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Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Review of the programmes of work 2018-2019 and 2020-2021

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Note by the Bureau of the Working Party

Summary

The present note contains information on progress made in the implementation of the programme of work for 2020-2021 (ECE/HBP/2019/7)¹ of the Working Party on Land Administration and on the work to be undertaken throughout 2021. The first three parts of the document are organized according to the clusters of the programme of work; the fourth part describes additional activities and work of the Bureau of the Working Party.

This note also includes those activities of the programme of work 2018-2019 (ECE/HBP/2017/4)² undertaken since the eleventh session, which was held on 27 and 28 February 2019.

¹ Available online at https://unece.org/DAM/hlm/documents/2019/ECE_HBP_2019_7-ENG.pdf

² Available online at https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/2017/ECE_HBP_2017-4e.pdf



I. Capacity-building and international knowledge-sharing

1. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, several events planned for 2020 in which the Working Party on Land Administration was involved in the preparations were cancelled or postponed. During the second half of 2020, workshops took place online.

2. Since the eleventh session of the Working Party on Land Administration in February 2019, the Working Party held the following workshops:

(a) “Digitally Enabled Development for a Sustainable Future in Eastern Europe” on 18-20 September 2019 in Vrdnik, Serbia. This workshop was jointly organized by the Republic Geodetic Authority (RGA), the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (EC JRC), the World Bank, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management in Europe (UN-GGIM-Europe) and the Working Party;

(b) “Formalizing the informal to protect residents in informal settlements” on 17 June 2020. The online workshop was organized jointly with the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG). The workshop launched the “Guidelines for the formalization of informal constructions”³. It replaced the initially planned launch event during the FIG Working Week 2020, which was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

(c) “Land PPPs and the role of the private sector during the recovery” on 21 October 2020. This online workshop took place during the FIG Commission 7 Online Annual Meeting, and was jointly organized by FIG Commission 7 and the Working Party.

3. Members of the Bureau participated in the Land and Poverty Conference, hosted by the World Bank on 25-29 March 2019 in Washington, DC. They presented the draft guidelines for the formalization of informal constructions.⁴

4. The Bureau and the Working Party secretariat have also presented the Working Party activities at international events focused on land administration, including:

(a) “The Ecosystems Related to Real Estate Conveyancing”, 20 and 21 November 2019, in Helsinki, Finland. On this occasion, the Working Party presented and discussed the draft Scenario Study on Future Land Administration and the conclusions of the draft Study on Fraud in Land Administration;

(b) Tenth World Urban Forum, 8-13 February 2020, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; and

(c) “Potential benefits and limitations of emerging technologies forum”, 25 November 2019 (online) and 16 January 2020. This workshop was organized by the HM Land Registry in collaboration with the Working Party.

5. In preparation for the discussion on “Land Administration during COVID-19” at the twelfth session, the Working Party will organize a series of webinars. The webinars will cover topics related to accelerated digitalization; COVID-19 and the effects on the property market; and the role of national spatial data infrastructure, geospatial data and technology in the response to COVID-19. The webinars are jointly organized with FAO.

6. The Working Party will organize one more workshop, in the fall of 2021, to take place in Gävle, Sweden, on education in land administration and geospatial management.

7. Collaboration with UN-GGIM and the Expert Group on Land Administration and Management (EG LAM) has continued. In this context, the Working Party provided input and comments to the development of the Framework for Effective Land Administration prepared by UN-GGIM. It also participated in the tenth session of UN-GGIM, which was held online on 26-27 August and 4 September 2020.

³ Available online at <https://unece.org/housing-and-land-management/publications/guidelines-formalization-informal-constructions>.

⁴ Ibid.

8. At the invitation of the Prindex Research Advisory Group, a joint initiative of the Global Land Alliance and the Overseas Development Institute to measure perceptions of property security, the Working Party joined the Advisory Group and is contributing to its activities.

9. The Bureau of the Working Party and the secretariat continued to use an online wiki⁵ to facilitate the sharing of information with the public and between its members. The secretariat set up a LinkedIn page⁶ for the Working Party, members of its Bureau and interested colleagues, to share articles and relevant information.

II. Land administration reviews

10. The Working Party undertook one land administration review in 2018, in Belarus.

11. The review of land management and land administration in Belarus was developed by experts from the Netherlands and the Russian Federation.

12. In 2019, the review was published as chapters in the Country Profile on Housing and Land Management of Belarus.⁷

13. Preparations for the development of a second Country Profile for Albania have started. Depending on the availability of extrabudgetary funds, it is expected to be undertaken during 2020-2021. It will include an update on the review of land management and land administration in Albania.

III. Studies on selected topics in land management

14. In 2018, the Working Party initiated a study on benchmarking in land administration on the costs for the registration and transfer of real estate and mortgages for the ECE region. This was done through a questionnaire. The preliminary results were presented at the eleventh session of the Working Party. The paper was finalized and published online in December 2019.⁸

15. In 2018, the Working Party initiated a series of studies on land consolidation practices in Europe, including the set-up of a standard legal framework for land consolidation. One of these studies, “Legal guide on land consolidation based on regulatory practices in Europe”, was coordinated by FAO in cooperation with LandNet (a network of practitioners and researchers in land consolidation) and with input from the Working Party and was finalized in 2020.⁹

16. The Working Party provided comments to the “Policy Framework for Sustainable Real Estate Markets”, published by the UNECE Real Estate Market Advisory Group in 2019. This study was an update of the 2010 Policy Framework for Sustainable Real Estate Markets, to reflect the emergence of key international agreements and new trends, such as migration and mobility flows; technology and innovation; the growth of emerging markets and asset competition; the change in housing demand oriented towards green buildings and new designs; and energy consumption and climate change.¹⁰

17. In 2019, the Working Party completed the preparation of the “Guidelines for the formalization of informal constructions”. These technical guidelines provide

⁵ <https://www2.ECE.org/wiki/display/HLMWPLA/Home>.

⁶ <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/6610809/>.

⁷ Available online at <https://unece.org/housing-and-land-management/publications/country-profiles-housing-and-land-management-belarus>.

⁸ Available online at

https://unece.org/DAM/hlm/documents/Publications/2019_Costs_study_real_estate_transfer.pdf.

⁹ Available online at <http://www.fao.org/3/ca9520en/CA9520EN.pdf>.

¹⁰ Available online at

https://unece.org/DAM/hlm/documents/Publications/2019_Policy_Framework_for_Sustainable_Real_Estate_Markets.pdf.

recommendations on how member States can address the challenges posed by informal development. They are based on the lessons learned from the previous studies by the Working Party on informal settlements, namely “Self-Made Cities: In Search of Sustainable Solutions for Informal Settlements” (2009) and “Formalizing the Informal: Challenges and Opportunities of Informal Settlements in South-East Europe” (2015). The publication provides general guidance for formalization projects in countries facing the challenge of informal development. It was prepared in cooperation with FIG and is available as hardcopy and online¹¹.

18. As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the secretariat of the Working Party organized the preparation of the “COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the UNECE Region”. The draft Recovery Action Plan will be presented at the twelfth session for endorsement by the Working Party and is expected to be finalized in 2021, taking into account comments expressed at the session.

19. In 2018, the Working Party initiated a follow-up to the 2011 study¹² “Fraud in Land Administration Systems” through a questionnaire to analyse the current state of play in the region. Results of the follow-up study were presented during the eightieth session of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (Geneva, 2-4 October 2019). To illustrate the study, a collection of good practices in addressing fraud in land administration systems in the ECE region is ongoing. The final draft study is expected to be presented at the twelfth session for approval by the Working Party, and then finalized and published online in 2021.

20. The Working Party continued its activities on the preparation of the “Scenario Study on Future Land Administration” which was initiated in 2018. Preliminary results were discussed during a round table on 21 and 22 March 2019 in Vienna, Austria, including outcomes of a related questionnaire submitted to the member States. This was followed by a discussion in the margins of the “The Ecosystems Related to Real Estate Conveyancing Conference and Plenary Meeting” of the Permanent Committee on Cadastre in the European Union (Helsinki, Finland, 20 and 21 November 2019). The Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management at its eighty-first session (Geneva and online, 6-8 October 2020) took note of the draft study. The draft study, including the scenarios and a self-assessment questionnaire, will be presented at the twelfth session of the Working Party for discussion. The Working Party is requested to endorse the draft study. It is expected that the study will be finalized in 2021.

21. In 2020, the Working Party, in collaboration with FIG, initiated a study on public-private partnership in land administration. The study is an update to the 2005 “Guiding Principles for Public-Private-Partnership in Land Administration” based on the results of a survey on experience and best practices with public-private partnerships in land administration. The preliminary findings have been presented and discussed during the FIG Commission 7 annual meeting (online). The results of the study will be presented at the twelfth session for endorsement by the Working Party. The study is expected to be finalized in 2021.

IV. Report on the work of the Bureau of the Working Party

22. Since the last session of the Working Party, held on 27 and 28 February 2019, the Bureau met five times in 2019, five times in 2020 and twice in 2021. It is expected to meet three more times before the twelfth Working Party session in May 2021.

23. In 2020, the Bureau conducted a survey among Working Party focal points to identify the main channels of communication. Results show that communication by email from the Working Party secretariat or from the Bureau members is the main channel used; it also

¹¹ Available online at <https://unece.org/housing-and-land-management/publications/guidelines-formalization-informal-constructions>.

¹² Available online at <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=24802>.

remains the preferred means of communication by far for receiving information on Working Party activities.

24. The Bureau established four task groups to work on contributing to the programme of work in selected areas. Bureau members participate in the work of these task groups. There have been some amendments to the groups since the last session, to reflect the changing needs of the work. These include:

(a) “Group on fraud in land administration” will close once the study has been updated;

(b) “Group on future scenarios in land administration” will close once the study has been completed;

(c) “Group for outreach and promotion” will continue its work. The purpose of this group is to preserve the history and knowledge of the work of the Working Party, and to make sure that the work is shared with relevant parties and published via appropriate channels; and

(d) “Group on public-private partnership in land administration” will close once the study has been updated.
