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COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
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(Geneva, 15-17 September 2003)
(Item 4 of the provisional agenda)

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2003-2005

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-third and sixty-fourth 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-third session the Committee stressed the importance of linking the priorities identified in the Habitat Agenda, in the Declaration and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development as well as in the Millennium Declaration with its programme of work. The Committee discussed the further need to strengthen the social and economic aspects of human settlements and to address poverty alleviation in the region (ECE/HBP/127, para. 8).

4. At the Committee's session, the secretariat will report on the Human Settlements Trust Fund's expenditures and balance in 2003. 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 continue to make either general contributions to the Trust Fund or specific contributions to earmarked programme elements.

5. The Committee's sixty-fifth session is scheduled to take place in Geneva on 13-15 September 2004. The Working Party on Land Administration will hold its third session in Geneva on 17-18 November 2003.

Proposed decisions by the Committee

6. In the light of the discussion, the Committee may wish to:

- (a) Take into account the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and make a contribution to the ECE regional meeting on sustainable development;
- (b) Take note of the progress made in the implementation of the programme of work;
- (c) Update and adopt its programme of work, as presented in annex I; and in line with the programme budget narrative for the biennium 2004-2005 (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 2003-2005

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 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, Lithuania, Romania, the Republic of Moldova and Albania have been published.

The studies for Armenia (started in October 2002) and the Russian Federation (started in April 2003) are in preparation. The concept of the country profiles has been revised so as to strengthen the focus on thematic areas which are of particular concern for the country under review. Steps have been taken to follow up the implementation of the recommendations in the country profiles.

In the context of the country profile on Romania, a workshop was organized in Bucharest in October 2002 to evaluate the developments which had taken place in the housing sector of Romania since the preparation of the country profile in 2000. The country profile project is presented on the Committee's web site (<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 late 2003, work will start on a study on Ukraine. Further workshops or ad hoc meetings of experts will be held to discuss the results of policy implementation as a follow-up to the studies' recommendations and to provide additional expertise in specific areas where needed. Cooperation with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Union and the World Bank will be maintained and strengthened.

The Committee may also undertake (subject to the availability of additional financial resources) activities related to the preparation of a regional housing profile on South Eastern

Europe in cooperation with the Council of Europe Development Bank, following the outcome of the High-Level Conference on Housing Reforms in South-Eastern Europe, jointly organized by the Council of Europe Development Bank and the World Bank in Paris on 23-24 April 2003.

Duration: 2003 - 2005.

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. Modern community development planning focuses on a broad range of additional issues and factors: social, economic, environmental, financial, etc. It is important to develop effective local planning systems as an integral part of strategic national and regional planning and development.

Work accomplished: As a follow-up to the workshop on encouraging local initiatives towards sustainable consumption patterns (Vienna, February 1998), the Committee on Human Settlements and the Steering Committee on Transport, Health and Environment have welcomed the offer of the delegation of Cyprus to organize a workshop on urban plans and transport sustainable for health and the environment.

Work to be undertaken: The delegation of Cyprus will organize the workshop in November 2003 to address practical experience in the environmentally sound management of urban transport integrated with sustainable land-use planning. Case studies presented in a common format and lessons learned will be reviewed during the workshop.

The Committee will also hold a discussion at its present session on development planning at the local level and it will consider the possibilities for preparing ECE guidelines on local planning (with special reference to countries in transition).

Duration: 2003 - 2005.

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 in 2000 with the assistance of HM Land Registry (United Kingdom).

The study on land mass valuation systems for taxation purposes in Europe and the survey on restrictions on ownership, leasing and transfer of real property in the ECE countries, were prepared and published in 2002 with the assistance of the Federal Land Cadastre Service of the Russian Federation.

Three workshops were held: on mass valuation systems of land for taxation (Russian Federation, June 2002), on cooperation in land administration, customers and services (Austria, September 2002) and on spatial information management for a sustainable real estate market (Greece, May 2003). An international team of land administration experts undertook country reviews on Armenia (2000), Georgia (2001) and the Russian Federation (2003).

Work to be undertaken: The Working Party is expected to decide on updating the ECE Land Administration Guidelines (ECE/HBP/96). In 2004 a land administration review is planned in Lithuania. Three studies, namely the guidelines on legal and cadastral objects and their identifiers, the guidelines on public access to data, and the report on public/private partnership, are being prepared.

Workshops are planned in the United Kingdom (Edinburgh, 1-4 October 2003), Armenia (spring 2004) and Lithuania (autumn 2004). The third session of the Working Party on Land Administration will take place in Geneva on 17-18 November 2003. Cooperation with key partners, such as the World Bank and EuroGeographics, will be further developed.

Duration: 2003 - 2005.

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 housing financing, the existing housing stock and its management. 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, and analyse legal conditions of condominiums, their organizational and management frameworks. Basic mechanisms for social housing development should also be defined and recommended.

Work accomplished: The ECE Guidelines on Housing Condominiums were prepared and will be published in 2003 (ECE/HBP/123). The Colloquium on housing cooperatives was organized jointly by UNECE, UN-HABITAT and the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) in Ankara in June 2002. A workshop on social housing was held in Prague in May 2003 as first step in the

preparation of ECE guidelines on social housing. A draft of the guidelines on housing finance was prepared and discussed by the Project Steering Group in March and June 2003.

Work to be undertaken: The Committee and its Bureau will study ways to promote the practical application of the Guidelines on Housing Condominiums and ensure their wide dissemination in countries in transition. A second workshop on housing condominiums will be organized in the Russian Federation in November 2003. The guidelines on housing finance systems for countries in transition will be finalized and presented to the Committee at its next session. The Committee will continue its work on social housing guidelines, taking into account the strong links between social housing and housing cooperatives. A task force for the guidelines on social housing will be established in Autumn 2003. A second workshop on social housing will be organized in Vienna in 2004. The workshop will consider the results of the work on these guidelines.

Duration: 2003 - 2005.

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 Statistics for Europe and North America every two years.

Work accomplished: The Bulletin of Housing and Building Statistics for Europe and North America was published in 2000. The human settlements statistics web site is accessible at: <http://www.unece.org/env/hs/bulletin/>.

A joint consultation (Committee on Human Settlements/Conference of European Statisticians) took place on 5 June 2003. It recommended some changes in the questionnaire sent each year to the national statistical offices and revised the name of the Bulletin. The new title would read Bulletin of Housing Statistics for Europe and North America.

Work to be undertaken: The Committee will prepare the next issue of the Bulletin of Housing Statistics for Europe and North America to be available on the Web in 2003. The Committee will coordinate the collection of housing statistics with the EU activities on housing statistics.

Duration: 2003 - 2005.

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 Ninth Conference on Urban and Regional Research took place in Leeds (United Kingdom) on 9-12 June 2002. The main topic was sustainable and liveable cities. Three themes were discussed: (i) urban society and economy: towards social equity through effective planning policies and tools - a behavioural perspective; (ii) improving urban performance: urban structure and ecosystems; (iii) governance and urban organization: integrated decision-making. The Committee's Bureau started consultations with the Slovak delegation to establish the topic, venue and date for the next conference on urban and regional research to be held in Slovakia.

Work to be undertaken: The Committee will continue the exchange of experience in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Declaration, and will consider the priorities of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in the context of its programme activities. A preparatory group for the 10th Conference on Urban and Regional Research will possibly be established in 2004. The Conference will be organized in cooperation and consultation with the European Network for Housing Research.

Duration: 2003 - 2005.

Annex II

BUDGET NARRATIVE 2004-2005

Subprogramme 8: Human settlements

The work under the subprogramme will be carried out by the Environment and Human Settlements Division.

The subprogramme's overall aim is to improve the situation in human settlements in the ECE region by supporting in particular socially vulnerable population groups and taking into account the gender perspective. The activities of the subprogramme will relate to the implementation of the ECE Strategy for a Sustainable Quality of Life in Human Settlements in the 21st Century as adopted at the ministerial meeting in September 2000. In line with these directions, the main activities of the subprogramme will be the preparation of analytical studies and guidelines on urban environmental performance and housing policies, with a particular focus on social housing, the dissemination of best practices, the compilation and publication of housing and building statistics for the ECE region, the organization of seminars and workshops, the provision of expert assistance to individual ECE countries as well as the follow-up of the implementation of the policy recommendations agreed at the relevant intergovernmental meetings. In particular, the follow-up activities on the country profiles on the housing sector will be strengthened and systematized. In addition, preparations will be undertaken to revise the ECE Strategy for a Sustainable Quality of Life in Human Settlements in the light of the developments taken place in the five years following its adoption.