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**Economic Commission for Europe**

Committee on Housing and Land Management

**Working Party on Land Administration****Seventh session**

Geneva, 30 June 1 July 2011

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

**Summary report on the workshops organized under the  
Programme of Work of the Working Party on Land  
Administration****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

At its meeting in December 2009, the Bureau of the Committee on Housing and Land Management discussed the need to streamline its reporting procedures. It agreed that the next Committee and Working Party on Land Administration sessions should be provided with a single document containing short summaries of the workshops that had taken place during the intersessional period.

The present note contains an overview of two workshops organized under the Working Party since its sixth session. Reports on the other workshops organized by the Working Party during the last biennium were summarized at the time of the Committee's seventy-first session (ECE/HBP/2010/5). In line with the Technical Cooperation Strategy of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE),<sup>1</sup> these activities focused on countries with economies in transition, were provided at the request of Governments and/or on the recommendation of the Working Party, and were implemented in those areas where the Committee has a clear comparative advantage over other organizations.

Particular attention was given to the involvement of beneficiary countries and the use of national expertise to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of technical cooperation activities implemented under the Working Party's programme of work.

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<sup>1</sup> Available on the UNECE website at: <http://www.unece.org/operact/opera/tcoop.html>.

## **I. Workshop on the Role of Spatial Planning to Improve Security of Tenure in the UNECE region**

1. The workshop was held in Antalya, Turkey, on 28 and 29 October 2010. It was organized by the Working Party on Land Administration in cooperation with the General Directorate of Land Registry and Cadastre of Turkey.
2. The workshop was attended by representatives of Austria, Azerbaijan, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (in line with United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)).
3. The goal of the workshop was to improve the understanding of the role of spatial planning and the responsibilities of land-administration authorities for reducing the spread of informal settlements in the UNECE region.
4. Informal settlements are improvised dwellings where housing has been constructed without the requisite legal title for use of the land. Today, more than 50 million people in this region live in informal settlements. In some cases, due to the lack of affordable housing, poor quality dwellings 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 occupants can have neither security of tenure nor access to basic infrastructure (such as potable water and sanitation) nor services (e.g. schools, hospitals and public transportation). Informal settlements are also often built in hazardous locations and their dwellers suffer social segregation.
5. Representatives of the Government of Turkey described work being done at the local and national level to address this issue. They emphasized that the authorities aimed to promote urban and rural settlements that were well structured, enjoyed balanced growth and offered a high quality of life for residents. To achieve this goal, preventive action should be taken that is directed at the root causes of informal settlements (e.g. migrations, natural disasters). To carry out this action, different institutions and organizations are working together. For instance, the Housing Development Administration was created to provide loans for the development of village architecture, the transformation of squatter areas, preservation and renewal of historic sites and local architecture, as well as for enacting social housing policies and infrastructure.
6. Representatives of other Governments in the UNECE region emphasized the value of well-coordinated spatial planning and land-administration policies and the importance of integrating strategies currently employed by separate public institutions. Streamlining registration and conveyance procedures and reducing their cost would not only safeguard the interests of owners but also of those who might have legitimate claims on the land they inhabit but lack the necessary legal titles to utilize their assets productively.

### **Main conclusions and recommendations**

7. Participants concluded that spatial planning is one of the most important areas for policy action to address informal settlements. In particular, land-administration authorities have a key role to play in policy implementation related to spatial data management and in the streamlining of cadastre activities and registration procedures.
8. The provision of information is critical for managing spatial development because it supports the formulation and implementation of effective human-settlements policy, which

must also integrate environmental-protection requirements. Land administration and spatial planning are fundamental land tools and they should be used in a coordinated manner to achieve the best results. It was emphasized that the European Union INSPIRE Directive provides useful guidance for ensuring the interoperability and sharing of data. Housing, land and spatial planning should also constitute part of an integrated national strategy to address poverty reduction and general economic development.

9. With regard to best practice based on international experience in promoting security of tenure, it was emphasized that security of tenure should be interpreted as a continuum of policies to gradually improve access to land rights. Especially in developing countries and in countries with economies in transition, Governments should reconsider policies that aim to universally regularize all settlements, and focus instead on a mixture of policies on such issues as sound emergency access to infrastructure, the creation of effective conditions for individual upgrading, as well as affordable multi-apartment housing as an alternative to regularization.

## II. International Forum on “Greening Real-Estate Markets”

10. The workshop was held in Dessau, Germany, on 29 and 30 November 2011. It was organized by the UNECE Real Estate Market Advisory Group in cooperation with the Federal Environment Agency of Germany, which hosted the event.

11. The workshop was attended by representatives of the Government of Germany as well as private sector, non-governmental organizations and academia from countries in the region.

12. Considered a focal point for many services and industries, the real-estate sector has a key role to play in adapting to climate change in the UNECE region. A more intensive use of green technologies by developers could radically transform the city landscapes of the region. Furthermore, it has been estimated that green investments will have a substantial multiplier effect on a country’s gross domestic product, in addition to savings in building operation costs for families. Overall, consolidating the necessary adaptations will require not only funding, but also motivation and awareness among citizens.

13. The objective of the workshop was to exchange information on best practice experiences in promoting green economies in the real-estate sector from a multi-stakeholder perspective.

14. The UNECE secretariat presented the contents of the Action Plan on Energy Efficient Housing, which aims at improving the carbon footprint of the housing sector in the UNECE region, and outlined its policy goals, targets for policy action, indicators of achievement and a vision for the year 2020.

15. The Real Estate Market Advisory Group summarized the findings of the study *Policy framework for sustainable real estate markets: principles and guidance for the development of a country’s real estate sector*, which among its principles emphasizes the need to introduce reforms in order to better appraise the use of green technologies in the valuation of real-estate units.

16. Speakers and participants reviewed the economic and social benefits associated with a green real-estate sector. Challenges that were identified included the impact of a more intensive use of green technologies on the durability of homes, related operations and maintenance costs for families and the need to better calibrate subsidies and tax incentives to facilitate green retrofits of existing housing stock; the importance of the use of ICT technologies by cadastre authorities to better quantify the potential for in-house energy generation with solar panels; the need to update value appraisal practices of buildings to

better quantify the effect of green investments; and the impact of a green real-estate sector on the comfort of living spaces and health of populations.

### **Main conclusions and recommendations**

17. Participants agreed that uniform global valuation standards should be set for all properties that incorporate green technologies as a form of value.

18. The potential of ICT technologies as applied by Government authorities should be exploited to improve accessibility of information for real-estate market actors.

19. Concerted action by all stakeholders involved will be needed in order to implement the Action Plan for Energy Efficient Housing in the UNECE region, and the main principles and recommendations for developing sustainable real-estate markets.

20. An interdisciplinary approach for the development of green real-estate markets needs to be applied, bearing in mind the linkages between the ecological, financial and social-cultural aspects of sustainable and green real-estate sectors.

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