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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management

#### Eighty-first session

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Items 4, 6, 9 and 10 of the provisional agenda

#### Review of the implementation of the programmes of work 2018-2019 and 2020

## Activities of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management since its eightieth session

### Note by the secretariat

#### *Summary*

This document provides information on the activities of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management since its eightieth session and outlines a list of activities for 2021.

The Committee is invited to take note of the information on activities implemented. The Committee is also invited to approve the list of activities proposed for 2021 containing detailed information on all activities needed to implement the programme of work of the housing and land management component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2021.



## **I. Implementation of the programmes of work 2018-2019 and 2020**

### **A. Review of and follow-up to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and other relevant agreements**

1. In 2019-2020, the Committee continued supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda, the Geneva UN<sup>1</sup> Charter on Sustainable Housing, the Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Housing and Urban Development and the Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE region for the period 2014-2020.

2. Representatives of the Committee Bureau and the secretariat participated in the following high-level events where the activities of the Committee supporting the implementation of the above documents were presented and discussed:

(a) The 10<sup>th</sup> session of the World Urban Forum (Abu-Dhabi, 8-12 February 2020) where the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) secretariat organized a series of events, including:

(i) The joint training with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) “Innovative management of multi-apartment high rise housing: Localizing SDG7&11 and New Urban Agenda through housing strategies”;

(ii) The joint networking event “Accelerating the Transition to Urban Sustainability through UN Inter-Regional Cooperation” with the UN-Habitat and other United Nations Regional Commissions;

(iii) The joint networking event “Governing and managing smart sustainable cities” with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the Open and Agile Smart Cities.

(b) The European Union meetings on territorial cohesion and on urban matters organized by the Finnish and Croatian Presidencies of the Council of the European Union (Helsinki, 16 and 17 October 2019; and Zagreb, 25 and 26 February 2020);

(c) The United Nations High Level Political Forum in July 2020 where ECE, together with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Regional Commissions and other United Nations agencies, convened the session “Bolstering local action to control the pandemic and accelerate implementation” and supported the session “Innovative approaches to spur action and delivery on the 2030 Agenda: lessons from the regions”.

#### **1. Promoting evidence-based policies to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development at national level**

3. The Committee actively supported the exchange of experiences and building the capacities of national governments on the formulation and implementation of evidence-based housing and urban development policies. Following the launch of the “Guidelines on evidence-based policies and decision-making for sustainable housing and urban development” at the eightieth session of the Committee in October 2019, implementation of the Guidelines started through the organization of national capacity-building workshops. The national workshops were organized within the project “Evidence-based policies for sustainable housing and urban development in selected countries with economies in

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations.

transition”, supported by the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) tenth tranche project, in<sup>2</sup>:

- (a) Minsk and Grodno, Belarus, on 10-11 December 2019;
- (b) Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on 19-20 February 2020;
- (c) Tirana, Albania, on 18 June 2020.

4. Cooperation with the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works of Bulgaria continued within the UNDA eleventh tranche project “Strengthening the capacities of national and local governments to formulate and implement evidence-based and participatory housing policies and strategies”, which is implemented by ECE and UN-Habitat. On 13-16 January 2020, ECE and UN-Habitat organized a technical mission to Sofia, Bulgaria and prepared a report with recommendations to inform future policy of the Government of Bulgaria on social housing and a design for the 2021-2027 cycle of the European Union Operational Programme “Regions in Growth” .

5. The Committee continued the development of Country Profiles on urban development, housing and land management. In 2019, the Country Profile of Belarus (ECE/HBP/195) was published in English and Russian. The development of a second Country Profile for Albania has started and depending on availability of extrabudgetary funds, it is expected to be undertaken during 2020-2021.

## **2. Promoting evidence-based policies to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development at city level**

6. To promote evidence based housing and urban development policies at city level, the Committee secretariat organized:

(a) The evaluation of cities’ performance using the Key Performance Indicators for Smart Sustainable Cities (KPIs for SSC)<sup>3</sup> and the preparation of Smart Sustainable Cities Profiles based on the evaluations made;

(b) Capacity-building activities to support the cities to become smart and sustainable. These included topics of investments into smart sustainable cities projects, approaches to foster vertical and horizontal coordination between different government agencies and public participation.

7. In 2019-2020, KPI evaluations were conducted and City Profiles were prepared for the cities of Grodno, Belarus and Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan. These activities were implemented within the project “Strengthening capacities of selected CIS countries to implement urban related SDGs through Country Profiles on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management and innovative financing mechanisms” with the financial support of the Russian Federation.

8. The KPI evaluation and preparation of a City Profile for Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan is organized with the support of the UNDA twelfth tranche project “Smart Sustainable Cities for the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda in the UNECE Region”.

9. The project also supported organization of the following capacity-building workshops<sup>4</sup>:

<sup>2</sup> Workshops planned to be organized in Kyiv, Ukraine, in April 2020 and in Tbilisi, Georgia, in September 2020, were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>3</sup> The KPIs for SSCs were developed by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and ECE within the [United for Smart Sustainable Cities Initiative](#)

<sup>4</sup> The Committee secretariat is also holding weekly coordination e-meetings with representatives of the three cities’ local governments to ensure the relevant activities are implemented within the agreed timeframe.

(a) A national online workshop on Innovative Financing Toolbox for Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on 15 May 2020;

(b) A national online workshop on Innovative Financing Toolbox for Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, on 4 June 2020; and

(c) A subregional online workshop on Sustainable Smart Cities Profile for the beneficiary cities in Belarus (Grodno), Kazakhstan (Nur-Sultan) and Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek), on 27 May 2020.

10. The activities in the three cities are implemented using the ECE approach “Sustainable Smart Cities with Innovative Financing”. This approach takes the cities through the full cycle from city evaluation as sustainable and smart, to recommendations on how to move it forward in this area, and to supporting innovative financing and investments to concrete city projects. The above activities are implemented in cooperation with UN-Habitat and in coordination with the offices of United Nations Resident Coordinators and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) offices in Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

11. Further, the preparation of City Profiles for four cities in Norway: Alesund, Asker, Rana and Trondheim, was conducted within the project “Improved sustainable urban development in 17 Norwegian cities” supported by the Government of Norway. In these and other Norwegian cities (total of 17 cities), the project supports the acceleration of the 2030 Agenda implementation by establishing a baseline for sustainable development for the cities under the evaluation; promoting the alignment of policy and budgets with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and national sustainable development targets; and stronger citizens engagement.

12. The experience of the Committee on the development of evidence-based policymaking at city level using the KPIs for SSC highlighted the importance of best available knowledge, evidence and data in evaluating cities’ performance. So far very few Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) have been developed using data and indicators, for instance, the VLRs for Barcelona (Spain), Bristol (United Kingdom), and Helsinki (Finland). No standard approach to the development and uses of data for VLRs exists. This is why the Committee Bureau elaborated a proposal to the Committee to use the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) KPIs for SSC as a backbone for the development of VLRs in cities in the ECE region (ECE/HBP/2020/6).

### 3. Activities of the Geneva UN Charter Centres of Excellence

13. The implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing was supported by the work of the Geneva UN Charter Centres of Excellence. The following key activities were implemented by the Charter Centres.

14. The **Centre of Excellence on Smart Sustainable Cities in Glasgow**, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, established on 8 November 2017 and hosted by the Glasgow Urban Lab of the Glasgow School of Art with support of the Glasgow City Council:

(a) Contributed to the preparation of the draft policy paper on evidence-based policies and decision-making for sustainable housing and urban development which is being developed under the programme of work 2018-2019 of the Committee with the support of the joint ECE/UN-Habitat UNDA tenth tranche project “Evidence-based policies for sustainable housing and urban development in selected countries with economies in transition”;

(b) Following the organization of the ECE Workshop on City Living (Glasgow, United Kingdom, 12 and 13 September 2019) which adopted the “Glasgow Message: Living in the City”<sup>5</sup>, contributed to the development of a concept note for the ECE study “#Housing 2030: Improving Housing Affordability in the UNECE region”.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.academyofurbanism.org.uk/events/the-glasgow-conference-on-city-living/>

15. The **Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Housing in Tallinn**, Estonia established on 2 May 2017 and hosted by the Estonian Union of Co-operative Housing Associations (EKYL):

(a) At the request of the secretariat, elaborated a training curriculum on the management of multiapartment buildings for housing managers in countries with economies in transition (in English and Russian languages) based on a training curriculum developed in Estonia on extensive experience in training housing managers. The training curriculum was used by the secretariat for the organization of trainings on housing management within the UNDA tenth tranche project “Evidence-based policies for sustainable housing and urban development in selected countries with economies in transition”;

(b) Developed a new training curriculum on how to prepare and negotiate a new statute of apartment associations as well as a one-year training programme on facility services for condominium, the pilot training of which is scheduled to start in July 2020. The programme is supported by the European Social Fund;

(c) Organized a training for representatives of the Ukrainian housing associations, which took place in Tallinn, Estonia and Rakvere, Estonia. Organization of the trainings was supported by the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The trainings complemented the ECE activities in Ukraine under the UNDA tenth tranche project supporting reforms in the housing sector;

(d) Provided training to a study group from Belarus on the Estonian housing management systems during a training programme in Tallinn, Estonia on 18 February 2020. The visit was supported by the Swedish International Liberal Centre;

(e) Prepared booklets on energy efficiency tips for consumers in condominiums and a brochure “ABC of apartment association”, both in Estonian and Russian;

(f) Presented the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and the work of the Centre at several national events of the Estonian Union of Co-operative Housing Associations.

16. The **Centre of Excellence on Smart Sustainable Cities in Vienna**, Austria established on 4 October 2018 and hosted by the Organization for International Economic Relations (OIER), developed a training module for the private sector to raise awareness on the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the SDGs.

17. The **Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Development Goal City Transition in Trondheim**, Norway, established on 23 August 2019 and hosted by the city of Trondheim in cooperation with the Norwegian University of Technology:

(a) Supported the application of the KPIs for SSC to evaluate the performance of 17 Norwegian municipalities and support their transition to achieving the SDGs;

(b) Contributed to the ECE workshop at the 2019 Smart City Expo World Congress presenting its project to assess smartness and sustainability of 17 Norwegian cities.

18. The **Centre of Excellence on Sustainable and Resilient Settlements in Tirana**, Albania was undergoing restructuring in 2018-2019 and 2020 and as such, there were no activities during the reporting period. Following the expiration of the Memorandum of Understanding, a new agreement is currently under preparation.

19. In addition to the Centres that are already established, at least two new centres are expected to be established in 2020: in Geneva, Switzerland, to be hosted by University of Geneva; and in Toronto, Canada, to be hosted by York University.<sup>6</sup>

20. The ECE is already cooperating with the University of Geneva on a joint project “Reliable Data for Evidence-Based Housing Policies” with funding from the Geneva Science-Policy Interface Initiative and on smart sustainable cities.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.unece.org/housing-and-land-management/housingcharter/geneva-un-charter-centres.html>

## B. Sustainable Smart Cities

### Implementation of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC)

21. The U4SSC initiative is a global platform dedicated to supporting cities worldwide in becoming smarter and more sustainable. The U4SSC is coordinated by ITU, ECE and UN-Habitat, along with the support of 14 other United Nations agencies and programmes. The U4SSC is working to develop strategic guidelines and measurement tools to assist cities in implementing the SDGs.

22. In the framework of the U4SSC initiative, the Committee secretariat:

(a) conducted evaluations of cities' performance using the KPIs for SSCs and prepared City Profiles as described in paragraphs 8, 9 and 11;

(b) Coordinated the preparation of a publication *Guide to Circular Cities*.<sup>7</sup> The Guide contains a circular city implementation framework that is designed to improve circularity in cities and support stakeholders in implementing circular actions. Seventeen case studies illustrate the implementation of the Guide. The Guide was published by ITU in May 2020;

(c) Developed the "Guidelines on tools and mechanisms to finance smart sustainable cities projects". The Guidelines provide practical recommendations for city governments on how to develop projects that are easily understood by and attractive to potential investors. They also explain what types of investors exist and how to make a sustainable city development plan attractive to them. The Executive Summary of the Guidelines is available in ECE/HBP/2020/4 and the full draft publication in ECE/HBP/2020/INF. 3;

(d) Organized meetings of the U4SSC Thematic Group "Economic recovery in cities and urban resilience building in the time of COVID-19";

(e) Participated in events to disseminate information on the U4SSC, including the Ninth Green Standards Week (Valencia, Spain, 1-4 October 2019); the side event on urban transport at the Smart City Expo World Congress (Barcelona, 21 November 2019); and in the networking event "Governing and managing smart sustainable cities" at the Tenth session of the World Urban Forum (Abu-Dhabi, 8-12 February 2020).

23. In the absence of established official procedures to evaluate the performance of a city using the U4SSC KPIs for SSC, the Committee secretariat developed the draft "ECE Protocol on the Evaluation of City Performance Against the Key Performance Indicators for Smart Sustainable Cities". The draft Protocol (ECE/HBP/2020/5) was reviewed by the Committee Bureau which submits it to the Committee for endorsement.

## C. Affordable, adequate, healthy, safe and energy efficient housing

### 1. Publications of guidance materials to support access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing

24. To support the implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and achievement of SDG 11, especially its target 11.1: "Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services ...", the Committee prepared the following publications:

<sup>7</sup> ECE appreciates the leadership on the study of Mr. Okan Geray, Strategic Planning Advisor of Smart Dubai.

(a) Guidelines on the Management and Ownership of Condominium Housing (ECE/HBP/198)<sup>8</sup>, developed by the Committee's Real Estate Market Advisory Group in 2019;

(b) Guidelines for the formalization of informal constructions, prepared by the Bureau of the Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA) and the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) Task Force on Property and Housing;

(c) Survey on costs for registration and transfer of real estate and mortgages for the ECE region. The publication presents results of a study implemented by WPLA on benchmarking in land administration on the costs for registration/transfer of real estate and mortgages for the ECE region.

## 2. Study “#Housing2030 - Improving Housing Affordability in the UNECE Region”

25. The Committee initiated the study “#Housing2030 - Improving Housing Affordability in the UNECE Region. The study is implemented in cooperation with Housing Europe, UN-Habitat and other partners. It is aimed to:

(a) Explore housing affordability challenges and existing policy instruments for improving housing affordability in the ECE region;

(b) Facilitate the exchange and dissemination of “good practices” in improving housing affordability among countries and cities of the ECE region;

(c) Identify the needs of policymakers in order to further develop and implement policies addressing housing affordability.

26. The study explores the following four topics: housing governance and regulation; access to finance and funding; access and availability of land for housing construction; and climate-neutral housing construction and renovation. The study also addresses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the housing sector and highlights good practices for improving the affordability and long-term sustainability of housing under each of the four topics.

27. In 2019-2020, a steering committee and an expert group were established to write the report. On 20 May 2020, the online workshop “Access and Availability of Land for Housing Construction” was organized. The second online workshop “Housing for Tomorrow: Towards Sustainable Homes and Neighbourhoods in the Mediterranean Region” was organized on 17 September 2020 in cooperation with the Government of Malta and the Union for the Mediterranean.

28. A survey of ECE member States was conducted in the summer 2020 with the aim to collect information about housing affordability challenges in countries and cities of the ECE region and with a view to develop relevant solutions, tools, measures and policy instruments and to enable the exchange of good practices. The outcomes of the survey will be presented at the eighty-first Committee session. The study report will be finalized in 2021 and will include a compendium of good practices based on discussions at the study workshops and responses to a 2020 survey of ECE member States.

29. Work on the draft publication “Housing for Migrants and Refugees in the UNECE Region: Challenges and Practices” continued in 2019. The draft publication includes outcomes of a study which aims to provide recommendations on the provision of housing to incoming migrants and refugees based on an analysis of identified innovative practices, an extensive literature review, and interviews with representatives of local and central governments, international banks, housing providers and third-sector organizations. After the Committee, at its eightieth session in October 2019, reviewed the draft publication and “agreed to undertake an additional review of the draft publication through the organization of informal meetings with permanent missions in Geneva in order to submit in a timely

<sup>8</sup> The guidelines build on the earlier Committee's publications on informal settlements: “Self-Made Cities: In Search of Sustainable Solutions for Informal Settlements” (2009) and “Formalizing the Informal: Challenges and Opportunities of Informal Settlements in South-East Europe” (2015).

fashion a revised draft for consideration of the eighty-first Committee session”, an informal consultation meeting with permanent missions in Geneva was organized on 17 December 2019. As some questions remain open, additional consultations will be organized prior to the eighty-first Committee session in order to finalize the draft.

### **3. Promoting energy efficiency standards in buildings through the activities of the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings**

30. The main outcome of activities undertaken by the ECE Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings which joins two ECE committees – Committee on Sustainable Energy and Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management – was the publication Promoting Energy Efficiency Standards and Technologies to Enhance Energy Efficiency in Buildings. The report includes a gap analysis of the status of energy efficiency standards, an assessment of available technologies in relation to the existing standards, mapping of existing technologies in buildings in relation to the existing standards, and a compendium of best practices of standards and technologies for energy efficiency in buildings.

### **4. Supporting fire safety standards in buildings**

31. The International Fire Safety Standards (IFSS) Coalition developed a set of new, high-level international standards on fire safety: “International Fire Safety Standards: Common Principles”, with the Royal Institutions for Chartered Surveyors (RICS) serving as a secretariat to the IFSS Coalition for the development of the common principles. The Common Principles are comprehensive and cover all aspects of fire safety in buildings from design, engineering and construction, and occupation to management and demolition. The Committee Bureau discussed the Common Principles at its several meetings and recommended to endorse the Common Principles as an ECE standard. The Common Principles (ECE/HBP/2020/7) and the Framework for the Application of the Common Principles (ECE/HBP/2020/INF.8) will be presented at the eighty-first session of the Committee.

### **5. Activities of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group**

32. The Real Estate Market Advisory Group (REM) continued to contribute to the work of the Committee on affordable and energy efficient housing, smart sustainable cities and land administration. The “Policy Framework for Sustainable Real Estate Markets” was published and launched at an event on the margins of the eightieth session of the Committee on 4 October 2019.

33. The main activity of the Advisory Group was the preparation of the report “Sharing Economy in the Housing Sector in the UNECE Region”. The study is planned to be finalized in 2020.

## **D. Land administration and management**

34. To assist member States in improving land administration and land management, the Committee activities promote security of tenure and improvement of cadastres and land registries, including institutional arrangements for land administration.

35. The WPLA held the conference “Digitally Enabled Development for a Sustainable Future in Eastern Europe” (Vrdnik, Serbia, 18-20 September 2019), jointly organized by the Republic Geodetic Authority (RGA), European Commission's Joint Research Centre (EC JRC), the World Bank, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management in Europe (UNGGIM-Europe) and WPLA. The conference promoted the exchange of best practices in digital transformation with a focus on data sharing and utilization, in particular, for regional and spatial planning, smart cities and governance of land tenure in Eastern Europe.

36. The Working Party contributed to the Conference and Plenary Meeting of the Permanent Committee on Cadastre in the European Union themed “The Ecosystems Related



to Real Estate Conveyancing” (Helsinki, Finland, 20 and 21 November 2019). On this occasion, the Working Party presented and discussed the draft Scenario Study on Future Land Administration to Encourage Global Consultations and National Interventions and the conclusions of the draft “Fraud in land administration” study.

37. The Working Party continued to actively contribute to the work of UNGGIM. In this context, it provided input to the development of a Framework for Effective Land Administration (FELA) prepared by the UNGGIM.

38. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, several events planned for the first half of 2020 in which WPLA was involved in the preparations, have been cancelled or postponed. One meeting was held as an online workshop instead (see below).

39. The Working Party launched the “Guidelines for the formalization of informal constructions” during a joint ECE-FIG online workshop (17 June 2020) on “Formalizing the informal to protect residents in informal settlements” to support building back better after COVID-19.

40. The ECE continued its cooperation with FIG, UN-GGIM, FAO, UN-Habitat and the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) on land management issues. At the invitation of the Prindex research advisory group, a joint initiative of the Global Land Alliance and Overseas Development Institute to measure perceptions of property security, the Working Party joined the advisory group and is contributing to its activities.

## 1. Studies on selected topics in land management

41. The WPLA continued its activities on the preparation of the Scenario Study on Future Land Administration to Encourage Global Consultations and National Interventions. After the discussion in the margins of the Helsinki Workshop in November 2019, it is planned to hold consultations on the scenarios and discuss the results of a self-assessment questionnaire during the twelfth session of WPLA in 2021.

42. The “Survey on costs for registration and transfer of real estate and mortgages for the ECE region” was finalized and published online in December 2019. Similarly, the “Guidelines for the formalization of informal constructions”, jointly prepared with FIG, was published in December 2019.

43. The Study on the Challenges of Fraud to Land Administration Institutions (July 2011) has been updated and a new version was prepared. The revised publication will be illustrated by case studies and then published online.

44. In collaboration with the FIG Commission 7, the publication “Guiding Principles for Public-Private-Partnership in Land Administration” (October 2005) will be updated and revised based on experience and best practices with public-private partnerships in land administration. A survey on the subject was prepared and disseminated to WPLA focal points.

## 2. WPLA Task Groups

45. The WPLA implemented its activities with the support of its Task Groups:

- (a) Group on outreach and promotion;
- (b) Group on future scenarios for land administration;
- (c) Group on fraud in land administration;
- (d) Group on public-private partnership in land administration.

## II. Technical Cooperation activities

46. The UNDA tenth tranche project “Evidence-based policies for sustainable housing and urban development in selected countries with economies in transition” was carried out in collaboration with UN-Habitat.

47. The UNDA eleventh tranche project “Strengthening evidence-based and participatory housing policies and strategies” is being carried out in collaboration with UN-Habitat. The project includes cooperation with the Ministry of Regional Development of Bulgaria on the review of the draft National Housing Strategy and other documents. Information on the project activities are presented in paragraph 7 of this document.

48. The UNDA twelfth tranche project “Smart Sustainable Cities for the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda in the UNECE Region” is implemented jointly with UN-Habitat. The project pilot cities are Grodno (Belarus), Nur-Sultan (Kazakhstan), Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), Tbilisi (Georgia) and Podgorica (Montenegro). Information on the activities implemented is available in paragraphs 6, 7, 8 and 9 of this document. Another UNDA twelfth tranche project “Inter-regional cooperation for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda” supports the activities on the KPI evaluation and innovative financing in the city of Almaty (Kazakhstan). In Almaty ECE is working together with UN-Habitat and Economic Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP).

49. In July 2020, ECE in cooperation with other United Nations Regional Commissions, UN-Habitat and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), started the implementation of the project “Urban economic and financial recovery and resilience building in the time of COVID-19” which is supported from the residual funds of the UNDA thirteenth tranche project. The project will be implemented in fifteen cities globally, including in Tirana (Albania), Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) and Kharkiv (Ukraine).

50. The ECE Regional Programme on Technical Cooperation provided support to travel of staff and experts to:

(a) A joint workshop with ESCAP “Forecasting Sustainable Urbanization: Support for Sustainable Infrastructure Planning in Cities”, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 20 and 21 February 2020;

(b) Mapping five out of 47 informal settlements in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, to support the Government of Kyrgyzstan in addressing COVID-19 related challenges in the informal settlements in Bishkek;

(c) Preparation of training materials for the online roundtable on innovative urban financing for the city of Almaty.

### **III. Cooperation with other Economic Commission for Europe subprogrammes**

51. The Committee continued to cooperate with ECE subprogrammes, especially on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Environment, Transport, Statistics, Economic Cooperation and Integration, Sustainable Energy, and Forestry and Timber, within the four ECE nexuses:

(a) Sustainable management of natural resources;

(b) Sustainable and smart cities for all ages;

(c) Sustainable mobility and smart connectivity;

(d) Measuring and monitoring SDGs.

52. Under the ECE nexus “Sustainable and smart cities for all ages”, the Committee secretariat coordinated the preparation of the publication “People-Smart Sustainable Cities: A Policy Nexus for a Prosperous, Green and Liveable Future”, the Executive Summary of which is available in ECE/HBP/2020/12.

53. The Committee has engaged in regular cooperation with the Committee on Sustainable Energy on energy efficiency in buildings. The two Committees co-lead the activities of the Joint Task Force on Energy-Efficiency Standards in Buildings.

## IV. Cooperation with other international organizations

54. Regular cooperation of the five United Nations Regional Economic Commissions and UN-Habitat is organized within the two projects: “Inter-regional cooperation for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda” supported by the UNDA twelfth tranche and “Urban economic and financial recovery and resilience building in the time of COVID-19” supported by residual funds of the UNDA thirteenth tranche. The UNCDF is also a partner in the UNDA thirteenth tranche project.

55. The Committee is working together with UN-Habitat, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Housing Europe, the World Economic Forum, Union of Cities and Local Governments, the European Commission, Eurocities and many other pan-European networks, on issues related to affordable and healthy housing. The roundtable “In focus: SDG 11”, which took place in Geneva on 1 October 2019, allowed discussing synergies and cooperation of the ECE Committee with partner organizations and to plan joint events and projects. The 2020 roundtable will be organized on 5 October 2020 in cooperation with the Geneva City Hub back to back with the Forum of Mayors and the eighty-first Committee session.

56. The Committee continues its cooperation with ITU, 15 other United Nations entities, the OiER, the UNDP offices of Armenia and Ukraine and other stakeholders through the U4SSC global initiative Meetings and outputs under this initiative include the “Guidelines on tools and mechanisms to finance smart sustainable cities projects” and the “Guidelines on strategies for circular cities”.

57. The Committee secretariat continues its cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), UN-Habitat and other organizations involved in the interagency National Urban Policy Programme through its ongoing technical cooperation activities. The secretariat participated in the OECD twenty-third meeting of the Working Party on Urban Policy in Paris on 16 April 2018.

58. Under the Memorandum of Understanding on Land Administration and Management with the FAO, the WPLA is collaborating under a bi-annual cooperation plan with FAO, as well as with the World Bank and the EC JRC. The Working Party regularly cooperates on the organization of joint events and studies with other international organizations involved in land administration in the ECE region, including UN-Habitat, UN-GGIM, the EU INSPIRE Initiative, the European Land Information Service, EuroGeographics, and others.

## V. Major activities planned for 2020 and 2021

### A. Promoting multilevel governance through the organization of the Economic Commission for Europe Forum of Mayors 2020: building urban resilience in the face of COVID-19

59. Following the discussions of the Day of Cities convened by ECE in April 2019, its Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management decided to convene the Forum of Mayors in 2020 and 2021.

60. As the novel corona virus disease (COVID-19) continues to spread across the ECE region, local governments are on the front lines of addressing this unprecedented pandemic. With the ambition to amplify local solutions, on 6 October 2020, ECE will bring together mayors from Europe, North America, Central Asia and the Caucasus to strengthen the resilience of cities to emergencies, including to COVID-19. The Forum of Mayors 2020 will be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, as a hybrid meeting with possibilities for online participation. The Forum’s topic in 2020 is “City action for a resilient future: Strengthening local government preparedness and response to emergencies and the impact of disasters and climate change”. The Forum will submit its recommendations to the Committee on how to address the challenges faced by local authorities in the region. This will help shape policy priorities and programme activities of the Committee. An online portal will be established

for the Forum to support the Mayors to organize the exchange of experiences and best practices on addressing economic and social consensus of pandemics and promoting urban resilience.

61. Prior to the Forum, on 5 October 2020, the roundtable “In Focus: SDG 11” (SDG11 Day) will be organized in cooperation with the Geneva City Hub. The roundtable will bring together partners and key stakeholders from United Nations agencies, city networks and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for an expert exchange on the most pressing issues on urban sustainability. Organization of the SDG11 Day will help to strengthen cooperation with other United Nations agencies and city networks.

## **B. Support efforts of national and local governments across the Economic Commission for Europe region in developing and implementing their immediate response and elaborating recovery plans to the COVID-19 pandemic**

62. As the COVID-19 pandemic impact unravels, with cities being the main hotspots for the transmission of the virus, the Committee will support efforts of national and local governments across the ECE region in developing and implementing their immediate response and elaborating recovery plans to the pandemic. Within the project “Urban economic and financial recovery and resilience building in the time of COVID-19”, the Committee secretariat will support the following activities:

(a) Development of a series of studies and guidance documents: “Global Compendium of Practices in Local Economic and Financial Recovery”, “Guiding Principles and Practices for Urban Economic and Financial Recovery and Resilience Building”, and “Technical Guide for Urban Economic and Financial Recovery and Rebuilding”;

(b) Organization of global and regional capacity-building activities for local governments;

(c) Support to local governments in three pilot cities: Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan; Kharkiv, Ukraine; and Tirana, Albania, to conduct an in-depth assessment of the economic and financial consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and to design local economic and financial recovery and rebuilding plans.

63. The ECE will look for opportunities to engage more countries in similar activities and will look for more funds for the implementation of this important project. This project will contribute to planning for more resilience in cities and for local governments to better able to withstand shocks such as the COVID-19.

64. Activities of several technical assistance projects implemented by the secretariat will be adjusted to support post-pandemic economic recovery in countries with economies in transition. Two projects under the UNDA twelfth tranche “Inter-regional cooperation for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda” and the “Smart Sustainable Cities for the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda in selected countries in the UNECE Region” will include activities to support national and city governments in Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Montenegro in addressing social and economic consequences of the pandemic. The former will be implemented jointly by the five United Nations Regional Commissions and UN-Habitat starting this spring with Almaty, Kazakhstan as the pilot city. The latter is implemented jointly by the ECE Housing and Land Management Unit together with other ECE divisions through the ECE Cities Nexus, and UN-Habitat. Among other planned activities for the period 2020-2021, these projects will formulate proposals for addressing some of the consequences of the pandemic and will advise on how to generate financing for infrastructure investments and other projects to promote more resilient economic and social development.

## **C. Review of and follow-up to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and other relevant agreements**

### **1. Promoting evidence-based policies to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at city level**

65. The Committee will continue its activities to promote evidence-based housing and urban development policies at city level through the evaluation of cities' performance using the KPIs for SSC, preparation of City Profiles based on the evaluation, and capacity building activities to support the cities to become smart and sustainable. In 2020-2021, KPI evaluation and preparation of City Profiles will be conducted for the cities of Almaty and Nur-Sultan in Kazakhstan; Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan; and Podgorica, Montenegro; These activities will be implemented within the UNDA twelfth tranche project "Smart Sustainable Cities for the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda in the UNECE Region".

66. Smart sustainable city profiles will be finalized in 2021 for 17 cities in Norway within the project "Improved sustainable urban development in 17 Norwegian cities" supported by the Government of Norway. Information on and best practices of the Norwegian cities in acceleration of achieving the SDGs and promoting alignment of policy and budgets with SDGs will be widely circulated in the ECE region.

### **2. Activities of the Geneva UN Charter Centres on Sustainable Housing**

67. Concerning the network of Centres of Excellence, the secretariat will continue implementing the recommendations of the evaluation to increase overall effectiveness and efficiency of operations of the Centres. This will include strengthening the network character of the Centres by setting up a shared online space for exchange of information and organizing biannual meetings (online or in person) and fostering the exchange of best practices between the Centres. In addition, it is planned to identify opportunities for joint fundraising

68. For 2020, it is expected that the existing centres will deliver their specific activities, including the following:

(a) The Centre of Excellence on Smart Sustainable Cities in Glasgow, United Kingdom will support organization of the online workshop "Climate change, environmental and health impacts on housing affordability" (9 November 2020) within the initiative "#Housing2030 - Improving Housing Affordability in the UNECE region" carried out by the Housing Europe, the ECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management and UN-Habitat;

(b) The Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Housing in Tallinn, Estonia will conduct trainings for housing managers in countries with economies in transition based on requests of countries to the Committee secretariat;

(c) The Centre of Excellence on Smart Sustainable cities in Vienna, Austria, jointly with the Centre of Excellence in Trondheim, Norway, will establish a networking website at <http://learningsociety.net> to connect city officials with the private sector on the topic of smart cities;

(d) The Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Development Goal City Transition in Trondheim, Norway, will continue to assess the performance of 17 Norwegian municipalities against the KPIs for SSC. Further, the Centre plans to run a pilot test on the development of VLRs to measure progress in attaining the 17 SDGs in several cities in Norway based on the U4SSC KPIs for SSC standard.

69. A detailed planning of work of the Centres of Excellence will be available after the annual meeting of the Centres which will take place in September 2020, prior to the Committee session.

### **3. Regional observatory on urban-related SDGs**

70. The ECE will launch a regional observatory on urban-related SDGs as a web-based platform. Activities on the development of the regional observatory in 2020 will focus on the:

(a) Development of a set of e-learning materials on data and knowledge for the review of progress towards the achievement of the SDGs and on evidence-based policies on housing, urban development and land management;

(b) Dissemination of outcomes of the Committee activities.

71. An ECE Online Academy will include a series of online lectures from ECE experts, including government officials, representatives of academia and partner organizations. Activities of the Online Academy will be promoted through social media channels.

## **D. Sustainable Smart Cities**

### **1. Implementation of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities**

72. The Committee secretariat will continue its work already started in 2020 on the evaluation of the cities' performance, and capacity building activities to promote evidence-based policies and apply innovative financing in the cities of Grodno (Belarus), Almaty and Nur-Sultan (Kazakhstan), Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), Tbilisi (Georgia), and Podgorica (Montenegro).

73. The Committee secretariat will lead the work of the U4SSC Thematic Groups "Economic recovery in cities and urban resilience building in the time of COVID-19" and "Tools and mechanisms to finance smart sustainable cities projects". Compendiums of best practices within the two thematic groups will be developed in cooperation with the U4SSC partner organizations.

74. Workshops and trainings to disseminate information on the published Guide on Circular Cities and its implementation framework will be organized.

### **2. Integrated approach to planning of cities and human settlements**

75. A sub-regional workshop on land-use planning and industrial safety is still planned to be held jointly with the secretariat of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents in Belgrade, Serbia in October 2020. Other regional and national events may be organized, and studies developed within the ECE Nexus on smart sustainable cities for all ages, in cooperation with other ECE divisions subject to availability of extrabudgetary resources.

76. A regional workshop on strengthening resilience of water and sanitation in cities will be organized jointly with the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe Protocol on Water and Health in the autumn 2021. The objective of this regional workshop is to support national and local governments in promoting the resilience of their water supply and sanitation systems to climate change impacts by bringing together the community experts on water, sanitation and health, as well as urban planning and climate change.

## **E. Affordable, adequate, healthy, safe and energy efficient housing**

### **1. Study "#Housing2030 - Improving Housing Affordability in the UNECE Region"**

77. Work on the study "#Housing2030 - Improving Housing Affordability in the UNECE Region" will continue in cooperation with UN-Habitat, Housing Europe, Union for the Mediterranean and other partners. This work is supported by extrabudgetary funds from the governments of Slovenia and Czechia.

78. In 2020-2021, the Committee secretariat will further:

(a) Finalize outcomes of the survey to collect “good practices” in improving housing affordability in countries and cities of the ECE region where both rental and homeownership housing will be addressed;

(b) Organize thematic and subregional/national workshops, including

(i) Workshop “Climate-neutral housing construction and renovation” to be held at Glasgow, United Kingdom on 9 November 2020; the workshop will be organized the UNECE Centre of Excellence in Glasgow;

(ii) Workshop “Housing governance and regulation towards housing affordability” focusing on housing affordability challenges in the South-Eastern Europe to be held at Slovenia in February 2021;

(iii) Workshop “Improving housing affordability through access to finance and funding” to be held at Sofia, Bulgaria in April 2021 (tbc).

79. The study report will be launched at the eighty-second session of the ECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management in October 2021 and will be presented at the planned Ministerial Meeting also in October 2021.

80. The Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management is further expected to launch a regional action plan for the ECE region “#Housing 2030: promoting sustainable housing as part of the recovery and rebuilding plans after the COVID-19 pandemic” which will reflect the recommendations of the #Housing2030 study.

## **2. Planned activities of the Economic Commission for Europe Joint Task Force on energy efficiency in building**

81. The ECE Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings will establish an online database of energy efficiency experts and will organize a series of trainings for national and regional government on improving energy efficiency in buildings through facilitating the maintenance, management and refurbishment of existing housing stock. A detailed planning of activities will be developed at the end of 2020.

## **3. Promoting fire safety in buildings**

82. The Committee will continue cooperation with IFSS on the implementation of the Common Principles on fire safety in buildings through the organization of exchange of good practices, studies and possibly joint pilot projects, if applicable.

## **4. Activities of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group**

83. The REM will continue its work on the ongoing studies on sharing economy in the housing sector and housing finance. It will also support the Committee in its activities on affordable housing, energy efficiency in buildings, including energy poverty, the use of land in urban contexts, bringing brownfield land into use, revitalization of neighbourhoods, finding new uses for old buildings and infrastructure, and other topics within the Committee’s mandate.

## **F. Land administration and management**

### **Studies on selected topics in land management and organization of the WPLA session**

84. To assist member States in improving land administration and land management, the Committee activities will promote security of tenure and improvement of cadastres and land registries, including institutional arrangements for land administration. This cluster will address land registration, e-governance, land tenure, spatial information and cadastres. An emphasis will be placed on issues of innovation, digitalization and capacity building in land administration. Possible impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the land sector will be assessed.

85. The Working Party will finalize the update on the Fraud in Land Administration Systems, and work on an update of the Guiding Principles for Public-Private-Partnership in Land Administration. The draft Scenario Study on Future Land Administration to Encourage Global Consultations and National Interventions will be discussed at the twelfth session of the Working Party in the spring 2021 and the results of this consultation reflected in the final study which will be finalized in 2021.

86. The ECE will also continue its cooperation with FAO, UN-Habitat and GLTN on land management issues.

87. The Working Party plans to hold its twelfth session during the last week of May 2021 in Valetta, Malta.

## **VI. Resources for the implementation of the Committee's activities in 2020-2021**

88. Many of the above-mentioned activities, especially those providing technical assistance to countries, are not covered by funds of the ECE Regular Budget. Some of the planned and above-listed activities will be implemented with the support of the ECE Regular Budget, UNDA projects, RPTC and extrabudgetary projects funded by the governments of Czechia, Norway, Slovenia and the Russian Federation. Additional extrabudgetary funds will be required for the implementation of activities under the 2020 Programme of Work of the Committee.

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