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COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS



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Ninth Conference on Urban  
and Regional Research

HBP/SEM.53/1  
21 June 2001

Leeds (United Kingdom), 9-12 June 2002

Original: ENGLISH

## PROGRAMME AND ORGANIZATION

Note prepared by the secretariat

### Introduction

1. At its sixtieth session in September 1999, the Committee on Human Settlements welcomed the proposal of the delegation of the United Kingdom to host the Ninth Conference on Urban and Regional Research in 2002. At its sixty-first session in 2000 the Committee approved the general outline and the main topic of the Conference: Sustainable and liveable cities. The Committee also agreed to set up a working group of rapporteurs to coordinate the preparatory work on the discussion paper. The Bureau, at its meeting in May 2001, discussed the programme and organization of the Conference and agreed to finalize a document on the subject for the Committee on Human Settlements in September 2001.
2. The Working Group will prepare a discussion paper which will concentrate on three main research themes (see para. 12) together with a number of questions to help participants direct their response papers and provide background information for the discussion.

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## **BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE OF THE CONFERENCE**

3. Sustainable development is widely recognized as a crucial issue and includes the maintenance of high but stable levels of economic growth and employment, social progress which recognizes the needs of everyone, effective protection of the environment and prudent use of natural resources.

4. Urban areas provide homes for the majority of the world's population, and account for most of the resources consumed. A key challenge for achieving sustainable development is to create the physical environment, social and economic conditions, and organizational links to make the world's urban areas more sustainable. The goal is to enhance the quality of life and social equity whilst fostering economic growth and development, and reducing resource use, waste and emissions.

5. Despite differences in administration and governance, the issues and perceptions of sustainable development are common to all UNECE countries and there is tremendous scope for cooperation in research to resolve them.

6. It is clear from the outcome of the Eighth Conference held in Madrid (Spain) in 1998 (HBP/SEM.52/2) and subsequent research programmes that there are three components to sustainable and liveable cities: a competitive, strong economy linked to a cohesive and equitable society; a well designed, coordinated and effectively functioning urban structure and healthy urban ecology; and effective systems of governance and social organization operating at the appropriate scale with the right connections.

7. Research into the socio-economic aspects of sustainable development is less advanced than research on physical and ecological aspects. Links between physical, ecological, economic and social sustainability need to be strengthened and research must address all aspects of sustainable development.

8. The basic objective of the Ninth Conference is to examine how the research has tackled these issues and the possible policies and instruments that can be applied for achieving sustainable and liveable cities.

9. Three main Conference themes reflect the three key areas to be addressed in the development of sustainable and liveable cities. The first theme is concerned with the socio-economic aspects of achieving sustainable and liveable cities: facilitating the development of a strong, competitive economy and creating a cohesive and inclusive society. It focuses on understanding human behaviour to identify the tools to produce these objectives, through consideration of the range of actors involved and the actions and outcomes they are involved in. In doing this it looks at the issues around influencing and managing change and overcoming inertia.

10. The second theme focuses on the ways in which built form influences the liveability of cities, covering issues such as urban design and function and use/reuse of land. It explores the dynamics of urban structure through examination of the relationships between the different

structural components and culture, lifestyles, resource and waste flows, and ecology. It relates these to the sustainability of the "compact city" paradigm, drawing out experience and conflicts arising from its implementation.

11. The third theme addresses the issues of governance and the organization of civil society in creating and maintaining sustainable and liveable cities. It looks at partnerships between and within the public and private sectors and with different sections of society. It is concerned with reducing conflicts between regional/national strategies, business and commercial developments and local interests. It also explores the relationships between the rights of individuals, communities and the State, and the issues raised for the administration of liveable cities.

### **CONFERENCE THEMES**

12. The Conference should bring together researchers, urban planners and policy makers. In so doing, it will assist policy makers in their decision-making task and at the same time contribute to a better understanding of future research requirements in this area. As agreed by the Committee on Human Settlements, the discussion will centre around three themes:

Theme I: Urban society and economy: achieving social equity through effective planning policies and tools.

Rapporteurs: Mr. David FELL (United Kingdom)  
Mr. Vladimir K. STORCHEVUS (Russian Federation)

Theme II: Improving urban performance: urban structure and ecosystems.

Rapporteurs: Ms. Ileana BUDISTEANU (Romania)  
Ms. Anne SKOVBRO (Denmark)

Theme III: Governance and urban organization: integrated decision-making.

Rapporteurs: Ms. Anne QUERRIEN (France)  
Mr. Ingemar ELANDER (Sweden)

### **DOCUMENTATION**

13. The Conference documentation will consist of:

- Programme and organization (HBP/SEM.53/1)
- Information note to the participants (HBP/SEM.53/1/Add.1)
- Discussion paper on sustainable and liveable cities (including the three themes) (HBP/SEM.53/3).

The discussion paper will be circulated by the secretariat in the three UNECE working languages well in advance of the Conference.

14. Countries and international organizations taking part in the Conference are invited to prepare response papers. These should deal with the issues raised in the discussion paper and respond to the questions formulated by the rapporteurs and give examples of recent research and research findings. Case studies may be used to demonstrate policy implementation. The

response papers should preferably be prepared in as many of the UNECE languages (English, French, Russian) as possible. Since it will not be possible to reproduce papers at the Conference, a sufficient supply (100 English, 50 French and 30 Russian, or if only one language version is available, 120 copies) should be sent directly to the host authorities by 29 March 2002 at the following address: Mr. Peter Bide, Planning Directorate, Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 4/E2, Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU, United Kingdom Tel: (+44 20) 7944 3904, Fax: (+44 20) 7944 3909, E-mail: peter\_bide@detr.gsi.gov.uk

In addition, four copies of each language version should be sent to the UNECE secretariat: Ms. Christina von Schweinichen, Environment and Human Settlements Division, Economic Commission for Europe, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland, Tel: (41 22) 917 23 88, Fax: (41 22) 907 01 07, E-mail: christina.schweinichen@unece.org

## **DATE AND VENUE**

15. At the invitation of the Government of the United Kingdom, the Conference will take place in Leeds from 9 to 12 June 2002. The exact venue and details about hotels, transport, cost and method of payment will be communicated at a later stage, together with the registration form (HBP/SEM.53/1/Add.1). The Conference will be preceded by field visits on 9 June to give participants the opportunity to become acquainted with the problems of and the approaches to urban development in the United Kingdom. They will be able to discuss relevant issues with local authorities, researchers and planners.

## **PARTICIPATION**

16. Participation at the Conference is open to representatives of UNECE member countries and international organizations taking part in the work of the Economic Commission for Europe. Other United Nations member countries may attend under article 11 of the Commission's terms of reference. Under article 8, European countries non-members of the United Nations admitted to take part in UNECE work are also welcome to participate. All participants must be accredited by their appropriate government authority or by the international organization concerned. In composing delegations, Governments may wish to bear in mind that the Conference, besides focusing on research, is essentially a discussion forum and meeting place for researchers, administrators and policy makers.

## **ORGANIZATION**

17. The Conference will elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson. The rapporteurs, who participated in the Working Group preparing the discussion paper and questions related to the themes, will analyse the response papers and introduce their respective themes at the Conference. Together with the chairperson and the secretariat, they will also prepare the draft conclusions and recommendations.

18. The draft conclusions will be presented to the participants for review at the closing session of the Conference. The secretariat will finalize the report of the Conference in

cooperation with the chairperson for circulation to all member States and participants. The Proceedings of the Ninth Conference on Urban and Regional Research, including the English version of all Conference materials, will be published.

19. Interpretation will be provided in English, French and Russian throughout the Conference and during the technical visits. Arrangements will be made for the projection of slides, films, video cassettes and tapes.

### **TIMETABLE**

20. The following programme is envisaged:

8 June - Saturday	Arrival of participants
9 June - Sunday	Field visit to developments in and around the city which provide examples of some of the issues addressed in the discussion paper
10 June - Monday	Opening of the Conference Discussion of theme I
11 June - Tuesday	Discussion of theme II
12 June - Wednesday	Discussion of theme III Presentation of the conclusions and recommendations of the Conference
13 June - Thursday	Departure of participants

### **COST AND METHOD OF PAYMENT**

21. The Conference is free of charge, but all participants are expected to pay for their own travel to and from Leeds and their living expenses. The host authorities will assist participants with hotel reservations. The host authorities will also make arrangements for Conference participants for the field visit. Further details will be provided about these arrangements.

### **VISAS**

22. Participants should, if necessary, apply for visas to the Embassy of the United Kingdom in the country in which they reside.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

23. Those wishing to obtain further information from the host authorities should contact: Mr. Peter Bide, Planning Directorate, Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 4/E2, Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU, United Kingdom  
Tel: (+44 20) 7944 3904, Fax: (+44 20) 7944 3909, E-mail: peter\_bide@detr.gsi.gov.uk

24. At a later stage an information note to the participants will be issued as an addendum. It will provide detailed information on:

- Registration; hotels and costs; the study tour: detailed programme.