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COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

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Geneva, 17-19 September 2001
(Item 4 of the provisional agenda)

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2001-2004

Introduction

1. The present note provides information to assist the Committee in discussing and establishing its programme of work, the duration of each activity, as well as its methods of work. The Committee's Bureau met twice between the sixty-first and sixty-second sessions of the Committee to review the programme of work and its implementation.
2. The draft programme of work is set out in annex I. Each programme element has a fixed duration. When discussing its programme of work, the Committee should keep in mind that the programme should reflect the real interests of member countries and their willingness to contribute to its implementation in terms of expertise, human and financial resources.
3. At its sixty-first session, the Committee agreed to consider the impact of the Strategy and the Ministerial Declaration on its programme of work and on national programmes at its session in September 2001 (ECE/HBP/119, para. 10 (d)). The Bureau of the Committee has considered the issue and invited the secretariat to prepare a revised draft programme and a new draft terms of reference for the Committee (annex II) for discussion and agreement by the Committee (the existing terms of reference were adopted in 1992).

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4. At the Committee's session, the secretariat will report on the Human Settlements Trust Fund's expenditures and balance in 2001. It is important to stress that without the Trust Fund the Committee would not have been able to carry out its programme of work. However, the Trust Fund needs to be maintained at a level that allows the Committee to fulfil its task. It is, therefore, important that countries should make either general contributions to the Trust Fund or specific contributions to earmarked programme elements.
5. A tentative list of meetings is presented in annex III.

Proposed decisions by the Committee

6. In the light of the discussion, the Committee may wish to:
 - (a) Take note of the progress made in the implementation of the programme of work;
 - (b) Update and approve its programme of work, as presented in annex I;
 - (c) Adopt the draft terms of reference, as presented in annex II;
 - (d) Call upon Governments to make either general contributions to the Human Settlements Trust Fund, or specific contributions to earmarked programme elements.

Annex I

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2001-2004

SUBPROGRAMME 10 - HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

10.1.1 Country profiles on the housing sector

Description: The housing sector has a critical role to play in ensuring the success of economic and social development in the ECE region and the reform process in countries in transition. At the same time, the process of transition to a market economy has had a profound impact on housing policy implementation and management. This project represents a tool for Governments to analyse their housing policies, strategies, institutional and financial frameworks for the housing sector and to compare the progress made internationally. The country profile is a process-oriented exercise. At its core is an analytical study on the housing sector, drafted by independent international experts. It draws on the Committee's work on housing and building statistics. Recommendations for improving policies and practices are an essential part of the programme. It also aims to provide information to potential investors.

Work accomplished: The country profiles on the housing sector of Bulgaria, Poland, Slovakia and Lithuania have been published. The studies for Romania and the Republic of Moldova are in preparation. A roster of international experts was established. The country profile project is presented on the Internet (<http://www.unece.org/env/hs/cph>).

Work to be undertaken: The Committee will continue its activities for the preparation of country profiles on the housing sector. In the autumn of 2001, work will start on a seventh study. Possibilities for holding further workshops or ad hoc meetings of experts to discuss the results of project implementation and disseminating the experience in ECE countries will be explored. A follow-up programme for the studies undertaken will be tested. Cooperation with Habitat, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Union and the World Bank will be maintained and strengthened.

Duration: 2001 - 2004.

10.1.2 Improvement of urban environmental performance

Description: Local systems and cities are efficient starting points for promoting sustainable consumption patterns. Numerous initiatives have already been launched in cities and towns to raise public awareness of the environmental impact of individual consumption behaviour, to promote environmentally sound goods, services and sustainable use of energy, water, raw materials and land by individuals and communities. It is recognized that environmentally sound urban and regional transport coordinated with sustainable land use and planning at the central, regional and local levels may lead to a substantial reduction in the impact on human health, natural resources and the environment, while improving the quality of life and economic

performance. Integration of land use and local transport policies requires integrated thinking and action across all policy areas and at all levels of decision-making.

Work accomplished: In cooperation with the Committee on Environmental Policy, a workshop on encouraging local initiatives towards sustainable consumption patterns was held in Vienna in February 1998. As a follow-up, a joint steering group on urban transport patterns and land-use planning was established. The steering group prepared a detailed work programme (HBP/2000/8).

Work to be undertaken: A workshop will be organized in 2002 jointly with the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy. The workshop will address practical experience in the environmentally sound management of urban transport integrated with sustainable land-use planning. Based on the workshop's results, guidelines for governments will be prepared for submission to a joint meeting of the Bureaux of both Committees, and then, if agreed, to the Fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe".

Duration: 2001 - 2002.

10.1.3 Land registration and land markets

Description: Proper land registration is crucial for security of tenure and property rights, effective housing policies and the promotion of market-oriented reforms in economies in transition, as well as in the context of European integration. The activity is aimed at providing assistance to countries in transition in reforming cadastre and land registration systems and sharing information and experience of modernizing land administration systems in the developed market economies through education and training; research and development; exchange of experience; transfer of technology; and standardization.

Work accomplished: The inventory of land administration systems in Europe and North America was published in 1999 and the study on key aspects of land registration and cadastre legislation was prepared and published with the assistance of HM Land Registry (United Kingdom). Two workshops were held: on security mechanisms in the creation of real property markets: protecting rights (Spain, September 2000); and on EU accession from a land administration perspective (Sweden, June 2001). International land administration experts undertook two missions: one to Armenia (November 2000, in cooperation with UNDP) and another to Georgia (May 2001).

Work to be undertaken: The Working Party on Land Administration will promote the practical application of the ECE Land Administration Guidelines (ECE/HBP/96) in countries in transition, inter alia, through different types of operational activities in these countries. A survey of the current structure of landownership and existing legislation to restrict or limit the sale of property in ECE countries and a study on mass valuation for taxation are being prepared. In 2001, a workshop is planned in Armenia. Next year workshops are planned in the Russian Federation and Austria. The second session of Working Party on Land Administration will take place in Geneva on 19-20 November 2001.

Duration: 2001 - 2004.

10.1.4 Housing modernization and management

Description: This activity provides an opportunity to look in detail at urban regeneration policies and at the existing and emerging housing problems, especially regarding the existing housing stock, its management and financing. As a result of the privatization process in countries in transition, the proportion of owner-occupied dwellings in multi-family housing has increased considerably. It is therefore important to establish property rights, define mixed ownership forms, and analyse legal conditions of condominiums, their organizational and management frameworks.

Work accomplished: The final draft of the ECE Guidelines on Housing Condominiums was prepared.

Work to be undertaken: The Committee and its Bureau will study ways to apply the Guidelines on Housing Condominiums and adapt them to specific countries and situations. The Advisory Network will develop housing finance strategies.

Duration: 2001 - 2004.

10.1.5 Development of human settlements statistics

Description: The Committee, together with the Conference of European Statisticians, develops and improves international human settlements statistics, and publishes the Bulletin of Housing and Building Statistics for Europe and North America every two years.

Work accomplished: The Annual Bulletin of Housing and Building Statistics for Europe and North America was published in 2000. The human settlements statistics web site (<http://www.unece.org/env/hs/bulletin/>) has been in operation since 1999.

Work to be undertaken: The Committee will prepare the next issue of the Bulletin of Housing and Building Statistics for Europe and North America to be published in 2002. Meanwhile, annual statistics gathered through the questionnaire will be posted on the web site. The Committee and its Bureau will consider possibilities for setting up a database on housing indicators for the ECE region. A consultation on this activity could be organized at the end of 2001.

Duration: 2001 - 2004.

10.1.6 Major trends characterizing human settlements development

Description: The development of human settlements encompasses a wide range of changes and trends which are not always compatible with the principles of sustainability. More knowledge of

the forces influencing the configuration of urban development and the characteristics of the implementation of urban policies will be provided by studying major trends characterizing human settlements development and presenting national experiences in formulating and implementing policies for a more sustainable development of human settlements.

Work accomplished: The preparations for the Ninth Conference on Urban and Regional Research are well under way and the programme has been issued (HBP/SEM.53/1).

Work to be undertaken: The Ninth Research Conference will take place in Leeds (United Kingdom) on 9-12 June 2002. The Committee will continue the exchange of experience in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

Duration: 2001 - 2003.

Annex II

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TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE

1. The Committee provides policy advice and expert assistance, and develops recommendations, methodologies and guidelines for sustainable housing and urban development. It acts in full conformity with the principles, commitments and global plan of action of the Habitat Agenda, adopted at the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in 1996, and the Declaration on Cities and other Human Settlements in the New Millennium, adopted by the General Assembly in June 2001, and subject to the general supervision and relevant decisions of the Economic Commission for Europe.
2. As a follow-up to the Ministerial Meeting of 19 September 2000 and the adoption of the ECE Strategy for a Sustainable Quality of Life in Human Settlements in the 21st Century (ECE/HBP/120), the Committee endeavours to:
 - (a) Promote efficient and democratic governance that responds to the needs of local communities, by helping ECE countries to develop national good-governance programmes for human settlements;
 - (b) Improve urban environmental performance;
 - (c) Strengthen social cohesion and security in cities;
 - (d) Promote reforms in the housing and urban sector by encouraging legal, economic and institutional changes to promote public and private investment;
 - (e) Improve land and real estate markets and secure private rights in land. The Committee works through its Working Party on Land Administration to reach this goal.
3. Bearing in mind the pertinent decisions of the Economic Commission for Europe, the Committee ensures that close cooperation is maintained on matters of mutual interest with other ECE principal subsidiary bodies, with international institutions and organizations in the ECE region, especially the European Community, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Council of Europe, as well as with the Commission on Human Settlements and other United Nations bodies.
4. In the implementation of its programme of work, the Committee cooperates with the private sector, with non-governmental organizations and with local authorities, relying in particular on its Housing and Urban Management Advisory Network.

Annex III

TENTATIVE LIST OF MEETINGS^{*/}

Meetings

19-20 November 2001	Geneva	Second session of the Working Party on Land Administration
9-12 June 2002	Leeds	Ninth Conference on Urban and Regional Research (United Kingdom)
September 2002	Geneva	Sixty-third session of the Committee on Human Settlements

^{*/} Bureau meetings, workshops, task force meetings and other informal consultations are not listed.