



Concept Note:

**UNECE workshop on:
Spatial planning to improve security of tenure in the UNECE region
Antalya, Turkey, 28 -29 October 2010**

To better understand the role of spatial planning and the responsibilities of land administration authorities to reduce the spread of informal settlements in the UNECE region, the UNECE Working Party on Land Administration, in consultation with the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management and with cooperation of the General Directorate of Land Registry and Cadastre of Turkey are organizing a workshop to take place in Antalya, Turkey, on 28 and 29 October 2010.

Informal settlements are improvised dwellings where housing has been constructed without the requisite legal title for use of the land. More than 50 million people in the UNECE region live in informal settlements today. In some cases, due to the lack of affordable housing, constructions are built on public or private lands with no legal ownership rights. In other cases, good quality housing is built without planning permits and in violation of land use plans. In consequence, its occupiers can have neither security of tenure, nor access to basic infrastructure (such as potable water and sanitation) nor services (e.g. schools, hospitals, public transportation, etc.). Informal settlements are also often built in hazardous locations and their dwellers suffer from social segregation.

According to a recent UNECE study (Self made cities: in search of sustainable solutions for informal settlements in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region), the quality of life for dwellers in informal settlements could be greatly enhanced if more socially responsible housing policy is introduced. Informal communities are the result of long-term trends in urban development that include rapid urbanization, poverty, displacement of refugees due to wars, dysfunctional land management, inadequate spatial planning systems and shortage of affordable housing. Because its causes are multidimensional in nature, holistic policies are necessary to achieve sustainable solutions. Equal, affordable and secure access to land and housing are fundamental to improving living conditions, and effective regulatory tools should be part of any serious policy reform.

The potential for spatial planning to integrate and coordinate different strategies dealing with land and housing issues has been acknowledged by governments. In what concerns land administration authorities, appropriate cadastral and land registration systems must be set up along with effective land and real property records to make information available to the general public on land rights and use as well as on real property transactions. Providing adequate security of tenure is a pre-requisite for extending entitlements to housing rights, which are guaranteed under international law and are also part of the Millennium Development Goals. For instance, streamlining registration and conveyance procedures and reducing their costs will contribute not only to safeguard the interests of owners but also of those who may have legitimate claims on the land they inhabit but lack the necessary means to engage in productive activities. Thus the need to experiment with ground-breaking policies that combine measures to enhance tenure security, such as extended subsidies for the upgrading of settlements and effective social housing developments for relocation of vulnerable families.



Participants in the workshop will be encouraged to discuss the implication of efficient registration systems for the development of well functioning housing markets, the development of mortgage credits as well as micro-credit as well as other policies that could be deemed important for expanding the spectrum of housing tenure in emerging economies and countries in transition. Some of the key questions to be discussed during the workshop include the following:

How important is spatial planning to prevent the spread of informal settlements and what are the roles of various government levels?

How important is the development of integrated National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) for guaranteeing security of tenure and how could it be improved to account for the needs of dwellers in informal settlements?

How does cooperation occur between national authorities in charge of spatial planning and municipal authorities? What are the implications of increased coordination required for the extension of cadastre and registration services, the development of mortgage finance and micro-credit?

What housing policies (social housing, housing loans, subsidies, etc) have proved more effective to reduce informality, and in which national contexts?

What are the lessons learned of experiences with legalization?

What combinations of fees, penalties and other sanctions have proved successful to reduce informality and in what contexts?

What recommendations contained in the study Self Made Cities have since been adopted by government authorities and what were the results?

How can the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups be accommodated in the design of public policy and what is the role of NGOs and citizen organizations involved in urban regeneration projects?

The objective is to discuss good practice experiences of spatial planning to reduce the incidence of informal settlements in the UNECE region and to ascertain what responsibilities property registration institutions and cadastres should assume as fundamental agencies that can guarantee the extension of housing tenure to all sectors of the population. Speakers from government institutions, private sector, academia and NGOs are invited to participate in the event.

For more information and if you wish to participate as a speaker, please contact:

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