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Report of the Committee on Housing and Land Management on its eighty-first session

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I. Introduction

1. The Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management held its eighty-first session in Geneva from 6 to 8 October 2020. The meeting also allowed participation online, with simultaneous interpretation into English, French and Russian. In addition, the meeting was streamed live on UN TV and, hence, was open to the general public.

2. The meeting focused on the review of the implementation of the programmes of work for 2018–2019 and 2020 (ECE/HBP/2017/7, ECE/HBP/2019/8 and ECE/HBP/2020/3), planning for the programme of work of the housing and land management component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2021 (ECE/HBP/2020/13), cross-sectoral cooperation, and preparations for the Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management 2021. On the first day of the Committee session, the first Forum of Mayors was held.

3. Owing to the exceptional situation during the COVID-19 pandemic and to allow for simultaneous interpretation during the online meeting, the overall meeting time of the Committee session was reduced. To allow for proper discussion and negotiation on the draft decisions, the secretariat organized two Informal Consultations prior to the session (on 22 September and 1 October 2020).

II. Attendance¹

4. Representatives of the following countries of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) participated: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan (online), Belarus (online), Bosnia and Herzegovina (online), Bulgaria, Canada (online), Croatia (online), Cyprus, Czechia (online), Estonia (online), Finland (online), France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy (online), Kazakhstan (online), Kyrgyzstan, Latvia (online), Lithuania (online), Malta (online), North Macedonia (online), Norway (online), Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania (online), Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden (online), Switzerland, Tajikistan (online), Turkey (online), Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, and Uzbekistan (online).

5. Representatives of Barbados (online), Ethiopia (online), and Nigeria (online) also attended.

6. Representatives of the following United Nations programmes and specialized agencies attended: United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), International Telecommunications Union (ITU), and World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

7. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended: Asian Development Bank, Eurasian Development Bank, European Commission, and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

¹ The Forum of Mayors was attended by over 1,000 people in all, with 150 active participants in-person and online via Interprefy. The live Webcast on UN Web TV was viewed by 875 people, from 65 countries.

8. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations attended: Co-PLAN - Institute for Habitat Development (Albania), Covenant of Mayors Office, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), Estonian Union of Co-operative Housing Associations, Eurocities, Fédération Française des Coopératives d'Habitants, International Real Estate Federation (FIABCI), Fondation pour un Centre pour LE Développement Socio-Eco-Nomique, Habitat for Humanity International, International Alliance for Sustainable Development Goals, Rainbow Cities Network, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), Geneva Cities Hub, and SDG Lab.

9. Representatives of the private sector, academics from universities and research institutions, and independent experts also attended, at the invitation of the secretariat.

10. Representatives of the following local and regional authorities from the ECE region attended: Tirana (Albania), Andorra la Vella (Andorra), Ganja (Azerbaijan), Vienna (Austria), Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Coquitlam (Canada), Victoria (Canada), Prague (Czechia), Rakvere (Estonia), Bordeaux (France), Evian (France), Ferney-Voltaire (France), Tbilisi (Georgia), Freiburg (Germany), Athens (Greece), Budapest (Hungary), Reykjavik (Iceland), Dublin (Ireland), Jerusalem (Israel), Milan (Italy), Savona (Italy), Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), Liepāj (Latvia), Vilnius (Lithuania), Alesund (Norway), Asker (Norway), Rana (Norway), Trondheim (Norway), Ohrid (North Macedonia), Katowice (Poland), Cascais (Portugal), Chisinau (Republic of Moldova), Murmansk (Russian Federation), Kazan (Russian Federation), San Marino, Belgrade (Serbia), Bratislava (Slovakia), Maribor (Slovenia), Novo Mesto (Slovenia), Barcelona (Spain), Helsingborg (Sweden), Berne (Switzerland), Geneva (Switzerland), Khorog (Tajikistan), Zhytomyr (Ukraine), Glasgow (United Kingdom), and Pittsburgh (United States of America).

III. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

Documentation: ECE/HBP/205

11. The Chair of the Committee, Ms. Doris Andoni (Albania), presented the provisional agenda, which was then adopted. She informed the meeting that 218 delegates from 47 ECE countries had registered for the Forum of Mayors and the Committee session. Many more were expected to follow the meeting via UN Web TV for which no registration was necessary.

IV. Forum of Mayors, report on the outcomes of the Forum of Mayors, the “In Focus: SDG 11” roundtable and related recommendations (agenda items 2 and 3)

Documentation: ECE/HBP/2020/1; ECE/HBP/2020/2; ECE/HBP/2020/Inf.1; ECE/HBP/2020/Inf.2

12. The first Forum of Mayors, under the overall theme “City Action for a Resilient Future: Strengthening Local Government Preparedness and Response to Emergencies and the Impact of Disasters and Climate Change”, took place in Geneva on 6 October 2020. The Forum was moderated by Mr. Sami Kanaan, Mayor of Geneva. In his welcome remarks, he recognized that events organized during the Sustainable Cities Week offered a platform for city networks and cities to engage with counties and international organizations. He expressed his appreciation for what could be considered a step towards a new multilateralism which also included local authorities. In March 2020, the Geneva Cities Hub was established to facilitate dialogue and cooperation between the United Nations, international

organizations, permanent missions and country representations based in Geneva, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academia, and to facilitate their connection to cities and city networks throughout the world. He further stressed that cities are closest to the population. Their expertise is fundamental in responding to concrete problems on an everyday basis, including climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, the retrofitting of buildings, affordable housing, soft mobility, and support to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

13. In her opening remarks, Ms. Olga Algayerova, ECE Executive Secretary, emphasized that the COVID-19 pandemic offered an opportunity to transform our cities and create a new normal: a normal that would benefit all people and the planet. She noted that this extraordinary situation proved that rapid change of our urban reality is possible, that behaviour patterns can be adapted, and that humans can stand in unprecedented solidarity for a common cause. The Forum of Mayors was a unique opportunity to learn from the experiences of cities just as cities are in the process of being re-inventing. She reminded mayors that reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 relies heavily on local action and ambition, and that it was important to recognize the key role of cities as drivers for a sustainable transformation, as large parts of the SDG targets need to be delivered by local authorities and actors.

14. Ms. Tatiana Valovaya, Director-General of the United Nations at Geneva, emphasized in her opening remarks the indispensable role of local governments in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. They have demonstrated extraordinary solidarity and flexibility during these challenging times. She reminded participants that the SDGs are global in nature, but their implementation is taking place at the local level. Cities are at the heart of this crucial agenda. Since we entered the decade of action at the beginning of 2020, the United Nations is counting on all countries and local governments to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs. She stressed that multilateralism of the twenty-first century is very inclusive, and involves international organizations, regional organizations, cities, regions, professionals, the private sector, and young people. She concluded by emphasizing that it was only in such an inclusive way that the global crises the world faces today could be tackled, especially as the current crises are the largest since the Second World War.

15. Mr. Giuseppe Sala, Mayor of Milan, Italy, in his keynote address, highlighted that it was essential to prevent the current pandemic from endangering the progress achieved so far on attaining the 17 SDGs. Instead, the new situation was an unprecedented opportunity to push for a shift to fairer and greener cities. Any recovery measure regarding COVID-19 must be rooted in the principles of equity and climate action. He referred to the C-40 Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force which he chairs. The Task Force advocates for a new global green deal, based on an inclusive economy, environmental sustainability, and social justice by creating new and decent green jobs. His personal lesson learned from the COVID-19 pandemic was that it is possible to adapt cities rapidly to a new context. He encouraged mayors to use the skills developed during the ongoing crisis and “be visionary” to lay the groundwork for a green and just agenda.

16. In a special address, “A message to Mayors”, Mr. Norman Foster, architect, shared his observation that the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated existing trends that aim to make our cities more sustainable and equitable, including the “15-minute city”, where living, working, dining, learning, being entertained and entertaining can all happen within walking distance. While this is not a new concept, it was boosted by the pandemic. He noted that the pandemic led to a new public attitude that is more open to change than ever before and, with that, a new range of opportunities to improve quality of life for urban citizens and to help combat climate change. He stressed that this new attitude should be used to make cities even more compact and liveable by creating greener, quieter and safer city centres and more

interactive neighbourhoods. Barriers between sectors would need to be relaxed to build synergies and develop innovative solutions. He ended his special address by expressing confidence that cities will prove resilient to the COVID-19 pandemic and bounce back stronger and better as a consequence.

17. The Forum included 36 interventions by the participating mayors and deputy mayors from across the ECE region, from Victoria, Canada to Khorog, Tajikistan. The programme of the event is available at <https://forumofmayors.unece.org>. The mayors shared their experiences and lessons learnt as regards the main themes of the Forum, that is, (i) local responses to the COVID-19 pandemic; (ii) city actions to adapt, mitigate and respond to the effects of climate change; (iii) local responses to natural hazards; and/or (iv) medium- and long-term resilience strategies in cities.

18. In the margins of the Committee session and the Forum of Mayors, the annual “In Focus: SDG 11” roundtable took place in Geneva and online on 5 October 2020. This event was jointly organized by the Geneva Cities Hub and UN-Habitat. It brought together representatives of 24 organizations, and is one of the largest gatherings of city networks. Participants partook of exchanges on the successes and challenges in the implementation of SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and other urban-related SDGs. Linked to the “City Action for a Resilient Future: Strengthening Local Government Preparedness and Response to Emergencies and the Impact of Disasters and Climate Change” topic of the Forum of Mayors, the 2020 edition of the “In Focus: SDG11” event focused on strengthening cooperation between cities and city networks. Ms. Daria Cibrario, Director, Geneva Cities Hub, reported on the outcomes and recommendations that emerged from this roundtable (Annex I).

19. The Chair invited the rapporteur of the Forum of Mayors, Mr. Peter Danielsson, Mayor of Helsingborg, Sweden, to report on the deliberations and outcomes of the Forum, including the Geneva Declaration of the Forum of Mayors 2020. The report from the rapporteur on the Forum is available in Annex II.

20. The secretariat provided detailed information on steps taken in the selection process for the Forum of Mayors, the eighty-second session of the Committee, and the Ministerial Meeting, as contained in Annex IV. On 8 October 2020, the Russian Federation made a statement (Annex V). This was followed by a statement from Ukraine (Annex VI).

21. The Committee welcomed the Geneva Declaration of the Forum of Mayors 2020 (Annex IV).

22. The Committee, taking into account the absence of consensus on the venue of the Forum of Mayors 2021, decided to defer the following draft decision² to the ECE Executive Committee, and invited the Executive Committee to take action as a matter of urgency.

“The Committee:

(a) [Decided that the Forum of Mayors 2021 will take place in Murmansk, Russian Federation; dates of the meeting will be communicated in due course after consultation with the host country];

(b) Decided that the Forum of Mayors will take place in 2022 in Geneva, Switzerland, subject to an initial positive assessment by the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management in 2021 of the previous two Forums (in 2020 and 2021);

² Paragraphs (b) to (i) were agreed *ad referendum* by the Committee on Urban Development, Housing, and Land Management at its eighty-first session.

(c) Invited the organizers of the upcoming Forums, as appropriate, to take into account the negative impact of the pandemic on international travel and to plan accordingly, including for virtual participation, to ensure the highest possible geographical representation;

(d) Invited the Forum of Mayors Steering Committee to prepare draft Terms of Reference for the evaluation of the Forum of Mayors 2020 session, to be considered and adopted at the next Committee session (in 2021), and take into consideration, *inter alia*, the following parameters for the evaluation to be presented by the Steering Committee:

- (i) Participation of mayors (at least 20 mayors participated, both online and in person);
- (ii) Interest in hosting shown by member States (at least one request received from a city or a country to host the Forum), as well as relevant costs;
- (iii) Relevance of the Forum agenda to the United Nations priorities (the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, etc.);
- (iv) Visibility of the event and media impact (social media posts reposted/shared by others);
- (v) Output and follow-up by mayors (at least five follow-up activities initiated by mayors);
- (vi) Impact on the Committee programme of work and on ECE (an increase in number of cities engaged in the implementation of the Committee programme of work).

(e) Agreed that the Forum of Mayors is organized in partnership with relevant international organizations, networks of cities, including the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, the Geneva Cities Hub and other relevant organizations, and the ECE nexus on “Sustainable Smart Cities for all Ages”;

(f) Took note of the ECE Inland Transport Committee decision at its session in February 2020 inviting the Committee “to consider how best to promote the activities and outputs of THE PEP related to sustainable urban transport [...] at the Forum of Mayors in 2021”, and requested the Bureau to formulate relevant proposals as part of the preparations for the Forum of Mayors 2021;

(g) Invited the secretariat to explore synergies and possibilities for cooperation with other relevant sub-programmes of ECE in the preparation for and organization of the Forum and, in this regard, strongly encouraged the active involvement of the nexus members of the Steering Committee;

(h) Took note of the proposed process for member States/cities to submit their candidacy to host the Forum of Mayors in the future, if extended beyond 2022, whereby the proposed process includes the following steps:

- (i) A letter of offer is sent to the secretariat by the member State for the consideration of the Committee;
- (ii) The Bureau of the Committee and secretariat review offers received and ask additional questions/request clarification, if necessary;
- (iii) The Bureau considers offers and makes recommendations;
- (iv) The Committee session decides on the host country/city.

(i) Based on the results of the evaluation, to be finalized by 2022, the Committee will have to agree on the objectives, format, and frequency of the Forum, if extended beyond 2022, with a view to submitting a proposal on future meetings for endorsement by the ECE Executive Committee and/or by the seventieth session of the Commission in 2023.

V. Review of the implementation of the programmes of work 2018-2019 and 2020: sustainable smart cities (agenda item 4)

Documentation: ECE/HBP/2020/3, ECE/HBP/2017/7, ECE/HBP/2019/8

A. Implementation of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities programme (agenda item 4a)

Documentation: ECE/HBP/2020/3, ECE/HBP/2020/4, ECE/HBP/2020/Inf.3, ECE/HBP/2020/Inf.5, ECE/HBP/2020/Inf.7, ECE/HBP/2020/Inf.8

23. The ECE is one of the 16 United Nations agencies who are members of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC), an initiative coordinated by ITU, ECE, and UN-Habitat and supported by 16 agencies, to achieve SDG 11. ECE activities within the U4SSC initiative are implemented as part of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management programmes of work, and are reviewed at the annual sessions of the Committee.

24. The U4SSC supports cities to evaluate their performance using the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Smart Sustainable Cities (SSC) and to implement smart sustainable city solutions through the development of guidelines, studies, city action plans and capacity-building events. The U4SSC KPIs for SSC is a United Nations standard on SSCs, which was developed by ECE and ITU in 2015 and endorsed by the ECE Committee at its seventy-seventh session in September 2016 (ECE/HBP/2016/4). The application of KPIs promoted the evidence-based approach to the review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

25. The Chair informed the meeting that the evidence-based approaches to housing and urban development policies developed by the Committee since 2016 are supported by the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) tenth tranche project “Evidence-based policies for housing and urban development in the UNECE Region”. This session on agenda item 4a was moderated by Mr. Matteo Tarantino, a Senior Research Associate at the University of Geneva, Switzerland.

26. Representatives of four Norwegian municipalities, Alesund, Asker, Rana, and Trondheim, presented the main findings of their SSC profiles developed by ECE within the U4SSC initiative.

27. The secretariat and Mr. Pedro Neves, a member of the ECE Business Advisory Board, and the SDG Task Force Leader for the PPP Unit at ECE, presented the *Guidelines on tools and mechanisms to finance Smart Sustainable Cities projects*, which were developed by ECE within the U4SSC initiative.

28. The Committee welcomed the development of the SSC Profiles for Nur-Sultan (Kazakhstan) and Alesund, Asker, Rana, and Trondheim (Norway), and endorsed the *Guidelines on tools and mechanisms to finance Smart Sustainable Cities projects*. It further took note of the information on the implementation of the U4SSC programme and reiterated the invitation to national and local governments to use the KPIs for SSC to evaluate cities.

B. Economic Commission for Europe Protocol on the Evaluation of City Performance Against the Key Performance Indicators for Smart Sustainable Cities (agenda item 4b)

Documentation: ECE/HBP/2020/5

29. The Chair informed the meeting that the KPIs for SSC have been tested and implemented in over 150 cities worldwide, based on the “Collection Methodology for Key Performance Indicators for Smart Sustainable Cities”. To improve the quality and transparency of the evaluation process, the Committee secretariat developed the “ECE Protocol on the Evaluation of City Performance Against the Key Performance Indicators for Smart and Sustainable Cities”. Agenda item 4b was also moderated by Mr Tarantino.

30. A representative of UN-Habitat provided a report on key outcomes of the joint ECE-UN-Habitat project, “Evidence-based policies for housing and urban development in the UNECE Region”, supported by the UNDA tenth tranche project. This included the organization of a series of national workshops in six countries with economies in transition, in cooperation with ECE.

31. A representative of the University of Geneva gave a briefing on the studies conducted by the University within the UNDA project and the Geneva Science-Policy Interface which supported ECE efforts to develop approaches to evidence-based policies.

32. The secretariat presented the *ECE Protocol on the Evaluation of City Performance Against the Key Performance Indicators for Smart Sustainable Cities*.

33. The Committee endorsed the *ECE Protocol* to provide guidance regarding the work of the ECE secretariat on the KPIs for SSC.

VI. Sustainable Development Goals Voluntary Local Reviews: measuring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level (agenda item 5)

Documentation: ECE/HBP/2020/6

34. The Chair introduced the topic, stating that city governments measure progress towards achieving the SDGs using various tools. The U4SSC KPIs for SSC is a comprehensive tool for assessing the performance of cities compared to the SDG indicators and, therefore, allow reflection on the city's progress towards SDGs.

35. Representatives of the ECE secretariat and UN DESA, and Mr Kristian Mjoen, Advisor, Trondheim Commune, Norway shared approaches to the development of Volunteer Local Reviews (VLRs), including using the U4SSC KPIs for the evaluation of progress of cities towards achieving SDGs. A representative of UN-Habitat reported on the nature of the VLRs as not ends, but means to foster sustainable development, and expressed the hope to explore more opportunities for cooperation with ECE in this area. The representative noted that UN DESA is working with other regional commissions on similar initiatives, and reported progress on other VLRs in Moscow and Florence.

36. The Committee endorsed the proposal to use the U4SSC KPIs for SSC as a backbone for the development of VLRs in cities in the region, and to develop guidelines for the use of these KPIs in the preparation of VLRs.

VII. Review of the implementation of the programmes of work 2018-2019 and 2020: affordable, adequate, energy-efficient and healthy housing (agenda item 6)

Documentation: ECE/HBP/2020/3, ECE/HBP/2017/7, ECE/HBP/2019/8

A. Affordable, adequate and healthy housing (agenda item 6a)

Documentation: ECE/HBP/2020/Inf.9

37. The Chair recalled that the Committee, at its eightieth session, had invited the Bureau to develop the study *#Housing 2030 - Improving Housing Affordability in the UNECE Region*, based on the request of the Committee at its seventy-ninth session in 2018 to conduct a survey of member States to identify their challenges and priorities in relation to housing affordability.

38. Ms. Elena Szolgayova and David Orr, #Housing2030 Initiative Co-Chairs, and Ms. Julie Lawson, Lead Writer of the study, provided an update on the development of the study prepared by ECE in cooperation with UN-Habitat and Housing Europe.

39. Representatives of the ECE member States discussed key affordability challenges in their countries, and approaches made to address those challenges:

(a) H.E. Roderick Galdes, Minister for Social Accommodation, Malta noted the need for good governance and public trust to develop effective social housing;

(b) Mr. Nikita Stasishin, Deputy Minister of Construction, Housing and Utilities, the Russian Federation, explained that his government is prioritizing the construction of social housing, in particular for families, and is increasing cooperation with the private sector to achieve this aim. The Russian Federation is also investing in formal standards for social housing, and is increasing the enforcement of building codes;

(c) Ms. Aša Rogelj, Deputy Director General, Directorate for Spatial Planning, Construction and Housing, Ministry of the Environment and Social Planning, Slovenia underlined the need for high-quality social housing for families, and noted that her government is building diverse types of social housing to cater to the needs of different groups (e.g. young singles, elderly, etc). She also mentioned a scheme to have private landlords let their holdings on the public market as social housing;

(d) Ms. Paige Esterkin, Deputy Secretary for Policy Development in the Office of Policy Development and Research, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, United States of America highlighted the joint work of her department with other areas of the United States government, such as the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Department of Treasury. She also mentioned the utility of tax breaks in spurring social housing development, and noted a recent executive order by United States President Trump on this matter;

(e) Mr. Bent Madsen, President of Housing Europe, spoke on how members of his organization acted quickly in the midst of the pandemic outbreak to provide housing to healthcare workers, and how they coordinated between landlords and tenants to prevent evictions in the wake of mass job losses;

40. The Chair informed the meeting that the draft study report *Housing for Migrants and Refugees in the UNECE region: challenges and practices*, which was prepared by the secretariat, continued to undergo review by the member States, as no consensus on the text

has yet been found. The preparation of this study was approved by the Committee at its seventy-seventh session in 2016.

41. The Committee took note of the information provided, made comments and recommendations for the future implementation of the *#Housing 2030 - Improving Housing Affordability in the UNECE region* study, and approved the study report as an official ECE publication in English and Russian, in digital and print formats. The Committee further took note of the progress of the study *Housing for Migrants and Refugees in the UNECE region: challenges and practices*, and approved it as an official digital ECE publication in English and Russian.

B. Energy-efficient housing (agenda item 6b)

Documentation: ECE/HBP/2020/3

42. The Chair introduced the topic and recalled that, at its eightieth session, the Committee had agreed to extend the mandate of the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency in Buildings for 2020-2021.

43. A representative of the ECE Sustainable Energy Division informed delegates about the progress of the Joint Task Force on Energy-Efficiency Standards in Buildings since the eightieth session of the Committee, and presented proposals for the future work of the Joint Task Force.

44. The Committee took note of:

(a) Activities of the Joint Task Force on Energy-Efficiency Standards in Buildings 2019-2020, including its publications, projects, and capacity-building activities;

(b) Information provided by the ECE Sustainable Energy Division on the Updated Framework Guidelines for Energy-Efficiency Standards in Buildings (ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2020/4);

(c) Ongoing and planned activities of the Joint Task Force in accordance with its Terms of Reference for 2020-2021 (ECE/ENERGY/2019/8), including the project and related activities.

C. Fire safety standards in buildings (agenda item 6c)

Documentation: ECE/HBP/2020/7, ECE/HBP/2020/Inf.10

45. When introducing this item, the Chair recalled that the Committee, at its eightieth session, had taken note of the activities of the International Fire Safety Standards (IFSS) Coalition on the development of a set of new, high-level international standards on fire safety: *International Fire Safety Standards: Common Principles "Safe Buildings Save Lives"*, with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors serving as a secretariat to the IFSS Coalition for the development of the common principles.

46. Mr. Gary Strong, Chairman, IFSS Coalition, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, presented the *International Fire Safety Standards: Common Principles*.

47. The Committee welcomed the *International Fire Safety Standards: Common Principles: "Safe Buildings Save Lives"*, to be published as an ECE standard, and invited representatives of national and local governments and stakeholders to apply the Common Principles to promote the safety of buildings.

D. Activities of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group (agenda item 6d)

Documentation: ECE/HBP/2020/8; ECE/HBP/2020/9

48. The Chair recalled that the Real Estate Market (REM) Advisory Group supports the Committee and the Working Party on Land Administration in the implementation of their programmes of work.

49. Ms. Paloma Taltavull de la Paz, REM Chair, presented a report on the activities of the REM and on the planned activities for the future.

50. The Committee:

(a) Took note of the report on activities of the Advisory Group since the eightieth Committee session;

(b) Invited the Advisory Group to continue its work on the study concerning sharing economy in the housing sector;

(c) Recommended the extension of the mandate of the Advisory Group until the end of 2022;

(d) Endorsed the revised terms of reference (Annex VII);

(e) Recommended that the ECE Executive Committee renew the mandate and approve the terms of reference of the Advisory Group until end of 2022;

(f) Endorsed the Advisory Group programme of work;

(g) Recommended that the ECE Executive Committee approve the programme of work of the Advisory Group for the period 2021-2022.

VIII. Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management 2021 (agenda item 7)

Documentation: ECE/HBP/2020/10

51. The Chair recalled that, at its eightieth session, the Committee decided to organize a Ministerial Meeting in October 2021 to review and discuss further steps in the implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, the ECE Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management 2014-2020 and the Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development. She presented proposals formulated by the Bureau for the organization of the Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management 2021.

52. The Committee:

(a) Agreed on the proposal for the Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management in 2021 as outlined in document ECE/HBP/2020/10, and invited the Bureau to organize it;

(b) Recalled the decision at its eightieth session and reiterated that the eighty-second session of the Committee will consist of the Forum of Mayors (on day 1), the regular session of the Committee, and the Ministerial Meeting;

(c) The Ministerial Meeting will be entitled “Affordable, adequate, and resilient housing in liveable cities, including cities which face extreme weather conditions”.

IX. Cross-sectoral cooperation (agenda item 8)

A. Review of activities of the Geneva UN Charter Centres for Sustainable Housing and Smart Sustainable Cities (agenda item 8a)

Documentation: ECE/HBP/2020/11, ECE/HBP/2020/11/Corr.1

53. The Chair introduced this item and recalled that the Committee, at its seventy-seventh session (2016), had recommended to establish a network of Geneva UN Charter Centres of Excellence on Sustainable Housing and Smart Sustainable Cities (Centres of Excellence), under the coordination of the ECE, to support the implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing (E/ECE/1478/Rev.1). She expressed her regrets that there was no time for the Centres to give presentations, and informed the Committee that the presentations by the seven existing and prospective Centres are available online.

54. The secretariat presented the *Guidelines for the establishment of Geneva UN Charter Centres of Excellence on Sustainable Housing and Smart Sustainable Cities and modalities of work*.

55. The Committee:

(a) Took note of the information on the activities of the Geneva UN Centres for Sustainable Housing and Sustainable Smart Cities, and made recommendations for future work;

(b) Endorsed the *Guidelines for establishing Geneva UN Charter Centres of Excellence on Sustainable Housing and Sustainable Smart Cities and modalities of their work*.

B. The ECE nexus on “Sustainable smart cities for all ages” (agenda item 8b)

*Documentation:*020 ECE/HBP/2020/12, ECE/HBP/2020/Inf.11

56. The Committee was informed about recent activities implemented under the inter-divisional cooperation in the ECE nexus on “Sustainable smart cities for all ages” and on the preparation of the nexus flagship publication *People-Smart Sustainable Cities: A Policy Nexus for a Prosperous, Green and Liveable Future*.

57. Mr. Oleg Golubchikov, lead author of the publication, presented the key findings of the study.

58. The secretariat presented its activities under the nexus on the COVID-19 response: the UNDA twelfth tranche project on SSCs, the UNDA thirteenth tranche project on Building Urban Economic Resilience during and after COVID-19, and the ECE project on COVID-19 recovery in informal settlements.

59. The Committee:

(a) Endorsed the key conclusions and recommendations of the flagship publication *People-Smart Sustainable Cities: A Policy Nexus for a Prosperous, Green and Liveable Future* of the ECE nexus on “Sustainable and smart cities for all ages”;

(b) Agreed to support the implementation of the recommendations of the *ECE Policy Brief on Ageing*, developed by the ECE Standing Working Group on Ageing, through

the activities of the Committee on affordable and energy-efficient housing, SSCs and urban planning;

(c) Welcomed the activities of the secretariat regarding supporting the response to COVID-19 at city level and building urban economic resilience, and requested the Bureau to formulate relevant proposals for the continuation of these activities as part of the programme of work for 2021, as appropriate.

X. Review of the implementation of the programmes of work 2018-2019 and 2020-2021: land administration and management (agenda item 9)

Documentation: ECE/HBP/2020/3, ECE/HBP/2017/7, ECE/HBP/2019/8, ECE/HBP/2020/Inf.12

60. The Chair of the Working Party on Land Administration, Mr. Fredrik Zetterquist (Sweden), reported on activities carried out by the Working Party since the eightieth session of the Committee, and on the preparation of studies on:

- (a) Challenges of Fraud for Land Administration Institutions;
- (b) A Legal Guide on Land Consolidation;
- (c) Guiding Principles for Public-Private Partnerships in Land Administration;
- (d) Scenarios for Future Land Administration and Management.

61. The secretariat informed the Committee on the preparations of the twelfth session of the Working Party, including on its dates and venue. The Government of Malta offered to host the session on 31 May and 1 June 2021, and the Working Party accepted this offer. The proposed themes for the twelfth session are: Scenarios on Future Land Administration in the ECE region; Digitalization in the Land Sector; Public-Private Partnerships for Land Administration; and Post-COVID-19 Recovery and Building Back Better.

62. The Committee took note of:

- (a) The implementation of the Working Party programmes of work 2018-2019 and 2020-2021;
- (b) The preparations of the twelfth session of the Working Party on 31 May - 1 June 2021;
- (c) The preparations of the *Scenario Study on Future Land Administration in the UNECE Region to Encourage Strategy Consultations and National Interventions* (ECE/HBP/2020/Inf.12).

XI. Review of the implementation of the programmes of work 2018-2019 and 2020: country profiles on urban development, housing and land management (agenda item 10)

Documentation: ECE/HBP/2020/3

63. The secretariat reported on the implementation of policy recommendations of the country profiles prepared by the ECE for Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Republic of Moldova and Uzbekistan. It also gave information on the planning of the country profiles for Albania and Kyrgyzstan.

64. The Committee:

- (a) Welcomed the implementation of the recommendations of the country profiles for Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Republic of Moldova and Uzbekistan;
- (b) Took note of the preparation of the country profile for Albania.

XII. Programme of work of the housing and land management component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme 2021 (agenda item 11)

Documentation: ECE/HBP/2020/3, ECE/HBP/2020/13

65. The secretariat presented the planned draft programme of work for 2021. It recalled that, in December 2017, the General Assembly, in its resolution *Shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations*³, approved the change from a biennial to an annual budget period on a trial basis from 2020 onwards. The draft programme of work for 2021 follows the annual format introduced in 2020, with amendments reflecting General Assembly Resolution 74/251 adopted in December 2019.

66. The Committee:

- (a) Took note of the information on the activities implemented by the Committee under its programmes of work 2018-2019 and 2020;
- (b) Adopted the programme of work 2021 and recommended it to the ECE Executive Committee for approval;
- (c) Approved the list of activities proposed for 2021 containing detailed information on all activities needed to implement the 2021 programme of work of the housing and land management component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme, as contained in (ECE/HBP/2020/3).

XIII. Publications for 2022 (agenda item 12)

Documentation: ECE/HBP/2020/14

67. The secretariat gave information on planned publications for 2022 (ECE/HBP/2020/14).

68. The Committee:

- (a) Approved the proposal for official publications and promotional materials of the housing and land management component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2022;
- (b) Approved the publication of the SSC Profile for Nur-Sultan (Kazakhstan) in English and Russian, in digital and print formats, instead of the Survey on Land Administration Systems;
- (c) Approved the publication of the SSC Profiles for Alesund, Asker, Rana and Trondheim (all in Norway) as official ECE publications in English, in digital and print formats.

³ See General Assembly Resolution 72/266.

XIV. Evaluation plan for 2022 (agenda item 13)

69. The Committee was presented with a proposal for the planned evaluation of the housing and land management component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2022.

70. The Committee approved the following topic for the subprogramme evaluation to be conducted in 2022: “Country profiles on urban development, housing and land management and smart sustainable city profiles as tools to support the evidence-based approach to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals”.

XV. Status of extrabudgetary support to the programmes of work 2020 and 2021 (agenda item 14)

71. The secretariat informed the Committee on the status of extrabudgetary support to the implementation of the programme of work.

72. The Committee took note of the information on the status of extrabudgetary support to the programmes of work 2020 and 2021, and invited countries to offer pledges to support their implementation.

XVI. Election of the Bureau (agenda item 15)

73. The Committee elected the Bureau members, including the Chair and two Vice-Chairs, who will hold office until the end of the eighty-second session. It elected the following individuals to hold office until the end of the eighty-second session:

- Ms. Doris Andoni, Albania (Chair)
- Mr. Elshad Khanalibayli, Azerbaijan (Vice Chair)
- Ms. Aša Rogelj, Slovenia (Vice-Chair)
- Mr. Dmitry Doroshevich, Belarus
- Ms. Marie Mohylova, Czech Republic
- Ms. Maja-Marija Nahod, Croatia
- Ms. Nino Gventsadze, Georgia
- Mr. Yves-Laurent Sapoval, France
- Mr. Giampiero Bambagioni, Italy
- Mr. Olzhas Sartayev, Kazakhstan
- Ms. Rachael Marie Scicluna, Malta
- Ms. Veronika Rehakova, Slovakia
- Ms. Helena Beunza, Spain
- Ms. Joana Balsemao, Portugal
- Mr. Nikita Stasishin, Russian Federation
- Mr. Edouard Jay, Switzerland
- Mr. Fredrik Zetterquist, Sweden (*ex officio*).

XVII. Other business (agenda item 16)

74. No other issues were raised by the delegates.

XVIII. Adoption of the report and closing of the session (agenda item 17)

75. As no consensus was reached by 8 October 2020 on agenda item 3, draft decision contained in paragraph 21, page 6 of this draft report, the Chair decided not to close the eighty-first session of the Committee and to reconvene in a formal meeting with remote participation at the earliest possible date to take action on this decision, and to hold informal consultations with Permanent Missions in Geneva on this matter on 19 October 2020.

76. Two informal consultations took place, on 19 and 26 October. The outcome of these consultations was considered by the Committee on 6 November, and is contained in paragraph 22.

77. The Committee was invited to adopt this report based on a draft prepared by the secretariat. The report was adopted, and the Chair closed the meeting at 16:39 on 6 November 2020.

Annex I

[English only]

Geneva Cities Hub report from the “In focus: SDG11” roundtable, 5 October 2020, Daria Cibrario (Director, Geneva Cities Hub)

Madam the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Colleagues and partners,

It is my pleasure and honour to deliver the report on the outcomes and recommendations that emerged from this year’s “In Focus: SDG11” roundtable, organized by the UNECE in cooperation with UN-Habitat and the Geneva Cities Hub. The event took place on 5 October, World Habitat Day, and featured a substantial participation by city networks, urban partnerships and initiatives that brought together the voices of cities and local authorities with Geneva-based UN agencies, NGOs, academia, and civil society, to discuss and exchange on the topic of “Supporting city actions for a resilient future”.

I will now share a set of **key outcomes and recommendations** that emerged from the discussion.

As for the **outcomes**:

1. Multilateralism must be more than ever inclusive and multi-level.

Opening panellists welcomed the UNECE’s and other UN agencies’ approach that bridges the gap between global institutions and local governments, recognizing and working with cities, and including them in intergovernmental processes to advance the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda.

2. Cities are the epicentres and the frontline responders to crises.

The socioeconomic consequences of COVID-19 are particularly harsh in cities and their communities, which have been at the forefront of the pandemic. Local authorities have led swift responses, redeploing municipal budgets, setting up emergency shelters, and adapting public service delivery.

3. Crises in urban settings magnified and exacerbated existing inequalities and vulnerabilities.

COVID-19 exposed the global housing crisis, and the direct relationship between lack of access to essential public services and public health. It has taken a heavy toll on women, exposed racial tensions, and worsened the challenges of vulnerable groups, including girls, migrants and refugees, indigenous people, and LGBTI individuals.

As for the **recommendations**, the following key messages stood out:

1. Global challenges need local solutions. Cities and local governments must have a seat at the table in global and national policymaking.

National crisis management committees need to include local authorities. A special envoy for cities to the UN Secretary-General could be appointed, and mayors' participation in national delegations at the UN General Assembly must be enhanced. New pathways are also needed for local authorities to take part in multilateral processes in their own capacity.

2. SDG implementation must be fast-forwarded, and there needs to be a systemic paradigm shift that puts local governments and their communities at the centre.

The global health crisis questions the current production and consumption models. The aspirations of local communities must be placed at the heart of global policy and of action to bring about sustainable change. Recovery plans need to prioritize the protection of our commons, public service delivery and access for all, and must be rooted in human rights.

3. An inclusive, cooperative, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach is a pre-requisite for effective, lasting recovery.

As COVID-19 will leave behind a legacy of socioeconomic hardship, all governance structures and stakeholders need to increase efforts, cooperation, solidarity, trust-building and collective action to ensure that cities become key hubs of inclusion and equal opportunity for all. This requires the meaningful participation of local authorities and of all categories of inhabitants in policy development and implementation.

4. Empowering local governments, building their capacity and securing adequate resources equates to empowering people.

Decentralization, subsidiarity, and local autonomy must be strengthened and accompanied by capacity building and adequate funding for local governments. Municipal financial and fiscal systems need to be urgently redesigned.

5. Good-practice sharing, peer learning and cooperation across departments and all levels of governments are essential to build effective local and national resilience plans.

We need to strengthen support for city-to-city cooperation, peer learning and cross-fertilization to develop policy solutions that address the specific features of local realities.

6. Reliable, consistent data collection, management and sound governance systems are critical to identify city needs and meet them with efficient solutions.

I thank you for your attention, and wish you every success in today's work and deliberations.

Annex II

Report on Forum of Mayors, Peter Danielsson (Mayor of Helsingborg, Sweden)

A. Context

1. The Geneva Forum of Mayors brought over 40 mayors from 39 countries together to discuss challenges facing cities related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the climate crisis and its solutions that have at their forefront the SDGs.

2. The Forum was opened by Lord Norman Foster, a renowned urbanist and architect, alongside the Executive Secretary of UNECE and the Director-General of UNOG. Foster particularly spoke about how the pandemic has been accelerating pre-existing urban trends related to digitalization, vehicular transport, and urban green spaces. He struck an optimistic tone, noting that cities have always emerged stronger out of crises and that previous calamities, such as the cholera epidemic of the late 19th century, the Spanish Flu, and even the Great Fire of 1666 in London, led to leaps in urban innovation that we continue to enjoy even today. In the spirit of “inclusive multilateralism”, which was also echoed at the preceding SDG11 Day on 5 October 2020, Foster noted that, while globalization has lifted millions out of poverty in developing countries, it has created local rust belts which threaten the legitimacy and stability of the current economic system. Forums like this one are part of how international organizations can strike the right balance between local and global, and bring more voices to the discussion. At the end of the Forum, the Mayors endorsed, by acclamation, the Geneva Declaration of Mayors, an ambitious platform purporting to “place the SDGs at the centre of our recovery efforts and create new urban realities for the benefit of all”.

B. Overview

3. While each mayor spoke of their own experiences, there were some important common themes:

(a) Implementation of the SDGs begins at the local level and is, in many respects, a local matter.

Local leaders are at the front lines regarding responding to crises, from COVID-19 to climate change, and need to be part of the discussion. They also have a much clearer view of the on-the-ground reality, and can come to the table with innovative solutions that might be overlooked at the national level. They can also see problems that are not apparent, or simply do not seem relevant, to higher levels of authority.

(b) Collaboration between cities is essential for solving all kinds of problems, and city networks and forums such as this one are often better-placed to facilitate dialogue between cities than national governments.

(c) Public-private partnerships are important tools for solving all kinds of problems in cities, and have become especially useful in the context of the pandemic.

There are COVID-19-related programmes in many cities to lend money to, or even take equity stakes in, local businesses to ensure their survival. This type

of initiative is especially pertinent in tourism-dependent cities with large numbers of small businesses now unable to operate.

(d) Building long-term resilience to crises of all kinds is a widely held goal, and there was general consensus that responding to problems as they come or individually is not the right approach to take.

Mayors noted that, due to COVID-19, they are dealing with multiple major crises simultaneously, that is alongside climate change and some regions that have faced natural disasters since the outbreak in January. Solving problems in silos is simply not a viable option.

(e) Setting a date for carbon neutrality is a necessary step towards galvanizing efforts to reduce emissions and move towards more sustainable economic models.

While exact dates for carbon neutrality varied from city to city, there was broad agreement that cities need to act and that, often, national targets do not go far enough or are simply not ambitious enough in their timing. An effort mentioned by a few cities is a push to make them “energy positive”, that is producing more energy than they consume.

4. Many interventions focused on specific measures implemented by cities to respond to crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. Several cities are already on the same page regarding such solutions, and there were several popular measures:

(a) Expanded cycling and pedestrian access

Remote working requirements drastically reduced vehicular traffic in cities, and social distancing requirements make public transit undesirable. Cycling emerged as a low-cost, environmentally friendly, and healthy transport option. Many mayors mentioned local initiatives to turn roads into bike lanes and/or pedestrian-only areas.

(b) Civil society initiatives to combat loneliness

COVID-19 prompted a crisis of loneliness among elderly people, as they are isolated and not able to get essential supplies. Mayors mentioned programmes that matched lonely seniors with volunteers who delivered essential supplies, checked up on their health, and provided much-needed emotional support. Other examples include psychological helplines to aid those distressed by the impacts of the pandemic.

(c) Buildings have been identified as a key source of carbon emissions, and building more sustainably is imperative in the effort to lower carbon emissions in cities

Many mayors alluded to measures to subsidize or otherwise encourage the retrofitting of older buildings to reduce emissions. This was especially the case in post-Soviet countries where a surfeit of poorly insulated housing is a key source of emissions from heating.

Annex III

Information on steps taken for the identification and selection of the host country/city for the Forum of Mayors 2021, the eighty-second session of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, and the Ministerial Meeting

1. The Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, at its eightieth session in 2019, decided to hold a Ministerial Meeting in 2021, and invited member States to host the Ministerial Meeting in their countries and inform the eighty-first Session accordingly.

2. Also, in accordance with the decision of the eighty-first session of the Committee, a Steering Committee for the Forum of Mayors was created. The Steering Committee is composed of interested bureau members and nexus members. It also allowed participation of other interested experts. Below is the full list of members:

- Mr. Edouard Jay, Steering Committee Co-Chair (Switzerland)
- Ms. Marie Pierre Meganck (France)
- Mr. Luca Nizzola, City of Geneva (Switzerland)
- Ms. Doris Andoni (Albania)
- Mr. Dmitry Doroshevich (Belarus)
- Mr. Olzhas Sartayev (Kazakhstan)
- Mr. Giampiero Bambagioni (Italy)
- Ms. Paloma Taltavull (Spain)
- Ms. Joana Balsemão, Steering Committee Co-Chair (Portugal)
- Ms. Beatriz Corredor (Spain)
- Mr. Olivier Coutau, Representative of Canton de Genève (Switzerland)
- Ms. Kamelia Kemieva, Geneva Cities Hub
- Ms. Franziska Hirsch, Environment Division, UNECE
- Mr. Oleg Dzioubinski, Sustainable Energy Division, UNECE
- Mr. Roel Janssens, Transport Division, UNECE
- Mr. Anders Jonsson, Innovation Section, UNECE

3. As several member States contacted the secretariat to inquire about the requirements for the hosting of the Ministerial Meeting and related events, the secretariat informed the Forum of Mayors Steering Committee, at its meeting on 3 March 2020, that a Note to member States inviting offers to organize the Forum of Mayors 2021 and related events would be sent to the Permanent Missions, and that offers could be submitted until the end of May 2020.

4. On 16 March 2020, the Note was sent to all ECE member States regarding hosting the Forum of Mayors 2021, the eighty-second session of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, and the Ministerial Meeting sometime in October/November 2021. The Note included an indicative list of services, facilities, and personnel to be provided by the country hosting the three above-mentioned events.

5. Interested member States were requested to send a detailed offer indicating their willingness to host the events, and to provide the required services to Ms. Gulnara Roll, Secretary to the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, no later than 29 May 2020.

6. At its meeting on 25 March 2020, the Steering Committee was informed that the Note to member States was sent and replies were expected by the end of May 2020.
7. Two offers were received in response to the call, namely from Spain (Barcelona) and the Russian Federation (Murmansk).
8. As the offers were rather similar in nature, in the ensuing weeks, the secretariat liaised with the two countries to ask additional questions.
9. The secretariat shared the answers to the questions of the two countries with the Committee Bureau for their consideration through an email message on 26 June 2020 and at the Bureau meeting on 1 July 2020.
10. Members of the Bureau include:
 - Ms. Doris Andoni, Albania (Chair)
 - Mr. Elshad Khanalibayli, Azerbaijan (Vice-Chair)
 - Ms. Aša Rogelj, Slovenia (Vice-Chair)
 - Mr. Dmitry Doroshevich, Belarus
 - Ms. Marie Mohylova, Czechia
 - Ms. Maja-Marija Nahod, Croatia
 - Ms. Nino Gventsadze, Georgia
 - Mr. Yves-Laurent Sapoval, France/ Marie-Pierre Meganck, alternate
 - Mr. Giampiero Bambagioni, Italy
 - Mr. Olzhas Sartayev, Kazakhstan
 - Ms. Veronika Rehakova, Slovakia
 - Ms. Beatriz Corredor, Spain
 - Ms. Joana Balsemao, Portugal
 - Mr. Andrey Chibis, Russian Federation
 - Mr. Edouard Jay, Switzerland
 - Ms. Emma Vincent, United Kingdom
 - Ms. Marge Martin, United States of America
 - Mr. Fredrik Zetterquist, Sweden (*ex officio*)
11. At its meeting on 17 July 2020, the Bureau of the CUDHLM considered the two offers (see para. 7 of this annex).

(*From the report of the Bureau meeting – verbatim*) “Bureau members considered that the offer of the Russian Federation seemed more advantageous because of: (a) geographical representation as the venue for the UNECE official meeting (because most of the UNECE official meetings are organized in Western Europe), (b) importance of “leaving no one behind”, i.e. so that the UN meeting is organized in a smaller city which is not a major tourist destination; (c) the resources provided for the staff support and communication activities. The Bureau recommended Murmansk, Russian Federation, as the host for the 2021 Forum of Mayors.”
12. On 18 September 2020, draft decisions for the eighty-first session were shared with all ECE member States (via official Note). The decisions included a reference to the fact

that the Committee was expected to decide on the venue of the Forum of Mayors and related events for 2021.

13. Two informal consultations (allowing for participation both in person and online) were held on 22 September 2020 and 1 October 2020 to discuss the draft decisions of the Committee, including the draft decision on the hosting of the Forum of Mayors 2021. During the second consultation, Spain informed the delegates that it had withdrawn its candidature for Barcelona.

14. At that time, no concerns were expressed by any member State on the offer of the Russian Federation.

15. After the consultation, on 2 October 2020, the secretariat issued another Note to member States with the revised draft decisions, and posted them on the Committee website.

16. These draft decisions were those considered by the eighty-first session of the Committee on 7 October 2020.

Annex IV

Statement from the Delegation of the Russian Federation

1. Россия поддерживает работу ЕЭК ООН в сфере устойчивой урбанизации и придаёт большое значение деятельности Комитета по градостроительству, жилищному хозяйству и землепользованию (КГЖХЗ). С удовлетворением отмечаем успешное проведение первого Форума мэров городов. Мы очень рады, что данная инициатива, с которой российская делегация выступила в ходе 68-й сессии ЕЭК ООН в 2019 г., получила высокую оценку как со стороны глав муниципалитетов нашего региона, так и со стороны стран-членов Комиссии.
2. Признательны подавляющему большинству стран-членов за поддержку города Мурманск принять у себя Форум мэров, 82-ю сессию КГЖХЗ и министерское заседание в 2021 г.
3. Сожалеем, что из-за позиции одной делегации Комитет не смог прийти к консенсусу по проекту решения о месте проведения Форума мэров в 2021 г. Подчеркиваем, что проект был одобрен заинтересованными делегациями по итогам нескольких раундов предсессионных консультаций, которые были открыты для всех стран-членов. С учётом ограничений, связанных с пандемией COVID-19, консультации проходили в т.н. "гибридном" формате, что позволяло принять в них участие не только сотрудникам Постпредств при Отделении ООН в Женеве, но и экспертам из столиц. Заявление о недостаточной транспарентности переговорного процесса абсолютно беспочвенно, обвинения в предвзятости оскорбительны и неприемлемы.
4. Заявки на проведение Форума мэров рассматривались в течение продолжительного времени в т.ч. по линии Бюро Комитета, которое в итоге рекомендовало кандидатуру Мурманска. При принятии решения в пользу российской города учитывались предоставленные городской администрацией гарантии, включая обязательство выделить необходимое финансирование. Таким образом, говорить о какой-либо дополнительной нагрузке на бюджет ЕЭК ООН просто неуместно.
5. Делегация Украины, как и все другие делегации, имела достаточно времени и возможностей заявить свою позицию по вопросу о месте проведения Форума мэров городов в 2021 г. Отказ от участия в предсессионных консультациях с последующим вскрытием достигнутых договорённостей в ходе официального заседания является вопиющим неуважением к ЕЭК ООН и её странам-членам. Решительно осуждаем такие провокационные действия, направленные на подрыв работы Комитета, который должен оставаться деполитизированной площадкой для экспертного диалога по актуальным вопросам устойчивого городского развития.

Unofficial Translation in English Provided by the Russian Delegation

1. Russia supports the work of the UNECE in the field of sustainable urbanization and attaches great importance to the activities of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (CUDHLM). We note with satisfaction the success of the first Forum of City Mayors. We are very pleased that this initiative, which the Russian delegation put forward during the 68th session of the UNECE in 2019, was highly appreciated both by the heads of municipalities in our region and by the member States of the Commission.

2. We are grateful to the overwhelming majority of member States for the support of the city of Murmansk to host the Forum of Mayors, the 82nd session of the CUDHLM and the Ministerial Meeting in 2021.
3. We regret that, due to the position of one delegation, the Committee was unable to reach consensus on the draft decision on the venue of the Forum of Mayors in 2021. We emphasize that the draft decision was approved by interested delegations during several rounds of pre-session informal consultations that were open to all member States. Taking into account the restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the consultations were held in the so-called "hybrid" format, which allowed not only the representatives of the Permanent Missions to the UN Office in Geneva to take part in them, but also experts from the capitals. The claims of lack of transparency in the negotiation process are completely groundless, and the accusations of bias are offensive and unacceptable.
4. Applications for the Forum of Mayors were considered for a long time, including during the Bureau meetings of the Committee, which ultimately recommended the candidacy of Murmansk. When deciding in favour of the Russian city, the guarantees provided by the city administration, including the obligation to provide the necessary funding, were taken into account. Thus, it is simply inappropriate to talk about any additional burden on the UNECE budget.
5. The delegation of Ukraine, like all other delegations, had enough time and opportunity to state its position on the venue of the Forum of City Mayors in 2021. Refusal to participate in pre-session consultations with the subsequent opening of the agreements reached during the official meeting is flagrant disrespect for the UNECE and its member States. We strongly condemn such provocative actions aimed at undermining the work of the Committee, which should remain a depoliticized platform for expert dialogue on the issues of sustainable urban development.

Annex V

Statement from the Delegation of Ukraine

1. We also appreciate the UNECE's initiative, which began last year with the Day of Cities, to convene the Forum of Mayors as an important platform for our locally elected officials to get in touch and discuss the most pressing issues on their agenda, including addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change.
2. As we continue down this road, the commitment of the local authorities, and their direct involvement in the implementation of the Agenda 2030, are indispensable.
3. At the same time, this process must be driven by the UNECE Member States, be consistent with their aspirations and be inclusive for all.
4. In this regard, my delegation cannot support the draft decision on this agenda item, in particular, the decision of this Committee to organize the Forum of Mayors 2021 in Murmansk, Russian Federation. We question the transparency and impartiality of the selection process, the lack of clearly defined procedures for the selection of the host city for the Forum, possible negative consequences for the budget of the Organization, as well as the lack of a detailed study of relevant logistic aspects (to name a few, the travel time from Geneva to Murmansk is not less than 14 hours).
5. Also, it seems that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has not been thoroughly analysed to convene next year's Forum according to the highest UN standards against the backdrop of the disease.
6. Moreover, grave violations by the Russian Federation of numerous resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly against Ukraine make it impossible for our delegation to attend the Forum in Murmansk, in particular, due to considerations of safety and security of its members.

Annex VI

Geneva Declaration of Mayors

I. Times of Change: Reshaping our Urban Realities

1. Our cities had to face an unprecedented emergency that found us, as well as our governments, unprepared. The COVID-19 pandemic posed a threat to all of us and our health, severely damaged our economies and put to test the administrations of our cities. In dense urban areas, the crisis was felt particularly strongly; it hit the most vulnerable groups of society hardest.

2. While many cities were in lockdown – and many industries, transport networks and businesses closed – we also started to experience an unknown urban life: better air quality, the return of nature to our cities, and empty streets giving space to cyclists and pedestrians. We stood up in solidarity and recognized the critical work of frontline workers who kept our societies functioning, including medical workers and employees operating essential services. The pandemic provided a testing ground for what cities could look like; the transformation of urban spaces happened overnight. If there is only one lesson to learn from this crisis, it is that rapid change of our urban reality is possible, behaviour patterns can be adapted, and humans can stand in unprecedented solidarity for a common cause.

3. We, the Mayors of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region, want to use the current momentum to rebuild our cities into places where all of us can thrive, quality of life is the guiding principle, nature and biodiversity are an integral part of urban planning, sustainable economies generate wealth for all, solidarity among city-dwellers prevails, and inequalities are actively narrowed. We align ourselves with the initiative of UN Secretary-General António Guterres to “build back better”, and turn the recovery into a real opportunity for shaping a healthy and resilient future. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 calls for action to work towards inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities – it is now in our hands to place the SDGs at the centre of our recovery efforts and create new urban realities for the benefit of all.

4. With this vision in mind we, the Mayors of the UNECE region, aspire to:

- (a) strengthen the resilience of our cities;
- (b) take ambitious climate action;
- (c) make our cities greener;
- (d) accelerate the transition to sustainable energy;
- (e) ensure urban transport is sustainable;
- (f) ensure housing is affordable, healthy and adequate;
- (g) make cities more equitable and inclusive; and
- (h) turn these aspirations into reality.

II. Strengthen the resilience of our cities

5. Increase our cities’ ability to anticipate, manage and recover from any future emergency, be it a pandemic, extreme and changing climate, or a disaster arising from natural or man-made hazards. We strive to make resilience and disaster risk reduction part of our urban development planning, and allocate funds for contingency plans. Smart city solutions

are an important step in the development of sustainable and resilient cities. This shift from crisis mode to medium- and long-term resilience strategies will help us protect the health, lives and safety of our city residents.

6. Build healthy cities, by creating environments which improve the physical, mental and environmental health of our communities. By integrating health in urban planning, we strive to improve access to urban green spaces, tackle air and noise pollution, improve sanitation and water management, improve sustainable mobility and promote healthy lifestyles. We recognize the role of spatial planning as a key instrument for building sustainable cities, and the importance of actively involving all stakeholders in the planning and decision-making processes for healthier cities and city-dwellers.

III. Take ambitious climate action

7. Accelerate the transition to carbon neutrality, by setting clear decarbonization goals, promoting the use of renewable energy, and increasing energy efficiency and low-carbon alternatives, especially in housing and transportation. We are strongly committed to tackling climate change at the local level by playing our part in limiting the temperature increase to 1.5°C and achieving net-zero carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by 2050.

8. Focus on climate change adaptation, by developing and implementing local adaptation plans with a view to enhancing cities' resilience to extreme and slow-onset climate impacts, based on participatory processes and with the involvement of civil society and the private sector. We commit to building adaptive capacity in line with local circumstances, and making full use of scientific, local and indigenous knowledge, where appropriate. In doing so, we will pay special attention to cost-effective, no-regret ecosystem restoration, conservation and nature-based solutions for adaptation. We recognize that natural solutions bring a range of co-benefits for local sustainable development beyond climate action. When designing and implementing adaptation measures, we will cater for local communities that are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

IV. Make our cities greener

9. Promote urban biodiversity, by integrating green spaces and trees into urban planning. Make sure green spaces are properly and evenly located and distributed in the city, and allow access to all citizens and residents in a safe manner. These measures will help improve air quality, reduce urban heat islands, and improve the health of inhabitants and the liveability of our cities.

10. Create opportunities for the increase of urban micro-farming and the inclusion of surrounding rural areas, as a means to promote food security and enhance the social and environmental benefits of local farming.

11. Tackle food waste, and provide opportunities for the redistribution of currently wasted and lost food, which will reduce carbon emissions and the waste of natural resources.

V. Accelerate the transition to sustainable energy

12. Improve the energy efficiency of cities to save energy, and reduce emissions and costs, leading to economic, health, and environmental benefits. By integrating energy-efficiency options into buildings, transport and urban planning, we will set our cities on a path of green growth.

13. Promote high-performance buildings with no- or low-carbon energy sources to reduce the carbon footprint of cities and energy costs for residents.

VI. Ensure urban transport is sustainable

14. Plan and design sustainable urban transport systems, with the aim of reducing traffic congestion, and environmental pollution, and increasing road safety⁴. Ensure that urban mobility systems are accessible, affordable and interlinked, aligned with land management, and integrated into the wider urban development. Guarantee that future users are efficiently included in the processes of planning and implementation.

15. Ensure that transport in the urban environment is sustainable, through the promotion of safe, secure, green, healthy and affordable smart mobility solutions.

16. Ensure enhanced resilience and preparedness of urban transport systems in times of population growth, urban sprawl, pandemics and natural disasters, with an emphasis on public transport as the backbone of many cities and as a provider of essential services to keep cities moving.

VII. Ensure housing is affordable, healthy and adequate

17. Ensure access to decent, adequate, affordable and healthy housing for all. Actively tackle the undersupply of affordable housing, rising urban rents, low quality of housing and urban infrastructure, limited access to land for housing construction and renovation, and mounting urban poverty and homelessness. Protect the most vulnerable groups of society by providing adequate housing where it is lacking and ensuring that the housed do not become homeless, especially in times of pandemics where the public appeal is to “stay home”.

18. Improve access for all to healthy and good-quality housing, by integrating a health dimension in urban planning and governance. Promoting decent housing conditions, including adequate infrastructure and services, has a direct effect on the health and quality of life of residents and is vital to making cities more habitable.

VIII. Make cities more equitable and inclusive

19. Build inclusive cities that guarantee equal rights and participation of all, including the most vulnerable groups in our communities. The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic – and also the impact of a changing climate – intensified pre-existing inequalities and put socioeconomic progress at risk of being rolled back. This is why we commit to “build back better” in a more equitable and inclusive manner.

20. Ensure women participate fully in political decision-making processes, and actively tackle the underrepresentation of women in local governments. It is critical to give women a voice for influencing public priorities and ensuring that urban planning responds to the needs of women and girls.

21. Ensure that contingency plans respond to the specific needs of different population groups that might be more vulnerable in emergency situations and under climate change, including women, children, senior citizens, people with disabilities, international and internal migrants and those who are economically disadvantaged. Provide for public participation in decision-making when developing emergency plans.

⁴ A good example of this is the European Commission’s concept of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans.

IX. Turn these aspirations into reality

22. We, the mayors of the UNECE region, are willing to use the existing tools, and our influence and channels to turn these aspirations into reality. We consider the UNECE as a connector and enabler, and the Forum of Mayors as a platform for:

(a) *On-going exchange and mutual learning:* We will share successful local solutions and action plans with our peers to facilitate mutual learning and to support each other in making progress.

(b) *Spreading the word:* We will act as promoters and champions of this Declaration and publicly commit to it, e.g. by translating and publishing it on our communication channels. We will consult with stakeholders regarding our action plans, and create local partnerships for their implementation. We will actively encourage fellow mayors to become champions for this Declaration.

(c) *Multiplier effect:* We will act as multipliers and join urban networks and initiatives, including the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, in order to develop and subscribe to concrete, ambitious commitments for our cities.

(d) *Tracking progress:* We commit to tracking the progress on the commitments, respond to the UNECE's progress survey, and present results of progress at next year's Forum of Mayors.

Annex VII

Terms of Reference of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group for 2021-2022

I. Objectives

1. The Real Estate Market (REM) Advisory Group supports the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management and the Working Party on Land Administration in the implementation of their programmes of work.
2. The Advisory Group assists the Committee and the Working Party to develop stronger and more sustainable housing real estate markets and smart sustainable cities; the Advisory Group reports to both bodies.

II. Activities

3. The activities of the Advisory Group address:
 - (a) affordable, adequate and healthy housing, and real estate markets (including sharing economy in the housing sector);
 - (b) housing finance (including transparent financial products for housing);
 - (c) energy efficiency in buildings;
 - (d) fire safety in buildings;
 - (e) management of multi-apartment buildings;
 - (f) property valuation and registration;
 - (g) smart and sustainable urban development;
 - (h) land markets and land administration (and related topics like land planning and housing sustainability); and
 - (i) spatial planning.
4. The Advisory Group will, according to the needs expressed by member States and following the decisions taken by the Committee:
 - (a) provide practical advice on the challenges addressed by the Committee and the Working Party in order to improve conditions for sustainable housing, urban development, and land management;
 - (b) prepare guidelines and best practices that support sustainable housing, urban development and land management, including best practices for encouraging investment in national housing real estate markets;
 - (c) recommend activities to the Committee and the Working Party for their programmes of work;
 - (d) assist the Committee and the Working Party to undertake studies and advisory missions; organize seminars and training workshops; draft policy documents and guidelines; collect data; disseminate information on the activities of the Committee; and develop training material;

- (e) work with the Committee and the Working Party to assist countries with training and capacity building for stakeholders acting in the housing market;
 - (f) collect examples of good practice in housing, urban development and land administration reforms in the UNECE region; and develop studies about the topics proposed and accepted; and
 - (g) assist the Committee and the Working Party with specific projects at their request.
5. The Advisory Group may propose specific activities. The final decision on activities to be carried out by the Advisory Group remains with the Committee.
 6. The Chair of the Advisory Group will, when possible and necessary, attend meetings of the Bureau of the Committee to discuss and present the work of the Advisory Group.

III. Membership

7. The selection of an Advisory Group member will be in line with the document "Guidelines for the establishment and functioning of teams of specialists within UNECE" (ECE/EX/2/Rev.1) and the following rules and principles:
 - (a) members of the Advisory Group must be nominated by member States or by non-governmental organizations recognized by the Economic and Social Council or identified and proposed by the secretariat;
 - (b) members shall be representatives of the private sector, non-governmental organizations, academia and municipalities;
 - (c) each member State or non-governmental organization may nominate, at most, one member of the Advisory Group at a time;
 - (d) nominations must be submitted to the secretariat at least 14 days before the Committee session in which the nomination is to be submitted; and
 - (e) nominations must be renewed, or new nominations submitted, when the mandate of the Advisory Group is extended, normally every two years.
8. The composition of the Advisory Group should, to the extent possible, include members whose knowledge and experience cover all areas under the Committee's programme of work.
9. Members of the Advisory Group participate in activities of the Committee in their own personal capacity⁵.
10. The Advisory Group will select from its own members a Chair and one or two vice-chairs. The Chair and the vice-chair(s) remain in charge for a maximum period of two years. The renewal of their appointment is possible for a maximum of two more periods.

⁵ Members who have proved not to be active for at least one whole year without a written notification to the secretariat will be automatically removed by the secretariat who will inform him/her via email. Members who prove not to be active include those members who do not participate in meetings and e-meetings, do not contribute in writing to studies and other activities of the Group, or do not reply to emails and messages by the secretariat.