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Review of implementation of the programme of work for 2010–2011

Draft programme of work for 2010–2011

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This note contains information on progress made in the implementation of the programme of work of the Committee on Housing and Land Management for the biennium 2010–2011 (see ECE/HBP/160) and provides an update on future activities of the Committee. The note takes into account related decisions of the Committee's Bureau meetings held on 21 December 2009 and 19 March 2010. The programme of work will be finalized by the secretariat to reflect decisions of the seventy-first session of the Committee. It should be noted that implementation of the activities contained in the programme of work is subject to the availability of funds and will reflect commitments of member States and their willingness to support and contribute in terms of expertise and human and financial resources.

Subprogramme 8 Housing, Land Management and Population

8.1.1 Country profiles on the housing sector

Description

The housing sector plays a critical role in ensuring the success of economic and social development in countries in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region and in the reform process in UNECE countries in transition. At the same time, the transition to a market economy has had a profound impact on housing policy implementation and management for many UNECE countries. This item of the Committee's programme of work enables Governments to analyse their housing policies, strategies, and institutional and financial frameworks for the housing sector and to compare them with progress made internationally. It also aims to provide housing-related information to potential investors. The country profile is an analytical study on the housing sector drafted by international experts. It places great emphasis on the linkages between housing, spatial planning and land administration policies. Recommendations and guidance for improving policies and practices are an essential part of this activity.

Work accomplished

To date, country profiles on the housing sectors of Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Slovakia and Serbia and Montenegro have been published. The launching event of the country profile of Belarus was held in Minsk in December 2009, and the fact-finding mission for the country profile of Tajikistan took place in early February 2010.

Work to be undertaken

The Committee will continue its activities to prepare country profiles on the housing sector. In that connection, the secretariat is finalizing the country profile of Tajikistan; a launching event of the country profile of Azerbaijan will be held in Baku on 18 November 2010; and contacts have been established between the secretariat and authorities in Uzbekistan and Ukraine to consider undertaking country profiles on the housing sector of those countries.

8.1.2 Improvement of urban environmental performance

Description

Cities and towns are efficient starting points for promoting a sustainable quality of life and for reducing carbon emissions. Numerous initiatives have already been launched in cities and towns to raise public awareness of the environmental impact of individual consumption behaviours, as well as to promote environmentally sound goods and services and the sustainable use of energy, water, raw materials and land by individuals and communities. The spatial planning process focuses on a broad range of issues and factors, including social, economic, environmental, financial and cultural ones. It is important to develop an effective local planning process as an integral part of strategic national and regional development planning.

Work accomplished

(a) *Spatial planning.* A workshop on “Enhancing urban performance: How effective urban planning can lead to greener urban communities and economies and promote social cohesion” was held in Prague, Czech Republic, in May 2010;

(b) *Informal settlements.* An analytical study on challenges and policy responses for informal settlements was completed. The book, entitled *Self-Made Cities: In search of sustainable solutions for informal settlements in the UNECE region* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.09.II.E.3), identifies the different characteristics of informal settlements in the UNECE region, analyses the root causes of their formation and development, provides an overview of existing policy responses, gives specific case studies and includes recommendations and guidance to member States on how to address the challenges posed by informal settlements;

(c) *Climate neutral cities.* A seminar on this topic was held during the seventieth session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management. The seminar presented case studies on how carbon emissions at the city and building level can be reduced, while also increasing the overall sustainability of urban spaces and households. The Housing and Land Management Committee also participated in the fifth session of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) World Urban Forum, “The Right to the City – Bridging the Urban Divide”, which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in March 2010. UNECE Executive Secretary Ján Kubiš was one of the speakers in a dialogue on “Sustainable Urbanization: Cities in a Changing Climate”. In addition, the Committee organized a networking event on “Climate Neutral Homes” during the Forum, which featured a series of presentations addressing the synergies between an increased reliance on green technologies in cities and related social and economic benefits.

Work to be undertaken

(a) *Spatial planning.* A joint workshop with the Industrial Accidents Convention on the topic of “Land-use planning around high-risk industrial sites” will be held in the Netherlands in November 2010;

(b) *Informal settlements.* A workshop on spatial planning as it relates to security of tenure will be held in Antalya, Turkey, in October 2010 as part of the programme of work of the Working Party on Land Administration;

(c) *Climate neutral cities.* A study on climate neutral cities is being developed by the Committee. The study identifies means and tools for adaptation to and mitigation of climate change in cities and provides recommendations and guidance addressed to policymakers, practitioners and the general public on how to implement and promote those measures. An extended outline of the study will be presented to the Committee at its seventy-first session, in September 2010.

8.1.3 Land registration and land markets*Description*

The Working Party on Land Administration is the subsidiary body of the Committee that specifically addresses land administration issues. Proper land registration is crucial for security of tenure and property rights, effective housing policies and the promotion of reforms in economies in transition, as well as in the context of European integration and the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The Working Party’s activities aim to provide assistance to countries in transition in reforming cadastral and land registration systems and in sharing information and experience regarding the

modernization of land administration systems in the more advanced economies through education, training, research and development, exchange of experience, transfer of technology and standardization.

Work accomplished

(a) *Land administration reviews.* A land administration review of Tajikistan was developed jointly with the country profile on the housing sector of that country. A chapter on land administration was included in the land administration review of Kyrgyzstan.

(b) *Workshops.* In 2009–2010, two workshops were held: in Baku, Azerbaijan, in March 2010, on efficient and transparent land management in UNECE member States; and in Minsk, Belarus, in June 2010, on the impact of “E-government” reforms on cadastre and registration services in the UNECE region;

(c) *Real Estate Market Advisory Group.* In April 2010, the Real Estate Market Advisory Group released its first publication, *Policy Framework for Sustainable Real Estate Markets: Principles and guidance for the development of a country's real estate sector* (ECE/HBP/147). A round table was held by the Advisory Group in Kiev, Ukraine, in June 2010 to present the *Policy Framework* and promote its application in Ukraine;

(d) *Fraud in electronic registration and conveyancing.* A questionnaire on fraud in electronic registration and conveyancing was distributed among member States. Expert staff from the United Kingdom will analyse the responses obtained and contribute to the development of a study containing policy recommendations and best practice examples in this area.

Work to be undertaken

(a) *Working Party on Land Administration.* The seventh session of the Working Party will take place on 20 and 21 June 2011;

(b) *Land administration reviews.* A fact-finding mission for a land administration review of the Republic of Moldova will be undertaken in 2010–2011;

(c) *Real Estate Market Advisory Group.* A workshop on “Greening the Real Estate Market”, to be held in Dessau, Germany, was postponed from April 2010 to November 2010 (to be confirmed);

(d) *Fraud in land management.* A study containing policy recommendations and good practice examples for prevention of fraud in this area will be presented to the Working Party on Land Administration for discussion and endorsement;

(e) *Informal settlements.* A workshop on spatial planning as it relates to security of tenure will be held in Antalya, Turkey, in October 2010 as part of the programme of work of the Working Party on Land Administration.

8.1.4 Housing modernization and management

Description

The main goal of this activity is to identify and provide tools for tackling problems related to housing stock and its management. Housing systems are an important factor with regard to both safeguarding social cohesion in UNECE countries and in responding to environmental challenges. Work in this area focuses in particular on urban renewal and housing refurbishment policies and on existing and emerging housing problems, especially those connected with housing financing and energy efficiency. As a result of privatization in countries in transition, the proportion of owner-occupied dwellings in multifamily

housing is the major form of tenure there. It is therefore important to establish property rights, define mixed ownership and establish a legal and institutional framework for operating housing condominiums. Focus will be put on the basic mechanisms for social housing development and for the enhancement of building performance.

Work accomplished

(a) *Energy efficiency in housing.* A study addressing the political, institutional, financial, technological and institutional gaps in the UNECE region was prepared (*Green Homes*, ECE/HBP/159). It contained a series of policy guidelines in this area and served as the basis for future work on this subject (see ECE/HBP/2009/6). The first workshop on energy efficiency in housing was held in Sofia in April 2009. An international forum on energy efficiency in housing, "Towards an Action Plan for Energy-efficient Housing in the UNECE region", was held in Vienna in November 2009. Both meetings contributed to the development of the draft Action Plan for Energy-efficient Housing in the UNECE Region.

Work to be undertaken

(a) *Energy efficiency in housing.* The draft Action Plan for Energy-efficient Housing in the UNECE Region will be presented for adoption by the Committee at its seventy-first session in September 2010. The International Energy Efficiency Forum, to be held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, was postponed from June 2010 to November 2010 (to be confirmed). A Green Building Workshop to be held in the framework of the Forum will discuss the issues of energy efficiency in the housing sector, including the implementation of the draft Action Plan for Energy-efficient Housing in the UNECE Region. A forum on measuring the carbon footprint of buildings, prepared jointly by the secretariats of the Timber and the Housing and Land Management Committees, will be held in Canada in spring/summer 2011 (to be confirmed);

(b) *Housing management.* A workshop on multifamily housing stock management will be hosted by Slovakia in the fall of 2010 to discuss lessons learned from the Slovak case study on housing management and to consider how its main findings could be replicated in other countries of the UNECE region;

(c) *Building and construction safety.* At its seventieth session, in September 2009, the Committee highlighted the importance of building and construction safety in the context of disaster preparedness. To address those issues, an international workshop on building and construction safety to be hosted by Azerbaijan will be held in Baku in November 2010 in collaboration with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;

(d) *Draft Framework Convention on Affordable, Healthy and Ecological Housing.* A background policy paper on affordable, healthy and ecological housing, prepared by the secretariat with the assistance of experts, will serve as the basis for an in-depth discussion by the Committee at its seventy-first session. Subject to the decision of the Committee, a draft Framework Convention on Affordable, Healthy and Ecological Housing will be developed to provide member States with an effective tool for ensuring sustainability of the housing sector in the UNECE region.

(e) *Training activities.* A training workshop on affordable housing for Government officials from countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States will be held in cooperation with UN-Habitat and the Government of Belarus in Minsk, Belarus, in November 2010. In addition, a joint United Nations Development Programme-UNECE training on the legal aspects of housing privatization and management will be held in Tbilisi, Georgia, in the fall of 2010 (to be confirmed) as a follow-up to the country profile on the housing sector of Georgia.