



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

ECE/HBP/136
16 November 2005

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

**REPORT ON THE SIXTY-SIXTH SESSION
(19 to 21 September 2005)**

- The Committee discussed the UNECE reform process on the basis of the evaluation report on the state of the UNECE. It considered options to reform the Committee and the activities put forward by its Bureau. Consequently it unanimously agreed to:
 - (a) Rename the Committee as the Committee on Housing and Land Management (subject to editorial changes);
 - (b) Further streamline its activities, putting emphasis on high profile tasks and discontinue two elements in the programme of work, namely, Development of human settlements statistics (10.1.5); and Major trends characterizing human settlements development (10.1.6.).
- The Committee considered the possibility of organizing a high-level meeting to be held in conjunction with the sixty-seventh session of the Committee on 18 to 20 September 2006 to define future policy directions and address specific and concrete topics, taking into account the outcome of the ECE reform;
- In consultation with United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), the Committee agreed to take an active part in the World Urban Forum to be held in Vancouver on 19 to 23 June 2006 and to organize UNECE side events which would provide a platform for both disseminating UNECE experience and good practice in the implementation of major policy issues regarding the housing sector, land administration and, in particular, social housing, and housing finance;
- Furthermore the Committee supported the work on the main principles of Public/Private Partnership in land administration and noted its relevance to other areas of the Committee's work like housing and spatial planning;
- The Committee adopted its programme of work for 2006-2007, and agreed on the draft biennial programme plan for 2008-2009 which had been prepared by the secretariat.

Introduction

1. The Committee on Human Settlements held its sixty-sixth session in Geneva from 19 to 21 September 2005. Mr. Hubert Van Eyk (Netherlands) chaired the meeting.
2. Representatives of the following countries participated: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine and United States of America.
3. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme UN-HABITAT, and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe were represented.
4. The following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attended: Huairou Commission (New York); International Council of Women (ICW); International Real Estate Federation (FIABCI); International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP); International Union of Tenants (IUT); and World Fire Statistics Centre.
5. Members of the Committee's Housing and Urban Management Advisory Network also attended.

I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

6. The provisional agenda (ECE/HBP/134) was adopted.

II. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE SIXTIETH SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

7. The secretariat informed the Committee on the decisions taken by the Commission at its sixtieth session, held from 22 to 25 February 2005, which had a bearing on the Committee's work (HBP/2005/1). In particular, attention was drawn to the ECE reform process and the evaluation report on the state of the UNECE. The Conference Room Paper (CRP.2) on the options to reform the Committee on Human Settlements was presented to the Committee, as well as the draft biennial programme plan for 2008-2009 (CRP.1). The Chair of the Committee provided additional information on the discussions held during the Commission's session and invited the delegations to discuss and agree on the proposals put forward by the Bureau on how the Committee could be reformed.
8. The following national delegations took the floor: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Czech Republic, Georgia, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States of America and expressed the need to continue the Committee's activities. No delegation supported the discontinuation of the Committee's work. The statements can be summarized as follows:
 - (a) The Committee on Human Settlements is a unique forum in the region for senior policy makers to formulate housing, land (real estate) and urban policies and strategies to promote an integrated approach for achieving sustainable human settlements development;

- (b) By undertaking joint activities and consultations, the Committee has built partnerships with other international organizations to create synergies and to avoid overlapping;
- (c) The Committee is supporting the economic and social stabilization of the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South Eastern Europe (SEE) countries by suggesting innovative ways of cooperating between different levels of government, private sector, and NGOs. It also contributes to establishing democratic governance at the municipal level and to enhancing social cohesion, poverty reduction and political stability;
- (d) The activities on land administration proved to be very effective in providing social and economic benefits in the housing sector and for urban development. It further supported its work on spatial planning as a major tool for shaping integrated policies for sustainable urban development;
- (e) The implementation of the Committee's policy work in particular through providing assistance to countries through organizing expert's meetings and capacity building events, related to the implementation of the recommendations contained in the country profiles as well as the policy guidelines developed by the Committee and Working Party, was stressed.

9. A representative of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe highlighted the political and technical dimensions of the Committee's work and indicated that the discontinuation of the Committee's activities could slow down the reform process in South Eastern Europe. The International Council of Women stated the importance of the Committee's work in the context of the living environment, support to poor families and introducing the gender perspective.

10. The Committee unanimously agreed to:

- (a) Recommend to the Commission that it maintain the three pillars of the Committee's activities namely on housing, spatial planning and land administration, and to strengthen the integration of these three sectors;
- (b) To rename the Committee as the Committee on Housing and Land Management (subject to editorial changes);
- (c) To concentrate on its main work directions and further streamline by cancelling two elements from its programme of work, namely, Development of human settlements statistics (10.1.5); and Major trends characterizing human settlements development (10.1.6), after the 10th Conference on Urban and Regional Research to be organized in Slovakia on 22 to 23 May 2006;

III. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

11. The purpose of the discussion was to engage the continuing attention of policy makers in the UNECE region on the importance of human settlement development for promoting stability and prosperity across the region.

12. Prof. E.A.Wegelin, consultant, presented the discussion paper (HBP/2005/5), reviewing the role of human settlements development (HSD) in the broader socio-economic development context of the UNECE region, with particular focus on Eastern Europe, EECCA and SEE. The presentation was linked to the three Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): poverty reduction; environmental sustainability; and partnerships for development.

13. The above presentation was supplemented by the presentation of Mr. J. Manthorpe (United Kingdom), who reported on the particular role of land administration in creating social and economic benefits for the society. The summary of the discussion is presented in the annex I. It was also suggested that the paper could be revised and presented as the Committee's contribution to the UN-HABITAT World Urban Forum to be held in Vancouver in June 2006.

14. As a follow up to the discussion, the Committee agreed:

- (a) To consider organizing a high-level meeting to be held in conjunction with the sixty-seventh session of the Committee on 18 to 20 September 2006. This meeting should define future policy directions of the Committee's work and address specific and concrete issues (for example such as the dilapidation of the former public housing stock, informal settlements, management of multi-family residential buildings, etc); and take into account the results of this year's in-depth discussion and the outcome of the ECE reform process;
- (b) To invite its Bureau and the secretariat to prepare a draft declaration on the basis of the outcome of the in-depth discussion, for consideration and adoption at the high-level meeting; and
- (c) To invite interested delegations to assist the Bureau in drafting such Declaration;
- (d) In consultation with UN-HABITAT to take an active part in the World Urban Forum to be held in Vancouver on 19 to 23 June 2006 in organizing UNECE side events which would provide a platform for both disseminating UNECE experience and good practice in the implementation of major policy issues regarding the housing sector, in particular social housing and housing finance, and land administration.

IV. PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2006-2007

15. The Committee discussed the directions of its work and future activities, based on the draft programme of work (HBP/2005/2).

A. Country profiles on the housing sector

16. The delegation of Armenia reported on the follow-up workshop to the study on the housing sector profile of Armenia, held in Yerevan on 20 to 21 May 2005 (HBP/2005/4) and on the usefulness of the country profile recommendations for further developing national policies and initiatives with regard to social housing, the management of multi-unit housing stock and the national preparation of housing strategies.

17. Since the previous session of the Committee, the Country Profile on the Russian Federation has been published (ECE/HBP/131). The delegation of the Russian Federation reported on the main features of the new Housing Code and that the country profile study was a basis for the set of housing laws adopted this year.

18. The delegation of Serbia and Montenegro presented the main conclusions and recommendations of the recently accomplished housing sector profile study, which is about to be finalized and published. Capacity building in the implementation of housing policies is a crucial issue for the country. In the discussion, it was suggested that the exchange of information between ECE countries on housing condominium legislation and implementation could be very helpful.

19. The delegation of Azerbaijan reported on the preparations for a country profile study on Azerbaijan, which started with a pre-mission carried out in April 2005. This was organized in conjunction with a pre-mission for the land administration review. The research missions of the international experts team are scheduled for January/February 2006, both for the country profile study and land administration review.

20. The following countries have requested to carry out country profiles: Ukraine, Georgia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYRM) and Belarus. The delegations of Ukraine and Georgia indicated their need and willingness to start the project in 2006.

21. The Committee was informed that the draft study on Trends and Progress in Housing Reforms in South-East Europe, jointly prepared and financed by UNECE, Council of Europe and Council of Europe Development Bank, was finalized.

22. The representative of the World Fire Statistics Centre drew attention to the increase in human losses as a result of fire in buildings in the ECE region, particular in countries in transition.

23. The Committee:

- (a) Acknowledged the progress in preparation of the study on Trends and Progress in Housing Reforms in South-East Europe, noted the fruitful collaboration of the UNECE with the Council of Europe and the Council of Europe's Development Bank; and invited the three organizations to publish the study;
- (b) Welcomed the outcome of the workshop held in Armenia, on the implementation of the recommendations of the country profiles, and took note of the information of the Russian delegation, including follow-up activities on the preparation of national housing legislation;
- (c) Took note on the finalization of the study on Serbia and Montenegro and invited the secretariat to publish the study before the end of 2005.
- (d) Took note of the progress in the preparation of the country profile study in Azerbaijan in conjunction with the land administration review on the country;
- (e) Invited its Bureau to decide which country should initiate a review in 2006-2007, taking into account the degree of preparedness of a given country for such activity;
- (f) Invited the Bureau in co-operation with the Advisory Network to consider activities on the exchange of information and good practice on housing legislation and implementation aspects, in particular in the area of housing condominiums and social housing.

B. Land registration and land markets

24. Mr. B. Kjellson (Sweden), the Chairperson of the Working Party on Land Administration reported on the progress made since the previous session of the Committee and on the preparations for the fourth session of the Working Party to be held on 21 to 22 November 2005.

25. The experts from Germany, Finland, Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom and the ECE secretariat implemented a land administration review on Lithuania (HBP/WP.7/2005/3). A follow-up workshop was organized in Lithuania on 23 to 25 September 2004

(HBP/WP.7/2005/5). The workshop on EU enlargement and developments in land administration in the UNECE region was held in Hungary (7 to 8 April 2005). The workshop on the multi-purpose cadastre was held in Finland (1 to 2 September 2005).

26. A pre-mission on Land Administration Review on Azerbaijan took place in April 2005 and the research mission is planned for January/February 2006, both in conjunction with the Country Housing Profile study.

27. Information was provided on the finalized and the ongoing studies, in particular on ECE Guidelines on Real Estate Units and Identifiers and on Land Administration in the UNECE Region: Development Trends and Main Principles.

28. Mr. P. Creuzer (Germany), the Chair of the task force, presented a study on the main principles of public/private partnership in land administration (HBP/WP.7/2005/8)

29. The Committee:

- (a) Supported the work on the main principles of Public/Private Partnership in land administration and noted its relevance to other areas of the Committee's work such as housing and spatial planning;
- (b) Took note of the progress made by the Working Party on Land Administration on land administration reviews, and their interlinkage with the countries' studies on the housing sector.

C. Improvement of spatial planning and urban environmental performance

30. The delegation of Poland informed the Committee of the results of the workshop on spatial planning held in Warsaw on 19-21 June 2005 (HBP/2005/3). The workshop stressed that spatial planning is a major tool for integrated government policies with its two basic functions: regulatory and developmental.

31. The secretariat reported on the preparation of the study on spatial planning systems and the results of the first meeting of the task force.

32. The Committee took note on the progress in preparation of the study on spatial planning and agreed that the study should be submitted for approval at its next session in September 2006.

D. Major trends characterizing the development of human settlements

33. The delegation of Slovakia presented the programme and organization of the 10th UNECE Conference on Urban and Regional Research (HBP/2005/6) to be held in Bratislava on 22 to 23 May 2006.

34. The Committee:

- (a) Approved the programme and noted the positive co-operation with the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT);
- (b) Agreed that the programme element "Major trends characterizing the development of human settlements"(10.1.6) would be discontinued after the Conference. It also agreed that if the Committee continued to work on very concrete urban planning policies these

activities could be undertaken through the existing programme element on improving environmental performance.

(c) Invited all delegations to prepare and send response papers for the Conference.

E. Housing modernization and management

35. The secretariat reported that the study on housing finance systems for countries in transition was published (ECE/HBP/138). A representative of Housing and Urban Management Network (HUMAN) informed the Committee about a launching event related to the study to be held in Slovakia in October 2005 with the participation of local representatives and of the neighbouring countries and other stakeholders.

36. Mr. W. Förster (Austria), Chair of the task force on social housing, presented the final version of the guidelines on social housing for approval by the Committee. He suggested that in consultation with UN-HABITAT, the World Urban Forum (Vancouver, 2006) could be a good opportunity to present the guidelines to a wider audience.

37. The delegation of Albania indicated its interest to organize a follow-up workshop on social housing. Several delegations stressed the need to translate the guidelines in other languages and disseminate among relevant organizations and authorities.

38. A representative of UN-HABITAT suggested that it work with UNECE in organizing a number of events on this issue. Representatives of FIABCI and ISOCARP indicated their interest to distribute the guidelines through their networks.

39. The Committee:

- (a) Adopted the guidelines on social housing for publication; and
- (b) Agreed to focus on the practical application of the guidelines and other policy recommendations in the UNECE member countries, and to look at ways in which the Committee could assist them in the implementation process (including the contribution of the network (HUMAN) in this process).

F. Development of statistics on human settlements

40. A representative of the UNECE Statistical Division reported on the preparations for the 2010 Censuses of Population and Housing.

41. The Committee took note of the preparations for the Population and Housing Censuses and agreed, if needed, to provide expert assistance for this process.

42. The Committee decided to discontinue the programme element, Development of Human Settlements Statistics (10.1.5). However, housing related statistics will continue to be collected within the country profiles programme. To this end the questionnaire for compiling the bulletin on housing statistics will be further streamlined so as to collect data more relevant to the Committee's programme of work. In this way data will be collected for both the country profiles and the housing sector database.

V. WORK OF THE BUREAU AND REPORT OF THE HOUSING AND URBAN MANAGEMENT ADVISORY NETWORK

43. The Chairperson of the Bureau reported on its work and its main decisions since the Committee's previous session.

44. Ms. S. Bamford, Chairperson of the Housing and Urban Management Advisory Network, presented the annual report on the activities of the Advisory Network (CRP.3) She highlighted the following issues: cooperation of the Committee with other organizations; efficiency of the country profile programme; the contribution of its experts to some of the reviews and capacity building events, and increased input to the implementation of the Committee's guidelines and recommendations.

45. The Committee approved the work of the Bureau and the report of the Advisory Network. Until the next session of the Committee, to be held in September 2006, the Advisory Network would consist of: Ms. Stephanie Bamford, Chairperson; Mr. Alle Elbers; Ms. Tara Clifford; Mr. Michael Doyle; Mr. Gert Gundersen; Mr. Claus Hachmann; Mr. Herbert Pfeiffer and Mr. Andrey Starovoytov.

VI. ADOPTION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2006-2007

46. The Committee adopted its programme of work for 2006-2007, taking into account the discussions and the decisions reached under each programme element (annex II). It also agreed on the draft biennial programme plan for 2008-2009 prepared by the secretariat (annex III).

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

47. The secretariat provided information on the UNECE Trust Fund on Human Settlements. The Committee took note of the information and thanked the countries which had provided contributions.

48. The sixty-seventh session of the Committee will be held in Geneva from 18 to 20 September 2006.

VII. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

49. The Committee elected its new Bureau as follows: Mr. Hubert van Eyk (Netherlands), Chairperson; Ms. Doris Andoni (Albania); Mr. Azar Khanlarov (Azerbaijan); Mrs. Natia Jokhadze (Georgia); Ms. Maria Jose Festas (Portugal); Ms. Elena Szolgayova (Slovakia); Ms. Janja Kreitmayer McKenzie (Slovenia); Mr. Peter Creuzer (Germany); Mr. Ernst Hauri (Switzerland) and Mrs. Shannon Sorzano (United States).

Annex I

SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION ON THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS
OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Participants in the discussion highlighted the particular importance of the economic and social benefits of housing and urban development in terms of job creation, positive growth impact on other sectors in terms of energy efficiency, environment, housing affordability, investments, viable housing financing schemes and banking sector, crime prevention, etc. The delegations stressed the particular need for active policy support at the country level in EECCA and SEE in order to promote governance, democracy, social, economic and political stability.

It was argued that neglecting human settlements development (HSD) leads to a continuation of market imperfections, particularly in the EECCA and SEE countries, that the public sector has generally not been able to redress. Areas singled out for urgent remedial action were the hasty and massive privatisation of the housing stock and the lack of its management, as well as the emergence and growth of informal/illegal housing, and other negative impacts, such as corruption in the construction sector, lack of viable housing finance systems and land supply constraints, all of which increase transaction costs and prices for land and housing services. The drag on economic growth, constraints on social equity and potential for social unrest resulting from such neglect are also serious policy considerations for policy makers.

With regard to poverty reduction, the presentation suggested that a new focus on human settlements development, on improved utilisation of existing land and housing assets, and improved targeting is required, as well as the need to address the financial sector, land management and spatial planning constraints. These elements should be present in a national poverty reduction strategy. Within the context of UNECE activities on land administration, legal empowerment of the poor is a very important issue and the sharing of knowledge in this area with other UN agencies and NGOs is essential.

It was further argued that the above new HSD focus will also support efforts towards environmental sustainability, in as far as it leads to improved utilisation of existing land and housing assets, energy efficiency and reduced environmental degradation (water and air quality), particularly in urban areas, as it results from industrial and vehicle emissions, and from inefficient patterns of spatial consumption.

Institutional and governance reforms were seen to be critical in ensuring that these potential gains are actually realised, with public/private partnerships as a central element. It was argued that the public sector needs to focus on its role of enabler, with local governments ensuring that markets are operational, and with households, communities, non-profit sector and the commercial private sector being the major primary actors. A major capacity-building effort will be required to ensure that all parties, particularly in the EECCA and SEE countries, will be able to play their proper roles.

The interventions of the Committee delegations expressed appreciation for selecting this important topic and especially highlighted the linkages between HSD and broader social and economic development. There was a general sense that the subject merited a broader discussion, rather than just focusing on the HSD contribution to the achievement of the above

MDGs. As to the focus in the discussion on improved utilisation of existing assets, it was noted that this should not be seen as an exclusive new approach, but rather as a shift in emphasis, considering human resource and financial constraints, particularly in the EECCA and SEE countries.

There was general acknowledgement that the emergence of informal housing and settlements is a widespread articulation of the neglect of housing requirements in socio-economic development policies, but opinions differed as to the best approach of handling this issue in regard to the legalization of informal housing. In any event, legalisation and the upgrading of existing informal settlements must go hand in hand with measures to support new housing development, so that any future informal settlements development may be prevented.

The Committee also acknowledged the seriousness of the issue of physical degradation in the privatised former public housing stock in many EECCA and SEE countries. There was general agreement that appropriate condominium legislation must be introduced and enforced in order to arrest and reverse this trend. It was also noted, however, that impoverishment of the new owners limits their ability to contribute towards the upkeep of these units, their common spaces and facilities.

The Committee emphasised the importance of housing finance development, along with improvements in land administration, as essential ingredients to realise the potential HSD contribution to socio-economic development. The Committee recognised the serious capacity constraints in the sector and the need for a major capacity-building effort. Several of the EECCA delegations present in the meeting noted the absence of a clear policy framework, and expressed the need for external support to the development of the human settlements policy action plans in their countries.

Annex II

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2006-2007

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 both economic and social development in the UNECE region and the reform process in countries in transition. At the same time, the transition to a market economy has had a profound impact on housing policy implementation and management. This project enable Governments to analyze 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. 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 sectors of Bulgaria, Poland, Slovakia, Lithuania, Romania, the Republic of Moldova, Albania, Armenia and the Russian Federation have all been published. The study for Serbia and Montenegro was finalized. Preparations for a country profile study on Azerbaijan have started: a pre-mission was carried out in April 2005, in conjunction with the mission on the land administration review of Azerbaijan.

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. Follow-up activities related to the implementation of the recommendations in the country profiles were organized in Albania in 2004 and in Armenia in May 2005. The workshop in Armenia sought to bring together all stakeholders to discuss and agree on priorities in preparation for the national housing policy paper.

In co-operation with the Council of Europe, the Council of Europe Development Bank and the International Finance Corporation, the Committee undertook a study on trends and progress in housing reforms in South-Eastern Europe, following the outcome of the High-level Conference on Housing Reforms in South-Eastern Europe, which was held in Paris on 23 and 24 April 2003.

Work to be undertaken: The Committee will continue its activities for the preparation of country profiles on the housing sector. The research mission to Azerbaijan is planned for January/February 2006. The following countries have expressed interest in having a country profile carried out: Belarus, Georgia, Ukraine, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The next study is being undertaken in Azerbaijan in co-ordination with the land administration review. Further follow-up workshops and meetings of experts will be held to discuss the results of the studies and the implementation process.

Co-operation 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.

10.1.2 Improvement of urban environmental performance

Description: Cities and towns are efficient starting points for promoting a sustainable quality of life. 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. The spatial planning process focuses on a broad range of issues and factors: social, economic, environmental, financial, cultural etc. It is important to develop an effective local planning process as an integral part of strategic national and regional development planning.

Work accomplished: In September 2004, the Committee held a joint in-depth discussion with the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP) on the contribution of strategic planning to housing and urban planning policies. It also considered the modalities for the preparation of a UNECE study on spatial planning at the local level.

The delegation of Poland prepared a questionnaire on spatial planning at the local level, which was distributed among spatial planning authorities in the UNECE member countries and then analyzed. A workshop on spatial planning systems at the local level was held in Warsaw from 19 to 21 June 2005, to discuss practical experience in the functioning of spatial planning systems, bottlenecks, effective solutions and methods. The results of the questionnaire, case studies and lessons learned were reviewed during the workshop. The workshop also considered the extended outline for the UNECE study on spatial planning at the local level. A first meeting of the reference group on the study was held in Warsaw on 22 June 2005.

Work to be undertaken: A study on spatial planning at the local level will be prepared by a consultant with the assistance of a reference group, which will meet on a regular basis to finalize the study for September 2006.

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 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 cadastral and land registration systems and sharing information and experience of modernizing land administration systems in the more advanced economies through education and training; research and development; exchange of experience; transfer of technology; and standardization.

Work accomplished: The delegation of the United Kingdom (HM Land Registry) prepared and published the second edition of the “Statement on Social and Economic Benefits of Good Land Administration” and updated the land administration inventory (2005). The study, “Land administration in the UNECE region: development trends and main principles” was prepared. The delegation of the Russian Federation translated the study in to Russian. A study on

public/private partnership in land administration was prepared for discussion at the fourth session of the Working Party on Land Administration.

A Workshop on Real Property Administration in Developing the Information Society was held in Lithuania on 24 and 25 September 2004, and it considered the implementation of recommendations made in the land administration review of Lithuania. Furthermore, a Workshop on EU Enlargement and Developments in Land Administration in the ECE Region, was held in Budapest in April 2005. A workshop on the multi-purpose cadastre was held in Finland from 1 to 2 September 2005.

An international team of experts undertook a land administration review of Lithuania, which was published in January 2005. A pre-mission for the land administration review on Azerbaijan was held in May 2005.

Work to be undertaken: The study, “Land administration in the UNECE region: development trends and main principles” will be published by the delegation of Greece. Workshops are planned in Georgia (first half of 2006), the Czech Republic (autumn 2006), Germany (spring 2007) and Ireland (autumn 2007). The land Administration review in Azerbaijan will be undertaken in co-ordination with the country profile in spring 2006.

The fourth session of the Working Party on Land Administration was held in Geneva on 21 and 22 November 2005. Co-operation with key partners, such as the World Bank, the Permanent Committee on Cadastre in the European Union and EuroGeographics, will be further developed.

10.1.4 Housing modernization and management

Description: This activity mainly aims at identifying and providing tools to tackle problems related to the existing housing stock and its management. It also provides an opportunity to look at urban renewal policies and at the existing and emerging housing problems, especially regarding housing financing. As a result of privatization 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 establish a legal and institutional framework for operating housing condominiums. This programme element also focuses on the basic mechanisms for social housing development.

Work accomplished: A second Workshop on Social Housing was held in Vienna in November 2004 and the Guidelines on Social Housing were prepared. The study on housing finance systems was published.

Work to be undertaken: The Committee and its Bureau will continue to promote the practical application of the Guidelines on Condominium Ownership of Housing and ensure their wide dissemination in countries in transition. The study on housing finance systems for countries in transition and the Guidelines on Social Housing will be distributed and discussed in the ECE countries and it is envisaged that the Committee will assist the ECE countries in the implementation process. A launching event for the study on Housing Finance will be held in Slovakia in autumn 2005 and workshop on social housing will be held in Albania.

10.1.5 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. This will be achieved by studying major trends which characterize human settlements development and presenting national experiences in formulating and implementing policies for a more sustainable development of human settlements.

Work accomplished: The 9th Conference on Urban and Regional Research took place in Leeds (United Kingdom) from 9 to 12 June 2002. Preparatory work for the 10th Conference on Urban and Regional Research was initiated by the delegation of Slovakia. The programme for the conference on the network of sustainable cities was prepared and the first meeting of the rapporteurs was held in Bratislava in July and September 2005. The meetings decided and discussed the outline of the discussion papers to be prepared by the rapporteurs.

Work to be undertaken: The 10th Conference on Urban and Regional Research, which will take place in Slovakia (Bratislava) from 22 to 23 May 2006. The Committee decided to discontinue this programme element after the Conference.

Annex III

DRAFT BIENNIAL PROGRAMME PLAN 2008-2009

The objective of the organization is to improve the housing and urban governance in the region, strengthening the formulation and implementation of policies and developing capacities at national and local levels.

<i>Expected accomplishments of the secretariat</i>	<i>Indicators of achievement</i>
Improved capacity for housing-related policy formulation and implementation, taking into consideration the socially disadvantaged groups of the population	Number of countries which have expressed willingness to engage in an assessment of their housing situations through the country profile programme Percentage of recommendations implemented in key areas by the countries that have taken part in land administration reviews as reported to the Committee on Human Settlements
Improved policy formulation for urban land management	Number of countries that have taken action to implement the policy recommendations on urban land use
Further development and reforms in land administration to provide secure ownership in land, investment and other private and public rights in real estate	Number of countries which have expressed willingness to engage in an assessment of their land administration systems through the land administration reviews

Strategy

The activities of the Division of Environment and Human Settlements responsible for this sub-programme will aim at:

- promoting the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Sustainable Quality of Life in Human settlements in the twenty-first century, strengthening the regional contribution to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, and addressing the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration (eradication of extreme poverty, promotion of gender equality, ensuring environmental sustainability), as well as the regional priorities for human settlements as decided upon at the First Regional Implementation Forum on Sustainable Development;
- collecting, analysing documenting information on housing conditions, trends and policies and assessing the existing housing situation, reviewing housing policies and providing policy recommendations;
- carrying out capacity building activities at the national and local levels to contribute to establishing democratic governance for adequately managing housing, land and urban services;
- identifying, developing and disseminating good practices on innovative policies to improve housing and the urban environment, and upgrading land and real estate systems.