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Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management

Working Party on Land Administration

Twelfth session

Geneva, 31 May and 1 June 2021

Item 11 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the report

Report of the Twelfth Session of the Working Party on Land Administration

I. Introduction

1. The Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA) held its twelfth session in Geneva on 31 May and 1 June 2021. In response to the global COVID-19 pandemic and its associated public health concerns and constraints the formal session allowed for almost exclusive online participation on an exceptional basis.

A. Attendance

2. Representatives of the following ECE countries participated: Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Republic of North Macedonia, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Uzbekistan.

3. A representative of Nigeria also attended the meeting.

4. Representatives of the following organizations of the United Nations system attended: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

5. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations attended: Eurogeographics, Maastricht Generation, Peace by Prosperity, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and the Surveying and Spatial Sciences Institute, Australia.

6. Private sector representatives, experts and academics from universities and research institutions also attended the session at the invitation of the secretariat.

B. Opening of the session and adoption of the agenda

7. The Chair of the Working Party, Mr. Fredrik Zetterquist, Sweden, opened the session. In his opening remarks the Chair highlighted the importance of accelerated digitalization and the use of new technologies, processes and business models in land administration to support a resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

8. Ms. Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), welcomed the participants to the meeting. In her remarks, Ms. Algayerova highlighted the important role of land administration and management in the COVID-19 pandemic recovery. Ms. Algayerova thanked the Ministry of Social Accommodation of Malta for offering to host the Working Party's Twelfth Session and their commitment to cooperate on future events.

9. The Working Party adopted the session provisional agenda without changes as contained in document ECE/HBP/WP.7/2021/1.

10. All presentations and statements delivered during the Session are available online, see: <https://unece.org/housing/events/wpla-12thsession>.

II. Land administration during the COVID-19 pandemic

11. This segment included presentations¹ by H.E. Mr. Roderick Galdes, Minister for Social Accommodation, Malta, on *COVID-19 effects and housing related recovery opportunities*; Mr. Pekka Halme, Senior Advisor, National Land Survey, Finland, with a keynote on *COVID-19 effects on recovery opportunities to help "build back better"*; Ms. Ewa Surma, Director of the Department of Strategy, International Cooperation and Public Information, Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography (GUGiK), Poland, on *The development of network services and usage in the time of pandemic*; Ms. Chryssy Potsiou and Mr. Steven Nystrom, Authors of the *COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the UNECE Region* (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2021/7; ECE/HBP/WP.7/2021/Inf.1) on the draft Action Plan; and Mr. Darko Vucetic, Head of Center of Excellence for GIM, Serbian Republic Geodetic Authority, on *Reflections on the implementation of the COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan*. The segment addressed the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has had on land administration and how the sector has responded and adapted to accelerated digitalization and the use of new technologies, processes and business models for land administration and management. In this segment participants also discussed the role of land administration and management for an inclusive, safe, resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

12. Outcomes and main conclusions² of the UNECE-FAO joint webinar series "Land administration during the COVID-19 pandemic" were presented by WPLA bureau members: Ms. Victoria Abbott (United Kingdom); Ms. Elena Busch (Norway) and Mr. Konstantin Litvintcev (Russian Federation).

13. The Working Party:

(a) Agreed on the draft COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the ECE Region and requested the Bureau to incorporate and address the additional comments received during and immediately after the Session until 30 June 2021;

(b) Requested that the completed Plan be presented to the eighty-second session of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management in 2021 for final endorsement; and

(c) Approved the COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan as an official publication in 2022 in English and Russian, digital and print.

¹ All presentations and statements are available, see: <https://unece.org/housing/events/wpla-12thsession>

III. Review of scenarios for future land administration

14. Mr. Lesley Arnold, Director, Geospatial Frameworks, President-elect, Surveying and Spatial Sciences Institute, Australia, set the scene with a presentation on the *Global reference frameworks on geospatial information and land administration*. Mr. Andrew Coote, Director, ConsultingWhere, UK, presented on the *Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF) and the experience of applying IGIF in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine*. Ms. Eva-Maria Unger, Kadaster International, presented on the *Framework for Effective Land Administration (FELA)*. All presentations and statements are available online, see: <https://unece.org/housing/events/wpla-12thsession>

15. Mr. Fredrik Zetterquist, WPLA Chair, introduced the Scenario Study on Future Land Administration in the UNECE region (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2021/5; ECE/HBP/WP.7/2021/Inf.2), including the self-assessment questionnaire which was sent to the member States to provide information for the development of the scenarios. The scenarios were elaborated based on the inputs received. The presentation was followed by an *interactive survey* asking the following questions: a) Relevance of the scenarios for strategic discussion, shaping of visions and self-assessment; b) COVID-19 effect on the scenarios; c) Suggestions for improvement of the scenarios; and d) Suggestions for strategies on a continuous dialogue in the region. The results of the interactive survey will be used to inform future activities on the future scenarios in land administration and will be made available online.

16. The Working Party:

(a) Agreed on the Scenario Study on Future Land Administration in the UNECE region and requested the Bureau to incorporate and address the additional comments received during and immediately after the Session until 30 June 2021;

(b) Requested that the completed Study be presented to the eighty-second session of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management in 2021 for final endorsement; and

(c) Approved the Scenarios Study as an official publication in 2021 in English and Russian, digital and print.

IV. Matters arising from the eightieth and eighty-first sessions of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management of the Economic Commission for Europe

17. The secretariat informed the Working Party about decisions taken by the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management at its eightieth session (ECE/HBP/201) held in October 2019 and eighty-first session held in October 2020 (ECE/HBP/206) and by the Executive Committee (EXCOM) on 5 March 2021.

18. At its eighty first session, the Working Party was informed on the Committee's decision (ECE/HBP/206 para 52) to organize its Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management in 2021 entitled "Affordable, adequate, and resilient housing in liveable cities, including cities which face extreme weather conditions" as part of the Committee's eighty second session. It is expected that the Ministerial Meeting will welcome key conclusions and recommendations of the study "#Housing2030: Effective policies for affordable housing in the UNECE region" and endorse the "Place and Life in the UNECE – A Regional Action Plan 2021: Tackling challenges from COVID-19 pandemics, climate and housing emergencies in region, city, neighbourhood and homes". The WPLA delegates were invited to register to participate in the Ministerial Meeting and encourage relevant Ministers from their countries to confirm their participation if they have not done so yet.

19. Further, the Working Party was informed on the Committee's activities supporting the response to COVID-19 at city level and building urban economic resilience. The activities were implemented under the two field projects "Post COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for

Informal Settlements in the UNECE Region” and the UNDA ‘rapid response’ project “*Building Urban Economic Resilience during and after COVID-19*”.

20. The secretariat also informed the delegates on the Committee’s activities to support building smart sustainable cities (including promoting digitalization) within the United for Smart Sustainable Cities Initiative, where UNECE is one of the 16 UN partner organizations and part of the U4SSC secretariat.

21. Finally, the Working Party was informed on the decision of the ECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) at its 112th session to organize the second Forum of Mayors back-to-back with the Regional Forum for Sustainable Development in April 2022 in Geneva. The Forum will be organized in four sessions, (1) Built environmental (2) Public and green spaces; (3) Mobility and connectivity; and (4) The neighborhood “15-minute city”. The Forum will focus on the Geneva Declaration of Mayors adopted by the First Forum of Mayors in 2020, related SDGs and COVID-19 recover actions.

22. The Working Party took note of the information provided.

V. Review of programmes of work 2018-2019 and 2020-2021

(a) Capacity-building and international knowledge-sharing

23. The Working Party was informed of the outcomes of the workshops held since its eleventh session.

24. The Chair presented a short overview of the progress made in the implementation of the programme of work for the period 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2021/3). In accordance with the programme of work the main activities carried out were: workshops, the work of the Bureau on international knowledge-sharing and on topics covering land administration and management, conferences, seminars and other events since the eleventh session.

(b) Land administration reviews

25. Mr. Andrey Filipenko, Director General of the National Cadastral Agency of Belarus, informed the Working Party of progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the review in land administration and management services in Belarus. The land administration review for Belarus was published in 2019 as a chapter in the Belarus Country Profile on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management. He noted progress on land management issues and digitalization of land administration systems. One of the key recommendations of the land administration review was to improve access to land to the private sector to promote investment.

(c) Studies on selected topics in land management and land administration

26. The Working Party was informed about the outcomes of studies developed since the eleventh session.

27. The Working Party Vice-Chair, Ms. Kirsikka Riekkinen, Finland, presented the “Study on public-private partnership for land administration” (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2021/6). This Study is an update to the 2005 study on “Guiding Principles for Public-Private Partnership in Land Administration” (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2005/8).

28. The Working Party Vice-chair, Ms. Victoria Abbott, United Kingdom, presented the “Study on Fraud in Land Administration Systems” (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2021/Inf.3). This study is an update to the 2011 “Study on the Challenges of Fraud to Land Administration Institutions” (ECE/HBP/165).

29. The Working Party endorsed the updated study on the “Public-private partnerships in land administration” and the updated “Study on Fraud in Land Administration Systems”.

30. The Working Party took note of the information on the implemented activities and requested the Bureau to complete activities for 2021 and present the final results at the eighty second session of the Committee in 2021.

31. All presentations and statements are available online, see: <https://unece.org/housing/events/wpla-12thsession>.

VI. Cooperation with international organizations and agencies working in land administration and land management

32. During this segment of the Session partner organizations shared ideas and information on potential synergies and areas for cooperation to improve land management throughout the ECE region as well as how to increase coordination between organizations in planning studies, conferences, publications and other activities. This segment included presentations by Ms. Carol Agius, UN-GGIM: Europe Secretariat, Eurogeographics; Mr. Malcolm Childress, Executive Director, Global Land Alliance; Mr. Robert Lewis-Lettington, Chief, Land, Housing Shelter Section, UN-Habitat; Ms. Romyana Tonchovska, Senior Land Administration - IT Officer, FAO; Mr. Paulo Torrinha, Head Director of Cadastral Information Department, Directorate-General for Territory, Portugal, Permanent Committee on Cadastre of the European Union (PCC) Secretariat.

33. The Working Party took note of the information provided.

34. All presentations and statements are available online, see: <https://unece.org/housing/events/wpla-12thsession>.

VII. Presentation of the programme of work for 2022–2023

35. The Chair presented the draft programme of work for 2022-2023 (ECE/HBP/WP.7/2021/4).

36. The Working Party reviewed and endorsed its programme of work for 2022-2023 (Annex I) and recommended it be submitted to the Committee for adoption at its eighty-second session in October 2021.

VIII. Election of the Bureau

37. The Chair invited the member States' representatives to present nominations for the Bureau members.

38. The Working Party elected by acclamation, the Bureau for its twelfth session, as follows:

- Mr. Fredrik Zetterquist, Sweden (Chair)
- Ms. Kirsikka Riekkinen, Finland (Vice-Chair)
- Ms. Victoria Abbott, United Kingdom (Vice-Chair)
- Mr. Filippo Cadamuro, Italy
- Ms. Mari Khardziani, Georgia
- Mr. Dimitris Rokos, Greece
- Ms. Tatjana Cenova Mitrevska, Republic of North Macedonia
- Ms. Elena Busch, Norway
- Mr. Konstantin Litvincev, Russian Federation
- Ms. Pilar Verdejo García, Spain.

IX. Any other business

39. No matters were raised under this item.

X. Date of the next session

40. The Chair informed that the next session is scheduled to take place in spring 2023. He also invited member States to consider hosting the next Working Party session in their country.

XI. Adoption of the report

41. The Working Party reviewed the session report based on a draft prepared by the Secretariat and adopted it.

42. The meeting was closed by the Chair at 15:43 on 1 June 2021.

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Annex I

Draft Programme of Work of the Working Party on Land Administration of the Economic Commission for Europe for 2022-2023

I. Capacity-building and international knowledge-sharing

1. **Objective:** To increase the capacity of ECE member States to formulate policies on land administration and management.
2. To achieve this objective, the Working Party will:
 - (a) Organize four workshops in the ECE region, in person and/or online, to allow for experience- and knowledge-sharing, to improve the human capital of stakeholders and enhance practices in land administration and management;
 - (b) Promote the work of the Working Party and provide advice on land administration at workshops, conferences, seminars and other events focusing on land administration and management, as well as through other channels, such as the planned regional observatory on urban-related Sustainable Development Goals;
 - (c) Provide policy advice to national and local governments in the implementation of the COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the ECE Region;
 - (d) Contribute, as requested and available, to ECE Real Estate Market Advisory Group roundtable discussions; and
 - (e) Contribute, as requested, to the work of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, in line with Economic and Social Council Resolution (E/RES/2016/27)³, including the United Nations Expert Group on Land Administration and Management.

II. Land administration reviews

3. **Objective:** To provide, upon the request of a member State, an assessment of the member State's land administration arrangements and guidelines to enhance them.
4. To achieve this objective, the Working Party will, upon invitation by Governments and subject to the availability of funding, develop member State land administration reviews as part of the ECE country profiles on housing and land management.

III. Studies on selected topics in land administration and management

5. **Objective:** To study issues in land administration of interest to member States, and generate publications containing analyses to help member States better understand the current status of land administration and management and thus formulate more targeted and effective policies, strategies and action plans.
6. To achieve this objective, the Working Party will:
 - (a) Continue to elaborate and, if necessary, update the scenarios for future land administration and land management solutions, including the self-assessment questionnaire, taking into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda as well as current global transformative forces, such as urbanization, digitization, climate change and open data in order to enhance preparedness to adapt to future new developments, increase flexibility and build resilience to disruptive events, such as the

³ Available online at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/RES/2016/27

COVID-19 pandemic, and ensure holistic land administration and land management solutions;

(b) Continue ongoing work on benchmarking of land administration systems. Initiate studies related to different critical aspects of land administration, e.g., on measures to enhance data quality in land administration systems; concepts and strategies for open data and data-driven solutions and practices in the support of approximation among the land administration, land management and geospatial management domains; review of educational programmes in land administration and geospatial management; analysis of perceived tenure security in the ECE region; and applications of emerging technologies in land administration; and

(c) Develop possible additional studies on the impact of COVID-19 on land administration and management.

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