.
6. To achieve this objective, the Working Party will:
 - (a) Organize further studies on benchmarking in land administration, on issues such as the cost of registration/transfer of real estate and registration of mortgages (including analysis regarding the cost of notary or lawyer services, cadastre or private surveyor and land registry);
 - (b) In cooperation with the Committee on Housing and Land Management, conduct a study on land consolidation and compile best practices for the ECE region.
 - (c) Carry out research on the formalization of informal real estate and informal markets.

(d) Carry out a comparative study on land administration services between countries with extensive land administration development experience and countries with rapid development. Identify best practices, including the aspect of PPP.

(e) Elaborate scenarios for future (5-10 years' perspective) land administration and land management solutions, taking into account the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda as well as current transformative forces, such as urbanization, digitization, climate change, open data, etc., in order to enhance preparedness to adapt to new future states, increase flexibility and build resilience for disruptive events, and ensure holistic land administration and land management solutions.

(f) Study challenges that UNECE countries with mature land administration and land management systems are facing, and share recommendations among all UNECE member States. The study will also include aspects such as adaptation to a more urban approach, the relationship to municipal systems, 3D cadastre, BIM, etc.
