



Welcome note

by

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Workshop “Strengthening National Capacities for Sustainable Housing”

**9:00, 8 September 2015
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova,**

Dear Excellency, Minister Bitca,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear colleagues.

It is my pleasure to open the workshop, “Strengthening National Capacities for Sustainable Housing and Urban Development”.

First of all, I would like to thank the government of the Republic of Moldova, namely the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction, for our continuous cooperation including the organization of this event.

I would like to express my gratitude to you, Minister Bitca, and to Ms. Gercheva, the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in the Republic of Moldova for taking your precious time to participate in the workshop.

My special thank goes to representatives of international organizations, representatives of different ministries and governmental bodies, and to you, all the other participants in this important discussion.

A survey, which was conducted by the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management in 2012, shows that countries in the UNECE region, especially those with economies in transition, are faced with multiple challenges in developing sustainable housing.

These challenges are:

- lack of affordable housing,
- insufficient energy-efficiency of housing,
- the necessity to develop resilient and climate-neutral cities and towns,
- to control the urban sprawl and
- to deal with informal settlements and constructions.

We are all here today because we want to address these challenges.

UNECE assists governments in developing policies to cope the mentioned problems.

With this workshop, that is part of the project funded by the UN Development Account, we aim at strengthening national capacity for sustainable housing and urban development.

We will present today recommendations of the Country Profile on Housing and Land Management.

The study and the recommendations were prepared by UNECE in cooperation with the Government and national experts.

The policy recommendations drawn in the Country Profile, I believe, will provide a solid platform for exchanging views and developing next steps for actions.

The next step will be the development of a National Action Plan, and for this I rely on your active participation in today's and tomorrow's discussion that will help us to identify priorities for this action plan.

This workshop will be also part of the preparations of the Republic of Moldova for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development – Habitat III, that will take place in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016.

This conference is organised once in twenty years to renew the global commitment to sustainable urbanization.

UNECE is coordinating the preparation of the Regional Report for Habitat III, which is based on the national reports to HABITAT III,

This includes also the national report which is being prepared by the government of the Republic of Moldova.

The HABITAT III Regional Report will be presented in Prague at the European HABITAT III Conference.

I want to use this opportunity to invite you, Minister Bitca, (*the Minister of Regional Development and Construction of the Republic of Moldova*), to participate in the European Habitat Meeting.

Habitat III will focus on the implementation of a “New Urban Agenda” and it will be one of the first major global conferences to be held after the adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

In other words, the today’s discussion has multiple targets and all of them are of high importance for the Republic of Moldova and for the international community.

Speaking about the Post-2015 Development Agenda, I would like to stress the importance of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing – this is a non-legally binding document, which aims to support member states as they

seek to ensure access to decent, adequate, affordable and healthy housing for all.

The Charter was endorsed by the Economic Commission for Europe in April and was transferred to the HABITAT III.

The Charter is the expression of the political will of 56 UNECE member States to ensure a high quality life to their citizens.

It will become an important tool to support the implementation of the expected Sustainable Development Goal on cities and human settlements.

We all know that housing is a basic need, and thus, is a critical factor, which determines the quality of life of the population. At the same time, according to UNECE studies, housing is the least affordable human right.

I trust that coherent actions of the government and international partner organizations - that we at UNECE are ready to facilitate - will be an essential stimulus for improving the sustainability of the housing sector of the Republic of Moldova.

Without doubt, this workshop will promote further policy discussion on affordable, healthy and environmentally sustainable housing.

Thank you all for coming here today and I wish you a productive discussion.
