

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



Summary

At its meeting on 2 April 2012, the Bureau of the Committee on Housing and Land Management of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe agreed on the need for a Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management containing specific targets to be reached by member States by 2020. The Bureau stressed the importance of promoting more effective housing policy reforms by setting specific targets and monitoring their implementation.

The Bureau prepared the first draft of the Strategy (ECE/HBP/2012/3), which the Committee discussed at its seventy-third session. The Committee decided on the structure of the Strategy and entrusted the Bureau with further developing the vision, objectives and targets. Also, the Committee entrusted the secretariat with conducting a survey of opinions of member States on priorities and challenges in housing and land management in the region.

Based on the results of the survey*, the draft Strategy was updated. The consultation on the draft continued at the following meetings: Meeting of the Bureau of the Committee (28 November 2012); Stakeholder Meeting (19 February 2013); Joint Bureaux Meeting of the Committee and the Working Party on Land Administration (19 February 2013); and Bureau meeting of the Committee (20 February 2013). Substantive contributions during the meetings were provided by the Working Party, the Real Estate Advisory Group, and various stakeholders including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the International Union of Tenants. The text was then sent to the Committee. On 21 May, during an informal meeting, the Committee agreed on the text. The Strategy was adopted by the Ministerial Meeting on Housing and Land Management on 8 October 2013 in Geneva.

The Strategy, which has a voluntary character, builds on existing and commonly accepted documents from the United Nations system. It aims at promoting sustainable housing and land management in the ECE region. It will guide the work of the Committee, its Working Party on Land Administration and the Real Estate Market Advisory Group. It will also further strengthen the implementation of existing tools and policy guidance of the Committee as well as contribute to the overall improvement of the housing and land management situation both nationally and regionally.

The first part of the Strategy contains 15 objectives (A to O) and 36 targets. These are organized under four themes: Sustainable housing and real estate markets; Sustainable urban development; Sustainable land administration and management; Cross-cutting themes (topics which cover two or three of the other areas).

The second part of the Strategy outlines the types of activities that the Committee will use to achieve its objectives and targets. These activities were highlighted as priorities in the results of the survey on challenges and priorities in housing and land management for the ECE region.



Participants of the Ministerial Meeting on Housing and Land Management on 8 October 2013 in Geneva

* Report on the outcome of the survey: Challenges and priorities in Housing and Land Management in the UNECE Region (ECE/HBP/2013/2) Available at: <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/2013/ece.hbp.2013.02.e.pdf>

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

(c) 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 guidance[†]

(e) Objective (E)

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

Targets: By the year 2020

- E1. Universal design[‡] 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. 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

[†] 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>).

[‡] "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>)

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.