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Report of the Committee on Housing and Land Management on its seventy-second session

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I. Introduction

1. The Committee on Housing and Land Management (CHLM) held its seventy-second session on 3 and 4 October 2011 in Geneva.

A. Attendance

2. Representatives of the following countries participated: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

3. Representatives of the following United Nations programmes and specialized agencies attended the session: the International Labour Organization (ILO); the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat); the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR); and the World Health Organization (WHO).

4. Representatives of the following intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations attended the session: Associazione Nazionale Tra le Società di Promozione e Sviluppo Immobiliare (ASPESI); Habitat for Humanity International; the International Council of Women (ICW); International Energy Agency (IEA); International Real Estate Federation (FIABCI); International Road Federation (IRF); and World Fire Statistics Centre (WFSC). A number of private-sector representatives, experts and academics from various European universities and research institutions also participated.

5. Members of the Committee's Housing and Urban Management Advisory Network (HUMAN) and the Real Estate Market (REM) Advisory Group also attended the session.

B. Organizational matters

6. The Chair of the Committee, Mr. Wolfgang Förster (Austria), opened the session. The Director of the Trade and Sustainable Land Management Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) welcomed the participants.

7. The Committee adopted its provisional agenda, as contained in document ECE/HBP/166.

II. Matters arising from the sixty-fourth session of the Economic Commission for Europe

8. The secretariat informed participants about the outcomes of the sixty-fourth session of the Economic Commission for Europe (Geneva, 29-31 March 2011) relevant to the work in housing and land management.

9. As a result of discussions on the new directions and initiatives in the UNECE programme of work, including in housing, the Commission adopted the following decisions related to the work in housing and land management:

- (a) Invited the Committee, after its annual session in October 2011, to report to the Executive Committee, first on the possibility of holding a Ministerial meeting in 2012 to assess progress in the implementation of ECE housing

instruments and to define future policy directions for the Committee's work, and second on the outcome of the work of the relevant open-ended Working Group on the advantages and drawbacks of a possible legally binding instrument on housing;

- (b) Encouraged the Committee to consider land administration and "real estate markets" as key components of its work.

10. The Commission also decided to review its future work priorities. It requested the Executive Committee to conduct the review during 2011-2012, and propose decisions on the matter to be taken by the next Commission session in 2013. The objective of two exercises being to ensure that the work of UNECE is effective and that focused on those areas which are most relevant to the needs of member States. For the subprogramme on housing and land management, this would mean a review of the programme of work, and the related activities and accomplishments of both the Committee and its subsidiary body, the Working Party on Land Administration. The Committee was also informed that the subprogramme on housing and land management would be reviewed by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 18 October 2011.

11. The Committee took note of the information provided, which would be taken into account in its future work.

III. Work of the Bureau of the Committee and the Housing and Urban Management Advisory Network

12. The Chairperson of the Bureau reported on the Bureau's work and the main decisions taken since the Committee's previous session (ECE/HBP/2011/2). The Committee was also informed about the outcome of the Bureau's discussion on the future of the Housing and Urban Management Advisory Network (HUMAN). In particular, the Bureau suggested that discontinuing HUMAN and offering a possibility for its members to join the REM Advisory Group could facilitate the future contribution of these experts to the work of the Committee. In its discussion, the Bureau took into account the above-mentioned decision regarding the Committee's work on real estate markets, the close interrelationship between the activities of HUMAN and those of the REM Advisory Group, and the need to streamline the structure of the Committee's advisory machinery.

13. The Committee approved the work of the Bureau and its proposal to discontinue HUMAN and to offer the possibility for its members to join the REM Advisory Group.

IV. Review of the programme of work

14. The Committee reviewed the implementation of the programme of work for 2010–2011 (ECE/HBP/2010/162), and considered the draft programme of work for 2012–2013 (ECE/HBP/2011/1) and the draft biennial evaluation plan of Subprogramme 8, "Housing, Land Management and Population" for 2012-2013 (Informal notice 1). It assessed the progress made and offered advice on future activities.

15. The secretariat informed the Committee about the EXCOM decision to defer the submission of the programmes of work of all sectoral committees for formal approval by EXCOM to the second half of 2012, with the understanding that work could continue on activities planned to take place in 2012 in accordance with the programme budget. These programmes of work could later be adjusted by EXCOM for the remainder of the 2012-2013 biennium in the light of the outcome of the review and decisions taken on the future work priorities of UNECE.

16. The Committee approved the draft programme of work for 2012–2013 and the draft biennial evaluation plan of Subprogramme 8, "Housing, Land Management and Population" for 2012-2013.

A. Country profiles on the housing sector

17. The Committee was informed about the progress in preparing, finalizing and launching country profiles of the housing sector.

18. The delegation of Azerbaijan reported on the launching event for its country profile (ECE/HBP/156); held in Baku in November 2010, and informed the Committee about progress in addressing the recommendations contained in the study. Reforms were being implemented in the housing sector, including the amendment of the Housing Code and the preparation of the draft Town Planning Code.

19. The representative of Tajikistan informed participants about recent developments in the housing sector since the fact-finding mission on the preparation of the Country Profile of Tajikistan. The study covered housing and land management issues, with a particular focus on challenges connected to infrastructure and settlements in disaster-prone areas. Reforms were being implemented to make housing more affordable and to promote institutional investments in the housing sector. Tajikistan was interested in continuing its cooperation with UNECE, particularly in further implementation of recommendations contained in the study.

20. The delegation of Kyrgyzstan provided information on the work carried out to implement the recommendations contained in the country profile of the housing sector of Kyrgyzstan (ECE/HBP/157), including plans for a launching event to be held in February 2012. The country has already started implementing some of the recommendations related to the simplification of housing property registration procedures, and a unified policy for land management was under development.

21. The delegation of Belarus informed the Committee about progress made in the implementation of recommendations from the country profile study of Belarus. Ongoing work to improve housing legislation in order to make housing more affordable for the population was highlighted, including the development of a draft law on housing construction savings and a draft Presidential decree on this issue, and a Programme for the design and construction of energy-efficient housing.

22. The representative of Serbia provided information on the impact of the country profile of Serbia on the country's housing policy. The delegation reported that the recommendations contained in the study had served as the basis for substantive improvements in housing legislation; in particular for the development of a legal framework for social housing, which included the Law on Social Housing and a Regulation on the Issuing and Revoking of the Operating Licenses.

23. The delegation of Georgia reported on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the country profile of Georgia (ECE/HBP/143). A draft Codex for Spatial Planning and Construction Regulation was being developed covering a number of issues raised by the country profile study, such as: the optimization of principles for spatial planning and construction regulations; the elaboration of national and regional housing strategies; and the introduction of rules for legalizing illegal buildings and structures.

24. A consultant presented the draft study "Housing Profiles: Implementation Challenges and Opportunities in Housing Policy and Practice in the UNECE Region". The study provided a comparative review of housing policy reforms in 27 countries with economies in transition in the UNECE region. The paper analysed four policy instruments -

regulatory, institutional, financial/fiscal and land administration policy instruments, and covered the following 7 areas:

- Strengthening political support for housing reforms.
- Establishing reliable and effective housing institutions.
- Developing effective land administration and land management.
- Mobilizing housing finance and fiscal support.
- Facilitating improvement in housing quality.
- Sustaining housing investment and production.
- Enabling access to affordable housing and tenure choice.

The study was developed for the first Europe and Central Asia Housing Forum (Budapest, 4-6 April 2011).

25. An expert who had been involved in the preparation of the country profile of Tajikistan informed the Committee specific issues in this country's housing sector. Tajikistan is extremely exposed to natural disasters that have plagued the country, causing death, and damaging its housing stock. In addition, housing affordability and choice were low and there was a lack of institutional and legislative housing frameworks. In this regard, the country profile was useful in providing an assessment of the current situation and offering solutions to improve the housing sector.

26. In the ensuing discussion, the delegations emphasized the importance of exchanging best practices on the implementation of the country profile recommendations, in particular on social housing and housing management, and underscored the importance of cooperation with international financial institutions and other donors to facilitate the development of new housing policy instruments in the reviewed countries.

27. The Chair of the Committee highlighted the countries' experience as an important example of how country profiles could contribute to improving the sector in countries of the region.

28. The secretariat informed the Committee that the country profile of the housing sector of Tajikistan had been finalized and would be published in the coming months. The study reflected the challenges and priorities of the housing sector in that country and also contained a chapter on land administration. Information was provided on progress in developing of the country profile of the housing sector in Ukraine, including on the outcome of the pre-mission (14-17 June 2011) and the preparation of the research mission which would take place in March 2012. The secretariat also informed the Committee about the request to undertake a country profile of the housing sector in the Republic of Moldova, received from its Government. The study would focus on housing modernization, management and land administration.

29. The representative of the Russian Federation provided information about the main priorities of the national housing policy and challenges to their implementation. The delegation highlighted progress made since the development of its country profile in 2002 and expressed interest in having a new review undertaken that would provide recommendations on how to address emerging challenges in this country's housing sector.

30. The Committee:
- (a) Took note of the information on the country profiles;
 - (b) Welcomed the proposals of the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation to carry out reviews of their housing and land administration sectors;
 - (c) Agreed to undertake the country profile of the housing and land administration sectors of the Republic of Moldova; and invited the secretariat and the delegation of the Republic of Moldova to agree on the dates and other issues related to the development of this study;
 - (d) Agreed to undertake the country profile of the housing sector of the Russian Federation; and invited the delegation of the Russian Federation to provide the secretariat with a letter from the respective Ministry requesting the country profile on the housing sector of this country.

B. Improvement of urban environmental performance

31. The Chair informed participants that the Committee at its seventieth session had agreed to include the issue of climate neutrality under this item of the programme of work and to undertake a study of means and tools for adapting to and mitigating climate change in cities. At its subsequent session, it agreed on the extended outline of the study and asked the secretariat to prepare the study and recommendations and present the text at the seventy-second session. The draft had been made available on the UNECE website as Informal notice 4.

32. The consultant presented the draft study “Climate Neutral Cities: How to make cities less energy and carbon intensive and more resilient to climatic challenges” (Informal notice 4). The main objective of the study was to provide policymakers, practitioners, planners and other professionals with an overview explaining the relationships between cities, climate change and energy, and to outline responses required to mitigate the energy intensity and carbon footprint of UNECE cities. The study presented a range of programmatic interrelated measures for a progressive transformation towards low-energy, low-carbon, highly resilient and ultimately climate neutral cities.

33. The Director a.i. of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction shared with the Committee their experience on strengthening urban resilience and informed the Committee about the “Making Cities Resilient” Campaign.

34. The secretariat informed the Committee about the outcomes of the workshop on Spatial Planning to Improve Security of Tenure in the UNECE region held in Antalya, Turkey, in October 2010 as part of the programme of work of the Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA). The workshop highlighted spatial planning as one of the most important areas for policy action to address informal settlements. It concluded that the provision of information is critical for managing spatial development since it supports the formulation and implementation of effective human-settlements policy.

35. The secretariat of the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents informed the Committee about the outcomes of the seminar on Land-Use Planning Around High-Risk Industrial Sites, which was organized jointly with the Committee on Housing and Land Management in The Hague, Netherlands, in November 2010. The main objective of the workshop was to facilitate a dialogue to improve understanding between authorities working on industrial safety and land-use planning. The workshop emphasized the importance of integrating safety aspects with land-use planning;

and highlighted the need for cooperation between safety authorities and land-use planners to ensure safe neighborhoods around major hazardous industrial facilities.

36. The Committee:
- (a) Took note of the information provided;
 - (b) Approved the draft study "Climate Neutral Cities: How to make cities less energy and carbon intensive and more resilient to climatic challenges";
 - (c) Invited the secretariat to finalize the study and to issue it as a UNECE publication.

C. Land registration and land markets

37. The Chair of the Working Party on Land Administration gave an overview of the activities of the Working Party and summarized the outcomes of the seventh session of the Working Party (June 2011), including:

- (a) The finalization of the the study *The challenges of fraud to land administration institutions* (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2011/3), which was launched during the session;
- (b) Workshops on “The Role of Spatial Planning to Improve Security of Tenure in the UNECE Region” (Antalya, Turkey, 28-29 October 2010) and on “Cadastral and Real Estate Registration Systems: Producing Quality Information for the Real Estate Market in the ECE Region” (Rome, 5-6 May 2011) (see ECE/HBP/2011/3);
- (c) Ongoing preparations for the upcoming workshop to be held in Amsterdam, Netherlands (12-15 October 2011), on the topic of land administration in a network society;
- (d) The decision by the Working Party to undertake a study on benchmarking of land administration systems to be presented at the next session of WPLA in 2013;
- (e) The offers by the delegations of Greece, Sweden and the United Kingdom to organize capacity-building workshops under the auspices of the Working Party on the following topics:
 - Identification rules for registration purposes (Sweden, 2013).
 - The role of land registration authorities in supporting the recovery in the global property market and the wider economy (London, October 2012).
 - Informal Development: Legalization Progress - Property and Housing Aspects (Greece, end of 2012).

38. The delegation of Italy informed the Committee about the outcomes of the workshop on “Cadastral and real estate registration systems: Economic information for real estate markets in the UNECE region” held in Rome, 5-6 May 2011. The workshop discussed the role of cadastral and real estate registration systems and their influence on the development of well-functioning housing markets. The workshop concluded, inter alia, that sound information on land property (i.e. by producing property index price information) was essential to support real estate markets. An integrated and holistic approach was recommended for the development of real estate markets both at national and international levels.

39. The representative of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group, reporting on the Group's activities, highlighted the successful release of the publication "Policy framework for Sustainable Real Estate Markets" and reported on the roundtable discussions organized in Kiev (17 June 2010), Lisbon (27 January 2011) and Rome (12 May 2011) to promote the national implementation of guidelines and the main principles contained in the publication. Since it was issued in 2010, the study has been translated into Chinese, Italian, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. The Committee was informed about the outcomes of the international workshop on "Greening Real Estate Markets: A Multi-stakeholder Perspective" (ECE/HBP/2011/3), organized jointly by the REM and the German Federal Environment Agency in Dessau, Germany, in November 2010. The representative of REM also highlighted the main elements of the Group's programme of work for the period 2012-2013 (Informal notice 3).

40. The Committee:

- (a) Took note of the information provided by the Chair of WPLA and the representative of the REM Advisory Group;
- (b) Took note of the information on future workshops and invited interested delegations to participate in the upcoming workshop on "Land administration in a networked society" to be held in Amsterdam (12-15 October 2011).

D. Housing modernization and management

41. The Chair reminded the delegations that the Committee at its seventieth session had adopted the Action Plan for Energy-efficient Housing in the UNECE Region and invited UNECE member States to implement policies for removing barriers to energy efficiency.

42. The secretariat informed participants that the Action Plan had been issued as a UNECE publication, in two languages (ECE/HBP/164). To present the Action Plan and promote its implementation in member States, a number of capacity-building activities had been organized: International Forum "Greening Real-Estate Markets" (Dessau, November 2010); First Europe and Central Asia Housing Forum (Budapest, April 2011); and UNECE - UN-Habitat joint training workshop on "Affordable Housing Provision in CIS countries" (Minsk, March 2011). In addition, a project was being implemented by UNECE in cooperation with UNDP to develop the National Action Plan of Montenegro for energy efficiency measures in the residential sector. This project could serve as a "model" technical cooperation project to be pilot tested in Montenegro and then replicated in other interested countries in the region.

43. The secretariat also informed the meeting that, as a follow-up to the training in Minsk, the Government of Kyrgyzstan offered to host a UNECE - UN-Habitat training workshop on affordable and energy-efficient housing to be held in 2012.

44. The delegation of Azerbaijan reported on the outcome of the forum on Natural Disasters and Building and Construction Safety which was organized in collaboration with the secretariat of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction in Baku on 16-17 November 2010. Participants in the Forum discussed various policy mechanisms to improve disaster preparedness in the region, and showcased a number of best practice examples of spatial planning strategies in disaster-prone areas (more information is available in ECE/HBP/2011/3).

45. The representative of Belarus presented the main outcomes of the training workshop on affordable housing provision in countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) held in cooperation with the Government of Belarus and UN-Habitat in Minsk in March 2011. Presentations at the workshop highlighted the most common challenges to

ensuring sustainable housing in CIS countries, and provided expert advice on how to develop effective policy responses. They also showcased good practices in achieving affordable and energy efficient housing (for more information, see ECE/HBP/2011/3).

46. The representative of Albania welcomed the increased focus of the Committee on organizing capacity-building workshops and training, and offered to host a training workshop in Tirana on the topic of energy efficiency in housing for countries of South-East Europe (June 2012).

47. The delegation of Armenia offered to host a UNECE - UN-Habitat national training workshop on affordable housing provision, in the second half of 2012.

48. The Committee took note of the information provided and welcomed the initiatives of Albania, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan to organize joint UNECE - UN-Habitat training workshops in 2012.

V. Affordable, healthy and ecological housing

A. Working Group on a Possible Legally Binding Instrument on Affordable, Healthy and Ecological Housing in the UNECE Region

49. The Chair reminded the Committee that during the seventy-first session it had decided to set up a Working Group on a Possible Legally Binding Instrument on Affordable, Healthy and Ecological Housing in the UNECE Region. In accordance with its terms of reference, the Working Group held two meetings in 2011 and produced a report on its findings.

50. To guide the discussions on this agenda item, the Committee heard three keynote presentations by experts on different topics related to sustainable housing with particular importance for the UNECE region, in particular: healthy housing; energy renovation of multi-family buildings; and sustainable real estate markets.

51. The Chair presented the main findings of the Working Group, as contained in its report (ECE/HBP/AC.1/2011/4). He emphasized that the large number of Working Group members and their active involvement in its discussions reflected both the importance of housing issues in the region and the great interest of member States in the topic of sustainable housing. At the same time, Working Group discussions highlighted the divergence of views on the scope of a possible framework convention on sustainable housing and the potential value of such an instrument.

52. The Committee also heard three presentations by members of the Working Group (Albania, Germany and Tajikistan), representing countries with different views on the scope of the possible convention. The presentations focused on the challenges encountered in these countries in improving sustainability of the housing sector and outlined their views on the added value of a possible framework convention.

53. In the discussion that followed, the Committee welcomed the presentations and emphasized the opportunity to streamline existing instruments through the development of a possible Framework Convention. Some member States expressed the opinion that a general declaration of principles could accommodate the diverging situations in some areas at the national level and also reflect the different needs of member States throughout the region. Overall, there was consensus that the Working Group should continue its deliberations in 2012 to further explore the scope and objectives of a possible framework convention.

54. The Committee:
- (a) Extended the mandate of the Working Group to continue its work in 2012 to develop the scope (subject and geographical coverage), and objective(s) of a possible framework convention on sustainable housing;
 - (b) Agreed to change the current name of the Working Group to “Working Group on a Possible Framework Convention on Sustainable Housing”;
 - (c) Invited the participation of legal experts in the Working Group;
 - (d) Requested the secretariat to present the findings of the Working Group at the next session of the Committee in 2012.

B. High-Level Ministerial Meeting

55. The Chair reminded the Committee that the sixty-fourth session of UNECE (March 2011) had invited the Committee to discuss the possibility of organizing a Ministerial meeting to assess progress in the implementation of UNECE housing instruments and to define future policy directions for the Committee’s work.

56. The secretariat presented a background note (ECE/HBP/2011/5) which provided a brief summary of the Committee’s focus and main areas of work since the last Ministerial meeting held in 2006, and highlighted some emerging challenges and issues of interest to member States in the area of housing and land management.

57. The Committee agreed on the need to review progress in the implementation of the 2006 Ministerial Declaration and define future policy directions of the UNECE work in the areas of housing and land management and supported the idea of organizing a Ministerial meeting. The delegation of Belarus offered to host such a meeting.

58. The Committee:
- (a) Agreed to hold a Ministerial meeting back to back with the seventy-fourth session of the Committee in September 2013;
 - (b) Requested the secretariat to prepare a draft indicative programme of the Ministerial meeting to be considered at the session of the Committee in 2012;
 - (c) Invited member States to consider hosting that Ministerial meeting and Committee’s session and provide their proposals for consideration by the Bureau of the Committee.

VI. Review of mandates of the Working Party on Land Administration and the Real Estate Market Advisory Group

59. The Chair informed the meeting about the review of mandates of the Working Party and the REM Advisory Group undertaken in line with the UNECE guidelines (ECE/EX/1 and ECE/EX/2/Rev.1, respectively).

60. The Committee was also informed about a comprehensive overview of the Working Party’s activities undertaken during the last five years, including workshops, seminars, publications and other initiatives (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2011/8). The document was discussed by the Working Party at its seventh session (30 June-1 July 2011). In addition, the Working Party had also evaluated the work of the REM Advisory Group, based on another document prepared by the secretariat (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2011/5). The Committee was also invited to take into account the decision of the sixty-fourth session of UNECE which

"encouraged the Committee to consider land administration and "real estate markets" as key components of its work". With a view to strengthening the work of REM and following up to the afore-mentioned decision, the Committee Bureau suggested that in the future the REM should report directly to the Committee and provide advice both to the Committee and to the Working Party.

61. The Chair of the Working Party and a representative of the REM Advisory Group presented the draft revised Terms of Reference of these bodies (ECE/HBP/2011/4).

62. The Committee welcomed the outcome of the review exercise and highlighted the relevance of the work undertaken by the Working Party and the REM Advisory Group. The Committee reviewed the draft revised Terms of Reference of the Working Party and REM Advisory Group and:

- (a) Extended the mandate of the Working Party on Land Administration for the next five-year period, with its draft revised Terms of Reference, for submission to EXCOM;
- (b) Extended the mandate of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group for the next two-year period, with its draft revised Terms of Reference, for submission to EXCOM.

VII. Inter-divisional and inter-agency activities

63. The Chair informed the meeting about the initiative taken by the UNECE Timber Committee to establish a Task Force on Green Building to be composed of experts from the Timber Committee, Committee on Housing and Land Management, the Committee on Environmental Policy and the Committee on Sustainable Energy.

64. The Chair provided information about the main outcome of the 1st Europe and Central Asia Housing Forum, held in Budapest in April 2011. The forum was organized jointly by Habitat for Humanity, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the United Nations Development Program and UNECE. As part of the programme, UNECE and the REM Advisory Group organized a parallel session on issues of affordable and ecological housing and sustainable real estate markets. The session featured a series of presentations by members of the Committee and the REM Advisory Group addressing the principles of affordable, healthy and ecological housing in the region, the contribution of energy efficiency measures to improving the affordability of housing and achieving other social and economic benefits, and the role that the UNECE policy framework for the real estate sector could play in promoting sustainable development, particularly in countries with weak legislative frameworks in this area (for more information, see ECE/HBP/2011/3).

65. The representative of the UNECE Sustainable Energy Division reported on the outcomes of the twenty-second session of the Steering Committee of the Energy Efficiency 21 Programme. Information was also provided on the main conclusions of the second International Energy Efficiency Forum, jointly organized by UNECE, UNESCAP and the Government of Tajikistan in Dushanbe from 12 to 14 September 2011.

66. The Chair reminded the delegations that other information about inter-divisional and inter-agency cooperation, in particular, with UN-Habitat, UNDP, UNISDR, etc. had been provided under other, relevant agenda items.

67. The Committee took note of the information provided.

VIII. Other business

68. The secretariat provided information on the UNECE Trust Fund on Human Settlements and invited delegations to announce their contributions to the Trust Fund for particular programme activities. Countries that had contributed funds since the previous session were thanked, in particular, Austria, Czech Republic and Switzerland. The secretariat further emphasized that the Trust Fund was vital for undertaking any of the activities within the Committee's programme of work. It was a matter of concern that this year's contributions had not yet reached the necessary level. While acknowledging the current economic climate, it was suggested that member States consider contributing any funds left unspent at the end of the budget year.

69. The delegation of Sweden announced the contribution of US\$ 15,000 to support participation of countries with economies in transition in capacity-building workshops and meetings of the Working Group on a possible Framework Convention on Sustainable Housing.

70. The Committee took note of the information provided and welcomed the voluntary contribution from Sweden.

IX. Election of the Bureau

71. The Committee elected the Bureau for its seventy-third session, as follows: Mr. Wolfgang Förster (Austria), Chair; Ms. Doris Andoni (Albania); Mr. Azer Khanlarov (Azerbaijan); Ms. Daniela Grabmüllerová (Czech Republic); Mr. Damir Pahič (Croatia); Ms. Lise Nielsen (Denmark); Ms. Elena Bejenaru (Republic of Moldova); Mr. Ilya Ponomariov (Russian Federation); Ms. Svetlana Ristić (Serbia); Ms. Elena Szolgayová (Slovakia); Mr. Lars Roth (Sweden); and Mr. Ernst Hauri (Switzerland).

X. Closing of the seventy-second session

72. The Chair announced that the secretariat would prepare the report of the seventy-second session, circulate it among the participants and post it on the Committee's website. The Chair then closed the session.
