



Economic Commission for Europe**Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management****Eighty-fourth session**

Geneva, 4-6 October 2023

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

**Review of the implementation of the
programmes of work 2022 and 2023****Activities of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing
and Land Management since its eighty-third session****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

This document provides information on the activities of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management since its eighty-third session in October 2022 and outlines a list of activities for 2023 and 2024.

The Committee is invited to take note of the information on activities implemented. The Committee is also invited to approve, subject to the availability of funding, the list of activities proposed for 2024 that are needed to implement the programme of work of the housing and land management component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme.



I. Implementation of the programmes of work since the eighty-third session

1. In 2023-2024, the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (CUDHLM) continued supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), the Paris Climate Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Geneva United Nations Charter on Sustainable Housing, the Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Housing and Urban Development¹ and the Place and Life in the ECE – A Regional Action Plan 2030.² The following activities were implemented:

A. Affordable, accessible and healthy housing

1. Place and Life in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe – A Regional Action Plan 2030: Tackling challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, climate and housing emergencies in region, city, neighbourhood and homes

2. The Place and Life in the ECE – A Regional Action Plan 2030: Tackling challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, climate and housing emergencies in region, city, neighbourhood and homes was endorsed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management on 6 October 2021 and was published in 2022 with illustrative sketches by renowned architect Norman Foster.³

3. The Regional Action Plan provides an integrated approach for supporting local and national development efforts until 2030 in two interlinked policy areas: cities, neighbourhoods, homes and rural life; and sustainable housing and homes. It contains concise guiding principles, goals, targets and actions for building more resilient, inclusive and sustainable people-centred cities in the ECE region with affordable, accessible and climate-neutral housing.

4. The following events were organized to disseminate information on the Regional Action Plan and build the capacities of national and local governments for the implementation:

(a) Side event to the eighty-third CUDHLM session “In Focus: SDG 11 - Inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities require sustainable and inclusive urban design and architecture” (Geneva, 3 October 2022; in person and online), in cooperation with the Geneva Cities Hub;⁴

(b) Side event to the eighty-third CUDHLM session “The impact of the energy crisis on housing, the real estate market and urban development in the Economic Commission for Europe Region: Perspectives from the UNECE Real Estate Market Advisory Group” (San Marino, 6 October 2022; online);⁵

(c) Presentation on the Regional Action Plan and other ECE instruments at the Sixth North and Central Asian Multistakeholder Forum on Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels (Almaty, 6-7 October 2022; in person);

(d) Side event to the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) “Climate action and New Urban Agenda: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

¹ <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/pub/2910>.

² For detailed information on meetings and publications, please see the website at <https://unece.org/housing>.

³ <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/pub/369375>.

⁴ <https://unece.org/housing/events/infocus-sdg11-2022>.

⁵ <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/events/370771>.

localization and sustainable urban policy for resilience” (Sharm El-Sheikh, 16 November 2022; in person);⁶

(e) Side event to the 2023 Regional Forum for Sustainable Development “SDG 9 & Fashion - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure” (Geneva, 28 March 2023; in person and online)⁷.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

5. The impact observed as a result of work on the Regional Action Plan was increased awareness among local and national governments and other stakeholders in the ECE region about the Regional Action Plan.

6. The following dissemination tools were used to promote the work on the Regional Action Plan: The Regional Action Plan website (unece.org/housing/regional-action-plan-2030), videos, podcasts, press releases and the use of ECE social media platforms.

2. “#Housing2030 – Improving Housing Affordability in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Region” study

7. The #Housing2030: Effective policies for affordable housing in the UNECE region study, which comprises a compilation of specific policy tools and case studies from the ECE region for affordable, decent and climate-neutral housing, was published in 2022.⁸

8. The following capacity-building activities were organized for national and local governments representatives:

(a) Workshop on Housing Policies and Emergency Architecture, organized jointly with Polis University (Tirana, 28 September 2022; in person and online);⁹

(b) Presentation on the #Housing2030 study at the Conference on Architecture Policies and Building Culture. The conference was organized by the Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic (Prague, 11-12 October 2022; in person);

(c) Workshop on Integrated Development of Five Residential Areas in Bishkek (Bishkek, 28 February 2023; in person and online);

(d) Side event to the International Housing Festival “(Re) Defining the role of Housing Agencies in Southern Europe” (Barcelona, 8 June 2023; in person)¹⁰.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

9. The following impacts were observed as a result of the work on #Housing2030:

(a) Identification of common challenges facing local and national governments in the ECE region to addressing housing affordability;

(b) An improved understanding among local and national governments in the ECE region of best practices and successful policies for ensuring housing affordability.

10. The following dissemination tools were used to promote the work on housing: the “Your #Housing2030 Making a House a Home”¹¹ podcast series, the #Housing2030 website (housing2030.org) and the social media platforms of ECE, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and Housing Europe.

⁶ <https://unece.org/COP27>.

⁷ <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/events/376596>.

⁸ <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/pub/360530>.

⁹ <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/events/371563>.

¹⁰ Information on events at the Social Housing Festival at <https://socialhousingfestival.eu/>

¹¹ <https://www.housing2030.org/podcasts>.

B. Response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the city level and building urban economic resilience

11. At its eighty-second session in 2021, the Committee “welcomed the activities of the secretariat regarding supporting the response to COVID-19 at the city level and building urban economic resilience” (ECE/HBP/208, para. 25). In response to the Committee’s request and under the guidance of the Bureau of the Committee, the secretariat launched activities to help cities recover from the pandemic and build more resilient economies and societies. In 2022-2023, the secretariat continued the implementation of technical assistance projects to support cities and local communities in overcoming the negative consequences of the pandemic and building long-term urban resilience.

1. Project on “Post COVID-19 Recovery in Informal Settlements in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Region”

12. The aim of the project was to strengthen the capacity of national and local governments in ECE countries to address the needs of the most vulnerable population groups living in informal settlements. It was implemented from 2020 to 2022, with funds from the ECE Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation (RPTC); and, in 2023, with support of the Regular Budget.

13. In 2022, activities focused on the implementation of the “COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the ECE Region”¹² (developed and endorsed by CUDHLM in 2021). The Action Plan provides a comprehensive list of goals, targets and actions to help local and national governments mitigate and/or prevent the spread of COVID-19 and address the needs of the most vulnerable population groups living in informal settlements.

14. The following outputs related to post-COVID-19 recovery in informal settlements were delivered:

(a) Collaboration with the City Development Initiative for Asia (CDIA) through the joint project “Integrated Development of Five Residential Areas in Bishkek”, which assists the city government of Bishkek to mobilise resources for implementing the recommendations for the improvement of five informal settlements and formulate proposals for bankable project proposals. This included the Workshop on Integrated Development of Five Residential Areas in Bishkek (Bishkek, 28 February 2023; in person and online);

(b) Online courses “Guidelines for the Formalization of Informal Constructions” and “Implementing COVID-19 Recovery Action Plans for Informal Settlements”¹³ were developed in English and launched. The courses are being translated into Russian.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

15. The following impact was observed as a result of work on post-COVID-19 recovery in informal settlements: national and local governments in the ECE region were provided with evidence-based policy recommendations to support post-COVID-19 recovery in informal settlements and address the needs of the most vulnerable groups living in these settlements.

16. The following dissemination tools were used to promote the work on post-COVID-19 recovery in informal settlements: podcasts, videos, press releases and ECE social media platforms.

2. Projects on building urban economic resilience during and after the COVID-19 pandemic

17. The “rapid response” project on “Building urban economic resilience during and after COVID-19” (www.urbaneconomicresilience.org) was implemented from 2020 to 2022 by the five United Nations Regional Economic Commissions, in cooperation with the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Capital Development

¹² <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/pub/367518>.

¹³ Available at: <https://www.cityresiliencetraining.com/course/>.

Fund (UNCDF), and with the support of the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) programme. This project focused on strengthening the capacities of local governments in 16 cities globally, including three cities in the ECE Region – Tirana, Albania, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan and Kharkiv, Ukraine. It involved the development of an urban economic resilience diagnostic and planning tool and the exchange of good practices in developing and implementing post-COVID-19 recovery plans.

18. An independent evaluation of the project was conducted in 2023 and it recommended “to continue efforts to engage pilot cities in their respective regions and help them further develop their capacities to access funding for their plans ... and provide [the cities] with spaces for experience exchange among pilot cities, both at the regional and global level” (ECE/HBP/2023/3).

19. To respond to the evaluation, the Regional Commissions, in cooperation with their technical partners, developed a new project “Supporting Member States in urban economic resilience building for inclusive responses and recovery regarding natural, man-made disasters, climate change, internal and external shocks”. The new project will be implemented from 2023-2025. It will support five cities globally in designing, implementing and monitoring sustainable, resilient, and inclusive economic and financial responses to internal and external shocks to achieve the SDGs.

20. Promoting urban resilience requires the application of innovative tools and instruments. In October 2022, at its eighty-third session, the Committee adopted the San Marino Declaration on Principles for Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Design and Architecture in Support of Sustainable, Safe, Healthy, Socially Inclusive, Climate-neutral and Circular Homes, Urban Infrastructure and Cities¹⁴. The San Marino Declaration provides action-oriented principles for strengthening the roles of city mayors, architects, engineers, urban planners, designers, surveyors, building and city managers, developers and infrastructure operators in promoting climate-neutral, safer, more inclusive and resilient urban planning and design.

21. The following capacity-building activities were organized to support the capacities of national and local governments for sustainable housing:

(a) Side event to the eighty-third session of the Committee “Green Finance for Urban Development”, in cooperation with the ECE Real Estate Market Advisory Group (REM) (Geneva, 6 October 2022; in person and online);

(b) Side event to the UN-Habitat Assembly “Regional Action supporting SDG Localization and Urban Resilience” (UN-Habitat, Nairobi, 8 June 2023; in person).

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

22. The following impact was observed as a result of the work of CUDHLM on post-COVID-19 recovery: local governments in the ECE region were provided with evidence-based policy recommendations to support post-COVID-19 recovery in cities and address the needs of the most vulnerable groups.

23. The following dissemination tools were used to promote the work on urban resilience and post-COVID-19 recovery: a dedicated project website (www.urbaneconomicresilience.org), press releases and the use of ECE social media platforms.

C. Sustainable Development Goals Voluntary Local Reviews: measuring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level

24. The Committee, at its eighty-second session, endorsed the regional guidelines for SDG Voluntary Local Reviews in the ECE Region. At its eighty-third session in 2022, the Committee endorsed the Updated Guidelines for the Development of Voluntary Local Reviews in the ECE Region (ECE/HBP/2022/6). The updated guidelines for the development

¹⁴ <https://unece.org/isu/documents/2022/12/post-session-documents/san-marino-declaration>.

of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR) provide cities with a standardized approach to localizing the SDGs and to reviewing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

25. To support the implementation of the Guidelines, ECE, in cooperation with the University of Geneva and other partners, developed and launched an online training module on VLRs¹⁵. To disseminate information on the training programme, the CUDHLM secretariat organized the workshop “SDG voluntary local reviews: evidence for greener, resilient and sustainable urban recovery in Eastern European and Central Asian countries in transition” (Geneva, 6 December 2022; in person and online).

26. In addition, the following capacity-building activities were organized:

(a) Side event “Multilevel governance for SDG Localization” to the ECOSOC Partnership Forum 2023” (New York, 31 January 2023; online);

(b) Roundtable “SDG 11 - Cities leading the transformation: SDGs in action and the new multilateralism” at the 2023 Regional Forum for Sustainable Development (RFSD) (Geneva, 29 March 2023; in person and online);

(c) Voluntary National Review - Voluntary Local Review (VNR-VLR) studio “Evidence-based approaches to the development of the Voluntary Local Reviews: experiences and best practices” at the 2023 RFSD (Geneva, 30 March 2023; in person and online);

(d) Side event to the 2023 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development “Building urban resilience and responding to crises through SDGs localization: Regional Approaches” (New York, 14 July 2023; in person).¹⁶

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

27. The following impacts were observed as a result of the work of CUDHLM on VLRs: increased cooperation between local/regional and national governments on the preparation of their VLRs/Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs) and VNRs and increased local capacity for evidence-based assessment of progress towards achieving the SDGs.

28. The following dissemination tools were used to promote the work on VLRs: a dedicated website for a joint project with the United Nations regional commissions and UN-Habitat¹⁷, press releases and ECE social media platforms. The work on VLRs was further disseminated through the “Local2030 Coalition”¹⁸ platform, which brings together United Nations agencies supporting the localization of the SDGs.

D. Implementation of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities initiative

29. The United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) initiative is a global platform dedicated to helping cities harness information communication technologies for achieving the SDGs. The initiative involves developing strategic guidelines and measurement tools for cities to use. Membership includes 14 United Nations organizations and programmes. The ECE Forests, Land and Housing Division, in cooperation with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and UN-Habitat, coordinates the U4SSC activities.

30. Within the framework of the U4SSC initiative, the Committee secretariat implemented the following activities to promote smart sustainable cities:

(a) Published the “Compendium of Practices on Innovative Financing”¹⁹ in 2022, which is used as training material to support capacity-building activities in cities in the ECE region;

¹⁵ <https://www.cityresiliencetraining.com/course/>.

¹⁶ <https://hlpf.un.org/2023>.

¹⁷ www.urbaneconomicresilience.org.

¹⁸ Local2030 Coalition is a multistakeholder platform for cooperation on VLRs and SDG localization; see more about Local2030 at <https://www.local2030.org/>.

¹⁹ <https://u4ssc.itu.int/publications/>.

(b) Organization of the Workshop on Smart Sustainable Cities, in cooperation with Polis University (Tirana, 28 September 2022; in person and online)²⁰;

(c) Co-organized the Seventh Meeting of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities Initiative (20 June 2023; online)²¹ with ITU and UN-Habitat.

31. The Committee secretariat also implemented the projects “Smart Sustainable Cities for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda in the UNECE Region” and the “Inter-regional cooperation for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda” from 2020 to 2023. The projects supported the transition of selected beneficiary cities – Grodno (Belarus), Almaty and Astana (Kazakhstan), Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), Tbilisi (Georgia), and Podgorica (Montenegro) - towards smartness and sustainability, with the aim of accelerating implementation of SDG 11 and other urban-related SDGs. As part of the projects, the Smart Sustainable City Profiles for Grodno, Astana, Bishkek and Tbilisi were published and the City Profiles for Almaty and Podgorica were drafted, hence, completing all the profiles for the pilot cities; and local workshops were organized to discuss the implementation of the recommendations of the city profiles. The projects were funded by UNDA.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

32. The following impacts were observed as a result of the implementation of the U4SSC programme in 2021-2022:

(a) Local and national governments were provided with an evaluation of their performance against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Smart Sustainable Cities (SSC) and recommendations for developing and implementing evidence-based sustainable urban policies;

(b) Increased awareness among local and national governments about best practices and approaches towards ensuring vertical and horizontal coordination and engaging citizens in the development of sustainable urban policies.

33. The following dissemination tools were used to promote U4SSC activities: a dedicated joint project website (<https://u4ssc.itu.int/about/>), press releases and ECE social media platforms.

E. Promoting multilevel governance through the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Forum of Mayors

34. In January 2023, the Executive Committee (EXCOM) of ECE established the Forum of Mayors as a subsidiary body of CUDHLM in the form of a Team of Specialists (ECE/EX/2023/L.4). EXCOM also decided that the Forum of Mayors will convene its meetings annually, in Geneva, immediately prior to the session of CUDHLM. This high level of interest signals the success of the Forum in anchoring itself as a practical mechanism for realizing the forward-looking vision of the United Nations Secretary-General of “a stronger, more networked and inclusive multilateral system, anchored within the United Nations”.²²

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

35. The following impacts were observed as a result of the establishment of the Forum of Mayors as part of the United Nations intergovernmental structure: increased engagement of the local governments in the ECE region with the United Nations; increased exchange between Mayors of cities of experiences and best practices, including success stories and challenges, in line with the topic of the Forum and within the mandate of the Committee; increased exchange between Mayors of their cities’ strategic plans, actions and joint

²⁰ <https://unece.org/info/events/event/371008>.

²¹ <https://u4ssc.itu.int/latest-meetings/7th-meeting/#:~:text=As%20part%20of%20the%20United,%2C%200930%20%E2%80%93%201610%20hours%20CEST>.

²² *Our Common Agenda – Report of the Secretary-General* (United Nations publication, 2021). Available at <https://unfoundation.org/our-common-agenda>.

initiatives for addressing regional and global challenges, including implementing the 2030 Agenda, in particular, SDG 11 and other relevant targets; and increased support to the implementation of the work of CUDHLM and subprogramme 8.

36. The following dissemination tools were used to promote the Third Forum of Mayors: a dedicated website (<https://forumofmayors.unece.org>) which also provides information on previous meetings – Day of Cities (2019), the first Forum of Mayors (2020) and the second Forum of Mayors (2022) – and on relevant good practices, events, guidance documents and publications; and social media platforms of ECE and its partners.

F. Activities of the Geneva United Nations Charter Centres for Sustainable Housing and Smart Sustainable Cities

37. To support the implementation of the Geneva United Nations Charter on Sustainable Housing, endorsed by ECE member States in 2015, a network of Geneva United Nations Charter Centres of Excellence for Sustainable Housing and Smart Sustainable Cities continued providing capacity-building activities and implementation of projects in close cooperation with the Committee secretariat.²³ The Centres conduct research and analysis on housing and urban development policies and undertake outreach activities to promote the Charter. They also engage in a range of activities on the ground within their specialization and expertise.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

38. The following impacts were observed as a result of the activities of the Geneva United Nations Charter Centres of Excellence:

(a) Improved understanding among local and national governments in the ECE region of the guiding principles contained in the Geneva United Nations Charter on Sustainable Housing;

(b) Increased exchange of experience and best practices among local and national governments in the ECE region for supporting the implementation of the Geneva United Nations Charter on Sustainable Housing;

39. To promote the work of the Geneva United Nations Charter Centres of Excellence, a video was developed to disseminate information on their activities (unece.org/housing/charter-centres) and the secretariat publishes up-to-date information on their activities on a dedicated ECE website (<https://unece.org/housing/charter>).

40. The following outputs were delivered in relation to the Geneva United Nations Charter Centres of Excellence

(a) The Centre of Excellence on Sustainable and Resilient Development, hosted by Co-Plan Institute at Polis University (Tirana, Albania), conducted a series of workshops, including "Co-design workshop on conceptualization of Green Transition" (Tirana, 8 – 22 November 2022); "Morning Talks - San Marino declaration on principles for sustainable and inclusive urban design" (Tirana, 9 February 2023); "SDG30 - Adopting SDG and San Marino Declaration on the Research Working Plan" (Tirana, 17 February 2023); and "Schools of

²³ The following Centres of Excellence have been established: (i) Centre of Excellence on Sustainable and Resilient Settlements in Tirana, Albania; (ii) Centre of Excellence on Smart Sustainable Cities in Glasgow, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; (iii) Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Housing in Tallinn, Estonia; (iv) Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Development Goal City Transition in Trondheim, Norway; (v) Centre of Excellence on Smart Sustainable Cities and Sustainable Urban Development at the University of Geneva, Switzerland; (vi) Toronto Centre of Excellence on Youth Homelessness Prevention at York University, Canada; (vii) Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Finance for Infrastructure and Smart Cities at Libero Istituto Universitario Carlo Cattaneo (LIUC – Cattaneo University), Italy; (viii) Centre of Excellence on the Forum of Mayors and Sustainable Urban Development at the Norman Foster Foundation, Spain; and (ix) a new Centre on Smart Sustainable Cities was established in cooperation with the City Diplomacy Lab at Columbia Global Centers in Paris in December 2022.

Architecture and Urban Planning of the Euro-Mediterranean region, Academic Advisory Group Meeting” (Tirana, 18-19 May 2023). The Centre of Excellence also supported the ECE secretariat in the collection of data and organization of stakeholder consultation for the ECE Country Profile on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management of Albania.

(b) The Centre of Excellence on Youth Homelessness Prevention, hosted by York University (Toronto, Canada), organized the following capacity-building trainings: a week-long training “Youth Work to make Housing First for Youth...WORK!” co-led by the Housing First Europe Hub (Budapest, 3-7 October 2022); Housing First for Youth “Train-the-Trainer: Housing First for Youth” event (Lyon, 13-15 March 2023); and a training as part of the 2023 FEANTSA Forum (Stockholm, 1-2 June 2023). It also conducted research on youth homelessness in Canada and in other countries of the ECE region.

(c) The Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Housing, hosted by the Estonian Union of Co-operative Housing Associations (Tallinn, Estonia), launched the technical assistance projects “Towards Ukraine's Residential Reconstruction: A Capacity-Building and Cooperation Programme for Housing Recovery in Kharkiv, Mykolaiv and Zhytomyr” and “INSPIRenov – Financial Schemes for Providing Innovation in the EE Renovation”. The Centre organized a series of capacity-building workshops and trainings and a study trip of housing managers from Latvia to Estonia (Tartu, 13-14 April 2023). The Centre also promoted the work of ECE on housing in its journal “Elamu” (“Dwelling”); and published a Handbook of Decisions of the Supreme Court of Estonia on cases of apartment associations.

(d) The Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Finance for Cities and Infrastructure, hosted by LIUC University (Castellanza, Italy), conducted research on public-private partnerships (PPP) and Green Finance for Real Estate. It organized a series of workshops on “Public and private finance for sustainable cities”; worked on the publication “PPP and Private Capital for Sustainable Infrastructure and Smart Cities”; and supported the Committee Bureau in developing the “Principles for Green Financing for Sustainable Real Estate, Infrastructure and Urban Transformation Projects”. The Centre was also involved in the collection of data for the ECE Smart Sustainable City/Country Profile of San Marino. It also supported the UN4Mykolaiv Task Force in the development of a vision for the city of Mykolaiv master plan.

(e) The Centre of Excellence on Smart Sustainable Cities, hosted by the municipality of Trondheim (Trondheim, Norway) and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), contributed to the ECE online training module on SDG Voluntary Local Reviews and developed a training curriculum for city officials on “Leadership and Governance for Sustainable Development”, in cooperation with the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), the BI Norwegian Business School and the Nord University (Norway).

(f) The Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Housing, hosted by Norman Foster Foundation (Madrid, Spain), was leading the development of a vision for the new master plan for the city of Kharkiv in Ukraine. The Centre also supported preparations for the Second Forum of Mayors; implemented a project on affordable and low-carbon housing; and organized two high-level workshops: on shelters (Madrid, June 2022), on energy-efficient housing (February 2023) and the “First Public Debate on Healthy Cities” workshop (Madrid, April 2023). In addition, the Centre participated in exhibitions at the Pompidou Centre (Paris, May to August 2023) and Venice Biennale Essential Homes (Venice, May to November 2023).

(h) The Centre of Excellence on Smart Sustainable Cities and Sustainable Urban Development, hosted by the University of Geneva (Geneva, Switzerland), supported the secretariat in developing data visualization of the KPIs for SSC for the ECE Smart Sustainable City Profiles. The Centre also developed an open-access e-learning platform²⁴ to host ECE e-learning content on urban sustainability and designed two e-learning courses (content, video recording, editing and exercises) on Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements and VLRs, in collaboration with ECE.

²⁴ www.cityresilience.com.

(g) The Centre of Excellence in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland contributed to the study “Scotland’s Urban AGE 2022”, which demonstrated how the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate crisis and Brexit combined to create an adverse environment for urbanism in the AGE cities (Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh).

41. In 2022, the work of the centre hosted by the municipality of Trondheim in Norway was discontinued and a new centre was established in cooperation with the City Diplomacy Lab at Columbia Global Centers in Paris.

G. Activities of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group

42. The Real Estate Market (REM) Advisory Group has continued to support the Committee and the Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA) by contributing to the work on affordable and energy-efficient housing, smart sustainable cities and land administration.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

43. The following impacts were observed as a result of the activities of the REM Advisory Group:

(a) Support to the Committee and WPLA in the implementation of their programmes of work;

(b) Increased exchange of experience and best practices among local and national governments in the ECE region in the areas of affordable and energy-efficient housing, smart sustainable cities and land administration.

44. The following outputs related to the work of the REM Advisory Group were delivered:

(a) Organization of side events to the eighty-third CUDHLM session and the Regional Forum for Sustainable Development for the ECE Region on affordable and energy-efficient housing;

(b) Support to the International Fire Safety Standards (IFSS) Coalition in promoting the implementation of the International Fire Safety Standards: Common Principles “Safe Buildings Save Lives”, endorsed by the Committee at its eighty-first session (Geneva, 6-9 October 2020).

45. Regular meetings were organized; REM supported the secretariat in the development of the Country Profile of Albania; and REM provided inputs into other CUDHLM draft documents and publications.

H. Land administration and management

46. The Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA) promotes security of tenure and improvement of cadastres and land registries, including institutional arrangements for land registration. The WPLA activities focused on improving e-governance, land tenure, spatial information and cadastres, with a special emphasis on innovation, accelerated digitalization and capacity-building in land administration. The thirteenth WPLA session took place in Geneva on 4 and 5 April 2023 (see ECE/HBP/WP.7/2023/2 for the session’s report). Detailed information on the implemented activities of WPLA is available in ECE/HBP/WP.7/2023/3.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

47. The following impacts/outputs were observed as a result of the work on land administration and management:

(a) Publication of “Digital transformation and land administration – Sustainable practices from the UNECE region and beyond”,²⁵ developed jointly with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG). The

²⁵ <https://unece.org/housing-and-land-management/reports-guidance-materials>.

publication features case studies of best practices on how modern information and communication technologies can accelerate documenting, recording, recognizing and monitoring of different forms of “people to land” relationships, with immediate benefits. These benefits include improved flexibility, inter-agency collaboration and transparency. The publication underlines the importance of developments in land administration activities in achieving multiple SDGs;

(b) The study “Sustainable development and security of property rights in the UNECE region: An assessment of perceived tenure security for land and housing”²⁶ was developed by ECE, jointly with the Global Land Alliance and the Overseas Development Institute. The study highlighted the importance of developing country-specific studies on the security of property rights based on an assessment of specific situations for each country to enable the development of more tailored recommendations, including ways to support the property rights of vulnerable groups.

48. The following dissemination tools are used to promote the work on land administration and management: the dedicated ECE website (<https://unece.org/land-administration-and-management>), videos, thematic articles, podcasts, press releases and ECE social media platforms

I. Country profiles on urban development, housing and land management

49. Following a request from the national government of Albania, work on the development of the Country Profile on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management of Albania started in October 2022. The Country Profile was drafted and discussed at a stakeholder consultation workshop organized in Tirana on 26 June 2023. The draft Profile is presented to the attention to the Committee (ECE/HBP/2023/Inf. 4).

50. Following requests from the national governments of Montenegro and Uzbekistan, preparations started to raise the required extrabudgetary funds to conduct the country profiles for these two countries. Pending availability of funding, the Country Profile for Montenegro will be developed during 2024 and it will integrate the results of the completed assessment of the country’s housing system (ECE/HBP/2023/Inf. 5). Work on the second Country Profile for Uzbekistan is planned for 2024-2025, pending availability of funds.

J. Technical cooperation activities

51. Technical cooperation activities presented in the previous sections were being carried out within the context of the following projects:

(a) UNDA 12th tranche project “Inter-regional cooperation for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda”, implemented in cooperation with the United Nations regional commissions and UN-Habitat; UNDA 12th tranche project “Smart Sustainable Cities for the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda in the UNECE Region”, implemented by ECE;

(b) UNDA 14th tranche project “Voluntary local reviews: evidence for greener, resilient, and sustainable urban recovery in Eastern European and Central Asian countries in transition”, led by UN-Habitat and implemented by ECE, United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG);

(c) The project “Enhance capacity of countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in developing and implementing policies and strategies for sustainable housing and sustainable smart cities (Centres of Excellence on Sustainable Housing and Sustainable Smart Cities for the CIS countries)”, supported by funds of the Russian Federation from 2021-2023.

²⁶ <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/pub/367641>.

52. The outbreak of the war in Ukraine on 24 February 2022 has caused the destruction of urban infrastructure in many towns and villages across the country. To ensure a coherent approach to reconstruction efforts, the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development of Ukraine elaborated a “Draft Framework Plan for the Integrated Rehabilitation of Settlements (Territories)” as a reference document for guiding local governments in developing and implementing reconstruction plans and initiatives in cooperation with the Ministry and with the support of international development partners. To pilot test the Draft Framework Plan, the Ministry launched a multifaceted project for reconstructing the cities of Kharkiv and Mykolaiv. The project serves as a blueprint for the reconstruction of other Ukrainian cities and towns. Given the thorough knowledge of ECE on the housing, land management and urban development systems of Ukraine, the Ministry requested ECE to:

- (a) Provide analysis and proposals for revisions to the draft framework Plan for the Integrated Rehabilitation of Settlements (Territories);
- (b) Support the implementation of the pilot project for reconstructing the cities of Kharkiv and Mykolaiv;
- (c) Establish a list of potential donors and elaborate city-based financing mechanisms for infrastructure projects to support the implementation of the revised Plan for the Integrated Rehabilitation of Settlements (Territories).

53. In response to the request of the Ministry, ECE established the UN4Kharkiv and UN4Mykolaiv task forces for supporting the reconstruction and long-term efforts of local and national governments to “building back better”. The two task forces bring together 16 United Nations agencies, other international organizations, representatives of the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development of Ukraine, the Kharkiv and Mykolaiv city governments, and Ukrainian experts. They are being coordinated by the Forests, Land and Housing Division, working closely with other ECE divisions and the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Country Team in Ukraine and supported by funds from the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation. The following meetings were organized as part of the UN4UkrainianCities project:

- (a) Task Force Meeting - UN4Kharkiv & UN4Mykolaiv on 22 November 2022 and on 21 February 2023 (online);
- (b) Workshop “Energy-efficient buildings and progress towards carbon neutrality in Ukrainian cities”, 18 November 2022 (online);
- (c) Workshop "Promoting circularity in rebuilding Ukrainian cities", 25 November 2022 (online);
- (d) Workshop on knowledge-sharing of Helsinki’s experience with civil defence shelters, 13 December 2022, Helsinki City Hall, Helsinki (in person);
- (e) Promoting economic recovery and planning reconstruction in Kharkiv and Mykolaiv through the use of public-private partnerships (PPPs) and innovative digital tools, 4 May 2023, Athens (in person and online);
- (f) UN4Ukrainian Cities Project Kick-Off Meeting, 05 June 2023, Palais des Nations, Geneva (in person and online);
- (g) Ukraine Recovery Conference, 21-22 June 2023, London (information on the project was presented);
- (h) Online weekly meetings for the development of the recovery master plans of Mykolaiv and Kharkiv (organized with interpretation English-Ukrainian);
- (i) Regular coordination meetings with the national government organizations, academia, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), United Nations agencies working in Ukraine and other United Nations organizations, which ensures coordination with other projects and activities and avoids possible duplication in project implementation.

54. In December 2022, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) approved funding for the work on the development of long-term

reconstruction master plans for the cities of Kharkiv and Mykolaiv. The project, funded by the BMZ and with the support of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)²⁷, is being implemented since June 2023.

K. Cooperation with other international organizations and cooperation through the Smart Sustainable Cities nexus at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

55. The Committee secretariat cooperates with the regional commissions of the United Nations and UN-Habitat within the context of its technical cooperation activities through the ECE Smart Sustainable Cities nexus. The secretariat also collaborates with Housing Europe and UN-Habitat within the context of the #Housing2030 initiative, and with the Geneva Cities Hub in organizing the roundtable “In focus: SDG 11” and the Forum of Mayors as part of the annual sessions of the Committee.

56. The secretariat is actively engaged in activities of multi-agency United Nations initiatives on housing, land management and urban development, including in the Local2030 Coalition regarding the localization of the SDGs; Making Cities Resilient 2030 (MCR2030) initiative led by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR); and U4SSC with the secretariat hosted by ITU, ECE and UN-Habitat.

57. To exchange information on activities and strengthen cooperation with other United Nations agencies, the secretariat was engaged in the organization of side events and delivering presentations as part of the following global and regional meetings:

(a) The Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the ECE Region (Geneva, 29-30 March 2023)²⁸ where the secretariat organized an SDG11 roundtable and several side events; and contributed to the side event organized by Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) “The city of the future is a green city: why we need trees in our cities for the SDGs,” (Geneva, 30 March 2023; in person and online);

(b) Second United Nations Habitat Assembly (Nairobi, 5-9 June 2023)²⁹, with a joint side event organized by the five United Nations regional commissions;

(c) United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (New York, 10-19 July 2023), with a joint side event organized by the five United Nations regional commissions;

(d) The European Union (EU) Urban Development Group (UDG) where presentations on ECE activities were delivered at the UDG meetings;

(e) Intergovernmental meetings and workshops organized by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) where presentations on ECE activities were delivered at the OECD workshops.

58. WPLA regularly cooperates with other United Nations agencies and international organizations involved in land administration in the ECE region, including UN-Habitat, United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), the European Union Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe (EU INSPIRE) Directive, FIG, EuroGeographics and others.

59. Following the ECE Commission session (Geneva, 18-19 April 2023), CUDHLM works to strengthen cooperation between the ECE sectoral committees within their mandates and develop joint planning with sectoral committees working on different aspects of housing and urban development.

²⁷ <https://www.giz.de/en/aboutgiz/profile.html>.

²⁸ <https://regionalforum.unece.org/events/regional-forum-2023>.

²⁹ <https://unhabitat.org/events/second-un-habitat-assembly>.

II. Major activities planned for 2024

60. The Committee will continue to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the housing, urban- and land-related SDGs, especially Goal 11 and its targets: (11.1) “Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services”; (11.3) “Enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries”; (11.6) “Reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management”; and (11.7) “Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces”.

61. Due to its cross-cutting nature, the Committee will also contribute to the achievement of other SDGs, particularly Goals 3, 6, 7, 9, 13, 15 and 17. Due consideration will be given to the integration of climate change mitigation and adaptation and disaster risk reduction and prevention measures into local and national housing, urban development and land management policies, strategies and planning. In attaining its objective, the subprogramme will continue building on cross-sectoral collaboration with other ECE sectoral committees engaged in the ECE nexus areas.

A. Affordable, accessible, adequate and healthy housing

62. The Committee will continue supporting the implementation of the Regional Action Plan 2030 through workshops, training events and studies. Countries will be invited to report regularly on the implementation of the Regional Action Plan during the annual sessions of the Committee.

63. The Committee will also continue its engagement in the #Housing2030 initiative. As part of the initiative and in cooperation with its partners, Housing Europe and UN-Habitat, and other stakeholders, it will focus on the development of longer-term scenarios of the housing sector in the ECE region; develop thematic studies; and organize regional and subregional policy workshops and capacity-building events.

64. The Committee will particularly focus its capacity-building activities on climate-neutral and energy-efficient housing to support the implementation of the Geneva United Nations Charter on Sustainable Housing and the Updated Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings³⁰. This will be done in cooperation with the ECE Sustainable Energy Division within the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings, established in 2017 by the Committee on Sustainable Energy and the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management,

65. The Committee will continue reviewing housing policies at the national level, including through the preparation of country profiles on housing, urban development and land management. In 2024, it will publish the Country Profile for Albania and, subject to availability of extrabudgetary financial resources, the Committee will work on the Country Profile for Montenegro and start preparations for the development of the Country Profile of Uzbekistan.

66. The Committee will work with the network of Charter Centres of Excellence to implement the Geneva United Nations Charter on Sustainable Housing.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

67. Implementation of the activities listed under heading A (affordable, accessible, adequate and healthy housing) is expected to support building the capacity of national and local authorities for developing and implementing policies for ensuring affordable, adequate and climate-neutral housing.

68. The following dissemination tools will be used to promote the work on housing: the Committee website (<https://unece.org/housing>), the #Housing2030 online platform

³⁰ <https://unece.org/documents/2020/12/updated-framework-guidelines-energy-efficiency-standards-buildings>.

(www.housing2030.org), the ECE Geneva United Nations Charter Centres of Excellence website (<https://unece.org/housing/charter>), podcasts, videos, thematic articles, press releases and ECE social media platforms.

B. Building urban resilience

69. The ECE secretariat, in cooperation with representatives of other United Nations regional commissions and other partner agencies, will continue working to support cities in countries with economies in transition and support countries in building urban resilience through policy advice, capacity-building, and use of innovative financial mechanisms for urban infrastructure projects and nature-based solutions. This will be done through:

(a) The implementation of the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) global project “Supporting Member States in Urban Economic Resilience building for inclusive responses and recovery regarding natural, man-made disasters, internal and external shocks” (2023-2024). The project will build on experiences and lessons learned from the UNDA Rapid Response project “Building Urban Economic Resilience during and after COVID-19”,³¹ implemented in 2020-2022, and on the outcomes of the projects’ independent evaluation³²;

(b) Building capacities of cities in the use of innovative and green financial instruments for urban recovery through the ECE Guidelines on tools and mechanisms to finance Smart Sustainable Cities Projects³³ (developed between 2020-2022); the Compendium of Practices for Innovative Financing of Smart Sustainable Projects;³⁴ and the Principles for Green Financing for Sustainable Infrastructure and Urban Transformation Projects (ECE/HBP/2023/3; elaborated by the CUDHLM Bureau), which are presented to the attention of the Committee at its 84th session;

(c) Promoting use of nature-based solutions to support building urban resilience. This will be done by building on the existing synergies with Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) in the areas of greening cities and urban forests. The Committee secretariat will engage more actively in the COFFI-led work, including in the ECE Trees in Cities Challenge³⁵, the Informal Network of Experts on Urban Nature (see ECE/HBP/2023/4) and the Forests for Food in Cities³⁶;

(d) Implementation of the COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the ECE Region³⁷ will be further disseminated to relevant stakeholders through the organization of at least two subregional workshops and trainings.

(e) The San Marino Declaration will be further disseminated through presentations, articles, website, best practices exchange, workshops and podcasts.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

70. Implementation of the activities listed under heading B (building urban resilience) is expected to support building the capacity of national and local authorities for developing and implementing policies for ensuring sustainable post-COVID-19 urban economic recovery and resilience as well as addressing the needs of the most vulnerable population groups living in informal settlements.

71. The following dissemination tools will be used to promote the work on urban resilience and on informal settlements: videos, thematic articles, podcasts, press releases and ECE social media platforms.

³¹ See www.urbaneconomicresilience.org.

³² Please see at https://unece.org/evaluation-reports#accordion_9.

³³ <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/pub/368918>.

³⁴ <https://www.itu.int/en/publications/Documents/tsb/2023-U4SSC-Compendium-Practices-Innovative-Financing-SSC-Projects/index.html#p=1>.

³⁵ <https://treesincities.unece.org/>.

³⁶ <https://unece.org/Forests4FoodCities>.

³⁷ <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/pub/367518>.

C. Implementation of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities initiative

72. ECE will continue its work as a member of the secretariat of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) initiative. It will finalize activities under the UNDA 12th tranche project “Sustainable Smart Cities with Innovative Financing”³⁸ in six project pilot cities - Grodno (Belarus), Almaty and Nur-Sultan (Kazakhstan), Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), Tbilisi (Georgia) and Podgorica (Montenegro) - and will work on improving its methodologies for the KPI evaluation and developing a dashboard with data on KPI evaluation.

D. Sustainable Development Goals Voluntary Local Reviews: measuring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level

73. The updated Guidelines for the Development of Voluntary Local Reviews in the ECE Region (ECE/HBP/2022/6) will support local governments in tracking progress towards the achievement of the SDGs and strengthen synergies between local, national and global level policies and initiatives. An ECE online training provides information on how the regional Guidelines can be implemented.

74. Testing of the updated regional Guidelines will continue in pilot cities of the UNDA 14th tranche project “Voluntary Local Reviews: Evidence for Greener, Resilient and Sustainable Urban Recovery in Eastern European and Central Asian Countries in Transition”³⁹ - Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan; Dushanbe, Tajikistan; Nis, Serbia; and Tbilisi, Georgia. As part of the project, ECE, in cooperation with project partners, organized a Voluntary National Review (VNR)-Voluntary Local Review (VLR) studio “Evidence-based approaches to the development of the Voluntary Local Reviews: experiences and best practices”, held as a side event to the 2023 RFSD in March 2023.

Activity impacts and dissemination of results

75. Implementation of the activities under heading C (SDGs VLRs) is expected to support further localisation of the SDGs and support building urban resilience in cities.

76. The following dissemination tools will be used to promote the work on VLRs: videos, thematic articles, podcasts, press releases and ECE social media platforms.

E. Activities of the Geneva United Nations Charter Centres on Sustainable Housing and Smart Sustainable Cities

77. The Centres will continue to be actively engaged in the implementation of the CUDHLM programme of work through capacity-building and technical cooperation activities. This will include the following projects:⁴⁰

(a) The Centre of Excellence on Sustainable and Resilient Development, hosted by Co-Plan Institute at the Polis University (Tirana, Albania), will continue supporting the Committee secretariat in the development of the Country Profile on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management of Albania and in the dissemination of its findings and policy recommendations. It will also implement a project, in cooperation with the University of Ferrara in Italy, “Planning cities for the (post-) pandemic/crisis era aspects of territorial sustainability and resilience in Lezha Region, Albania”;

³⁸ The project was supported by the UNDA 12 tranche projects, see more at <https://unece.org/housing/innovativefinancing-sustainable-smart-cities> and <https://unece.org/housing/projects/NUA-implementation>; and through a project “Strengthening capacities of selected Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries to implement urban related SDGs through Country Profiles on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management and innovative financing mechanisms” funded by the Russian Federation.

³⁹ <https://unece.org/housing/VLRs>.

⁴⁰ This is not an exhaustive list. The detailed list of planned activities is at <https://unece.org/housing/charter-centres>.

(b) The Centre of Excellence on Youth Homelessness Prevention, hosted by York University (Toronto, Canada), will continue supporting ECE in identifying and promoting rights-based, evidence-informed approaches to preventing and addressing homelessness in the ECE region;

(c) The Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Housing, hosted by the Norman Foster Foundation (Madrid, Spain), and the Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Finance for Cities and Infrastructure, hosted by LIUC Business School (Castellanza, Italy), will continue the provision of expertise to the ECE project “UN4Ukrainian Cities: Enhancing urban planning in the cities of Kharkiv and Mykolaiv in Ukraine by supporting to the implementation of the new master plans and facilitating investments in sustainable urban infrastructure”;

(d) The Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Housing, hosted by the Norman Foster Foundation, will also implement the projects “Essential Homes – Scaling Up” and “Portugal Modular Construction System – Prototyping”;

(e) The Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Housing, hosted by the Estonian Union of Co-operative Housing Associations (Tallinn, Estonia), will implement the projects “Towards Ukraine’s Residential Reconstruction: A Capacity-Building and Cooperation Programme for Housing Recovery in Kharkiv, Mykolaiv and Zhytomyr” and “INSPIRenov – Financial Schemes for Providing Innovation in the EE Renovation”, in close coordination with the CUDHLM secretariat;

(f) The Centre of Excellence on Smart Sustainable Cities and Sustainable Urban Development, hosted by University of Geneva (Geneva, Switzerland), will continue its work on the projects “REDEHOPE: Project aiming at building an online self-diagnosis tool to help housing organization improve their data management practices” and “Voluntary Local Reviews Online Dashboard”. They will be developing a flexible online system to collect, aggregate, analyze and visualize VLRs. They will also continue developing the online portal “CityResilienceTraining.com”, which already hosts several online training programmes;

(g) The Centre of Excellence on Smart Sustainable Cities, hosted by the City Diplomacy Lab Columbia Global Centers (Paris, France), will organize a series of online and in-person capacity-building workshops on “City Diplomacy in Times of Crises”.

78. The CUDHLM secretariat will continue organizing regular network meetings and foster the exchange of best practices between the Centres.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

79. By strengthening the network of the Centres, new proposals for innovative joint activities will be developed to support the implementation of the Geneva United Nations Charter on Sustainable Housing as well as the Regional Action Plan.

80. The following dissemination tools will be used to promote the work of the Centres of Excellence: the dedicated ECE website (<https://unece.org/housing/charter>), videos, thematic articles, podcasts, press releases and ECE social media platforms.

F. Promoting multilevel governance through the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Forum of Mayors

81. The Third Forum of Mayors will take place in Geneva on 2 and 3 October 2023. The Forum is expected to inform the Committee, at its 84th session, on its outcomes and present the recommendations of the Forum to the Committee (ECE/HBP/2023/1) for inclusion into the implementation of the Committee's programmes of work for 2023 and 2024.

G. Activities of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group

82. The REM Advisory Group supports the Committee and WPLA in the implementation of their work programmes according to its draft programme of work for the period 2023-2024 (ECE/HBP/2022/8).

H. Land administration and management

83. In order to continue to assist member States in improving land administration and land management, promoting security of tenure and improving cadastres and land registries, including institutional arrangements for land administration, activities for 2023 will focus on accelerated digitalization, legal barriers to data, security of tenure and capacity-building in land administration, notwithstanding monitoring and assessing the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the land administration sector.

84. A study on “Ecosystems and security for future land administration arrangements” will be developed to address related challenges in the region and provide recommendations for helping governments strengthen the role of land administration in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda.

85. As a follow-up activity, a workshop in Madrid on security in land administration, will be organized in November 2023 and will cover topics of tenure security in land administration. The workshop will facilitate sharing experiences and best practices among countries in the ECE region based on content of the WPLA published reports “Digital transformation and land administration – Sustainable practices from the UNECE region and beyond” and “Sustainable development and security of property rights in the UNECE region: An assessment of perceived tenure security for land and housing”.

Activity impacts/outputs and dissemination of results

86. The planned activities of WPLA will further support strengthening technical capacity of land administration authorities in the ECE region.

87. The following dissemination tools will be used to promote the work of WPLA: the dedicated ECE website (<https://unece.org/land-administration-and-management>), videos, thematic articles, podcasts, press releases and ECE social media platforms.

I. Country profiles on urban development, housing and land management

88. Following requests from the national governments of Montenegro and Uzbekistan, preparations are underway to raise the required extrabudgetary funds to conduct the country profiles for these two countries. Pending availability of funding, the country profile for Montenegro will be developed during 2024 integrating the results of the completed assessment of the country’s housing system (ECE/HBP/2023/Inf. 5) and work on the second Country Profile for Uzbekistan is planned for 2024-2025.

J. Update on technical cooperation activities

89. In 2023-2024, the following projects will be implemented:

(a) UN4UkrainianCities: Enhancing urban planning in the cities of Kharkiv and Mykolaiv in Ukraine by supporting the implementation of the new master plans and facilitating investments in sustainable urban infrastructure. This project is funded by BMZ and is implemented with the support of GIZ. It includes the following activities:

- (i) Support to the development of the national legislation on housing and urban development;
- (ii) Development of an online interactive toolbox;
- (iii) A survey-based assessment of the socio-economic situation;
- (iv) Capacity-building activities for local governments to develop and implement economic development programmes;
- (v) Formulation of pilot projects and identification of investors under the master plans of Kharkiv and Mykolaiv and matchmaking of the pilot projects with private and public financial institutions;

- (vi) Conducting ten workshops to strengthen the institutional systems and capacity-building of local governments for the implementation of the reconstruction master plans;
 - (vii) Organization of trainings and field trips for local technical experts to develop solutions for project preparation, implementation, operation, and maintenance; development of a municipal investment tracker investment tracker.
- (b) Project “Building capacities of UNECE member States for integrated urban planning and accelerating achieving urban related SDGs through exchange of best practices and developing an online Toolbox” to be funded by the city of Madrid, Spain. The project will include:
- (i) Organization of three thematic workshops to exchange experiences and innovative practices in urban planning, such as, for instance, development of online city platforms and urban cadasters;
 - (ii) Collection of available best practices based on outcomes of the thematic workshops and development of an online toolbox with best practices;
 - (iii) Organization of two training workshops (in person and online) for representatives of regional and local authorities on specific topics addressed by the Toolbox;
 - (iv) Dissemination of the toolbox information through presentations and organization of side events at relevant international meetings and events (for instance, COP-28, the World Urban Forum and other relevant regional events).
- (c) Implementation of the UNDA projects on smart sustainable cities and on the VLRs according to the projects’ schedules.

III. Resources for the implementation of the activities of Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management in 2024

90. Many of the activities of the Committee, especially those involving the provision of technical assistance to countries, are not covered by funds of the ECE Regular Budget. Some of the planned and listed activities will be implemented with funds from the ECE Regular Budget, UNDA, and RPTC. Some extrabudgetary projects in 2023-2024 were funded by the Governments of Czechia, Slovenia, Switzerland.

91. Additional extrabudgetary funds will be required for the implementation of activities under the 2023 and 2024 Programmes of Work of the Committee.

92. The Housing and Land Management Unit is comprised of four regular budget staff. This includes two professional staff: one P4 Environmental Affairs Officer (Secretary to the Committee) and one P2 Associate Economic Affairs Officer (Secretary to the Working Party) and two general service staff: one G6 Programme Assistant and one G6 Statistical Assistant. A Junior Professional Officer, supported by the Government of Italy for 2022-2024, serves as Secretary to the Forum of Mayors.