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**Meeting with the Chair of the Committee on Urban Development,
Housing and Land Management**

Report by the Chair

I. Introduction

1. The Chair of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (CUDHLM), Ms. Stephanie FÜRER (Switzerland), is pleased to submit her report to the 131st meeting of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Executive Committee (EXCOM).

2. This report outlines the main achievements of CUDHLM in implementing its programmes of work for the period 2022-2023 since its eighty-third session in October 2022. Detailed information is contained in the report of the eighty-third session of the Committee (ECE/HBP/219).

3. The eighty-fourth session of CUDHLM was organized on 4–6 October 2023. It was held in person and brought together around 300 participants, representing 44 member States from across the ECE region and beyond, the United Nations regional commissions and specialized organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the academia. The session was streamed live on UN web TV.

II. Achievements since the eighty-third session

4. In 2022-2023, 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 2030². The following activities were implemented:

A. Affordable, accessible, and healthy housing

1. Implementation of the 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

5. In 2022–2023, the Committee supported implementation of 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” which was endorsed by the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, Housing, Land Management on 6 October 2021 and published with illustrative sketches by renowned architect Norman Foster.³ The Regional Action Plan provides integrated principles, goals, targets, and actions for building more resilient, inclusive and sustainable people-centred cities with affordable, accessible and climate-neutral housing.

6. At the eighty-fourth session, a panel discussion was organized where representatives of member States and key stakeholders reported on the implementation of the Regional Action Plan in their respective countries, cities and communities and shared experiences and best practices. For instance, a representative of the Ministry for Environment and Physical Planning of North Macedonia, highlighted the vital role of urban spatial planning and emphasized that a swift, equitable and inclusive green transition is needed, through the promotion of household photovoltaics and the creation of new green jobs. A representative of the Federal Office for Housing, Switzerland, addressed housing shortages in cities, emphasizing the need to strengthen multilevel cooperation for compact, walkable urban development and affordability improvements, despite limited public housing. A

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>.

representative of the Ministry of Transport, Slovakia underlined the importance of ensuring accessible and affordable housing through supporting housing stock refurbishment, boosting social housing construction, renovating existing homes, enacting new legislation, and adopting a multi-stakeholder approach to engage all stakeholders, thereby empowering cities and towns to play an active role in this endeavour. A representative of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, United States of America, discussed the new Green and Resilient Retrofit Programme, highlighting that the largest portion is dedicated to housing investments for low-income residents through loan and grant programmes. A representative of the Chisinau city government, Republic of Moldova, introduced plans for the development of an urban planning system named GIS-LOCAL which is based on the use of the Geographical Information System and aims to provide swift decision-making information for municipal management. A representative from the Estonian Union of Cooperative Housing Associations, Tallinn, Estonia, presented the national 3D e-construction platform containing digital information on building stock. The platform allows the city to efficiently organize refurbishment of buildings, including residential ones.

7. 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 2023 Regional Forum for Sustainable Development “SDG 9 & Fashion - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure” (Geneva, 28 March 2023; in person and online);⁶

(e) Roundtable “Housing affordability, energy efficiency and health: policy challenges for cities and regions” (01 September 2023; Alicante, Spain; in person).

8. As a result of work on the Regional Action Plan: increased awareness was observed among local and national governments and other stakeholders in the ECE region about the Regional Action Plan.

9. The following dissemination tools were used to promote 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” Initiative

10. In 2022–2023, the Committee supported ECE governments in implementation of their policies and programmes for affordable and decent housing through policy advice and capacity building activities. This was done based on the toolbox on affordable, decent, and

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

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

⁶ <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/events/376596>.

climate-neutral housing developed as part of the joint ECE-UN-Habitat-Housing Europe Initiative “#Housing2030: Effective policies for affordable housing in the UNECE region”.⁷

11. A discussion on outcomes of the #Housing2030 implementation activities at the eighty-fourth Committee session⁸ highlighted the triple challenge of affordability, sustainability and availability of housing as across the ECE region the increased interest rates on mortgages and high construction and renovation costs have led to backlogs in affordable, especially social housing availability. The Committee experts called for promoting a wider range of innovative solutions in the housing construction and renovation, including through the use of prefabricated buildings, repurposing empty government-owned buildings for affordable social housing solutions, strengthening the work of housing cooperatives and homeowner associations and others. At the same time, they stressed a shortage of skilled workforce, especially of construction workers, able to implement the technological and institutional innovations and called for more training to develop the needed skills.

12. 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 organized by the Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic (Prague, 11–12 October 2022; in person);¹⁰

(c) Workshop on Integrated Development of Five Residential Areas in Bishkek (Bishkek, 28 February 2023; in person and online);¹¹

(d) Side event to the International Housing Festival “(Re)Defining the role of Housing Agencies in Southern Europe” (Barcelona, 8 June 2023; in person).¹²

13. 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 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.

14. The following dissemination tools were used to promote the work on housing: the “Your #Housing2030 Making a House a Home”¹³ 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.

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

15. 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

⁷ As part of the Initiative, a study “#Housing2030: Effective policies for affordable housing in the UNECE region” was published in 2022, which is available at <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/pub/360530>.

⁸ See the report of the eighty-fourth Committee session, ECE/HBP/2019, specifically the session “Activities of the network of the Geneva UN Charter Centres for Sustainable Housing and Smart Sustainable Cities.

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

¹⁰ <https://mmr.gov.cz/en/ministerstvo/spatial-planning-and-building-rules/conference-ecap-2022>

¹¹ <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/events/377797>

¹² Information on events at the Social Housing Festival at <https://socialhousingfestival.eu/>

¹³ <https://www.housing2030.org/podcasts>.

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”

16. This project started in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic which exposed the needs of the most vulnerable population groups living in informal settlements across the ECE region. In 2022, the “COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the ECE Region”, which 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, was published.¹⁴ In 2022-2023, the Committee supported implementation of the Action Plan.

17. 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 pilot informal settlements (out of the existing 54) and formulate proposals for bankable project proposals.¹⁵ 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”¹⁶ were developed in English. The courses are being translated into Russian.

18. 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.

19. 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 COVID-19 pandemic

20. An independent evaluation of the “rapid response” project on “Building urban economic resilience during and after COVID-19” (www.urbaneconomicresilience.org)¹⁷ 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).

21. To respond to the evaluation recommendations, the UN Regional Commissions, in cooperation with UN-Habitat, 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 is implemented from 2023 until 2025 and it supports five pilot cities globally in designing,

¹⁴ <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/pub/367518>.

¹⁵ Read more at <https://unece.org/housing-and-land-management/news/unece-helps-bishkek-kyrgyzstan-informal-settlements-and-urban>

¹⁶ Available at: <https://www.cityresiliencetraining.com/course/>.

¹⁷ The project was implemented by the five United Nations Regional Economic Commissions, in cooperation with the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), and with the support of the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) programme and 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. See more at www.urbaneconomicresilience.org

implementing, and monitoring sustainable, resilient, and inclusive economic and financial responses to internal and external shocks to achieve the SDGs.

22. 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 Cities.¹⁸ 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.

23. At the eighty-fourth session, the Committee organized a dedicated panel discussion on implementation of the San Marino Declaration.¹⁹ The panel speakers underlined the need to address through innovative urban planning and design multiple and interlinked challenges, including those related to the energy use, finance and climate change. They highlighted the importance of incorporating participatory methods throughout the entire life cycle of urban projects, promoting stakeholder and community engagement in co-defining challenges, co-designing solutions, and co-implementing the projects as this approach is crucial for preventing prolonged and expensive cycles of revisions.

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

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

(b) Side event to the UNECE Urban Resilience Week 2023: “Promoting access to decent, adequate, affordable and healthy housing for all” (5 October 2023; Geneva, Switzerland; in-person and online).

25. 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.

26. 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

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

28. 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 VLRS.²⁰ To disseminate information on the training programme, the CUDHLM secretariat organized the workshop “SDG voluntary local reviews: evidence for greener, resilient and

¹⁸ <https://unece.org/isu/documents/2022/12/post-session-documents/san-marino-declaration>.

¹⁹ Session V. “Follow-up to the adoption of the San Marino Declaration on principles for sustainable and inclusive urban design and architecture” at the 84th session of the CUDLHM, ECE/HBP/2019, paras 13-18.

²⁰ <https://www.cityresiliencetraining.com/course/>.

sustainable urban recovery in Eastern European and Central Asian countries in transition” (Geneva, 6 December 2022; in person and online).

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

(a) Webinars: Multilevel governance for SDG localization: “Connecting VLRs, VSRs and VNRs” (17 July 2023) and “Data innovation for reporting, planning and transparency” (18 July 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).²¹

30. The following impacts were observed as a result of the work of CUDHLM on VLRs:

(a) Increased cooperation between local/regional and national governments on the preparation of their VLRs/Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs) and VNRs;

(b) Increased local capacity for evidence-based assessment of progress towards achieving the SDGs.

31. 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-Habitat,²² press releases and ECE social media platforms. The work on VLRs was further disseminated through the “Local2030 Coalition”²³ platform, which brings together United Nations agencies supporting the localization of the SDGs.

D. Implementation of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities initiative

32. 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.

33. 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”²⁴ in December 2022, which is used as training material to support capacity-building activities in cities in the ECE region;

(b) Organized the Workshop on Smart Sustainable Cities, in cooperation with Polis University (Tirana, 28 September 2022; in person and online);²⁵

²¹ <https://hlpf.un.org/2023>.

²² www.urbaneconomicresilience.org.

²³ Local2030 Coalition is a multistakeholder platform for cooperation on VLRs and SDG localization; see more about Local2030 at <https://www.local2030.org/>.

²⁴ <https://u4ssc.itu.int/publications/>.

²⁵ <https://unece.org/info/events/event/371008>.

(c) Co-organized the Seventh Meeting of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities Initiative (20 June 2023; online)²⁶ with ITU and UN-Habitat.

34. The Committee secretariat also finalized in October 2023 implementation of 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”. The projects were funded by the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) AND 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.

35. 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. The projects resulted in 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.

36. 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

37. 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. Thus, the Forum is 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”.²⁷

38. The following impacts were observed as a result of the establishment of the Forum of Mayors as part of the United Nations intergovernmental structure:

(a) Increased engagement of the local governments in the ECE region with the United Nations;

(b) 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;

(c) Increased exchange between Mayors of their cities’ strategic plans, actions and joint initiatives for addressing regional and global challenges, including implementing the 2030 Agenda, in particular, SDG 11 and other relevant targets;

(d) Increased support to the implementation of the work of CUDHLM and subprogramme 8.

39. The following dissemination tools were used to promote the Third Forum of Mayors: a dedicated website (<https://forumofmayors.unece.org>) – and on relevant good practices,

²⁶ <https://u4ssc.itu.int/latest-meetings/7th-meeting/#:~:text=As%20part%20of%20the%20United,%2C%200930%20%E2%80%93%201610%20hours%20CEST.>

²⁷ *Our Common Agenda – Report of the Secretary-General* (United Nations publication, 2021). Available at <https://unfoundation.org/our-common-agenda>.

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

40. 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.²⁸ 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.

41. 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.

42. 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>).

43. 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 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-

²⁸ 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.

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 implemented a project on affordable and low-carbon housing; and organized high-level workshops: 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).

(g) 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 platform²⁹ 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.

(h) 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).

44. 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.

²⁹ www.cityresilience.com.

G. Activities of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group

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

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

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

(b) Increased engagement of other stakeholders, including academia and private sector in implementation of the Committee's and WPLA programmes of work.

47. 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 in 2020.

48. 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

49. 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.

50. The following outputs were produced in the context of the work on land administration and management:

(a) Publication of "Digital transformation and land administration – Sustainable practices from the UNECE region and beyond",³⁰ developed jointly with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG). The 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"³¹ 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

³⁰ <https://unece.org/housing-and-land-management/reports-guidance-materials>.

³¹ <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/pub/367641>.

enable the development of more tailored recommendations, including ways to support the property rights of vulnerable groups.

51. 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

52. 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, discussed at a stakeholder consultation workshop organized in Tirana on 26 June 2023, and was presented to the attention to the Committee at its eighty-fourth session (ECE/HBP/2023/Inf. 4).

53. 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.

III. Major activities planned for 2024 and beyond

54. 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".

55. 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 considerations 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 collaboration with other ECE sectoral committees.

A. Affordable, accessible, adequate, and healthy housing

56. 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.

57. 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.

58. 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 Buildings³². 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.

59. 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.

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

61. 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.

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

63. 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”,³³ implemented in 2020-2022, and on the outcomes of the projects’ independent evaluation³⁴;

(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 Projects³⁵ (developed between 2020-2022); the Compendium of Practices for Innovative Financing of Smart Sustainable Projects;³⁶ 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

³² <https://unece.org/documents/2020/12/updated-framework-guidelines-energy-efficiency-standards-buildings>.

³³ See www.urbaneconomicresilience.org.

³⁴ Please see at https://unece.org/evaluation-reports#accordion_9.

³⁵ <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/pub/368918>.

³⁶ <https://www.itu.int/en/publications/Documents/tsb/2023-U4SSC-Compendium-Practices-Innovative-Financing-SSC-Projects/index.html#p=1>.

secretariat will engage more actively in the COFFI-led work, including in the ECE Trees in Cities Challenge,³⁷ the Informal Network of Experts on Urban Nature (see ECE/HBP/2023/4) and the Forests for Food in Cities;³⁸

(d) Implementation of the COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the ECE Region³⁹ 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.

64. 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.

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

C. Implementation of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities initiative

66. 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”⁴⁰ 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

67. 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.

68. 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”⁴¹ - 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.

³⁷ <https://treesincities.unece.org/>.

³⁸ <https://unece.org/Forests4FoodCities>.

³⁹ <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/pub/367518>.

⁴⁰The 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.

⁴¹ <https://unece.org/housing/VLRs>.

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

70. 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

71. 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:⁴²

(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”;

(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 (Castellaza, 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 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 organizations improve their data management practices” and “Voluntary Local Reviews Online Dashboard”. They will be developing a flexible online system to collect, aggregate, analyse, 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”.

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

⁴² This is not an exhaustive list. The detailed list of planned activities is at <https://unece.org/housing/charter-centres>.

73. 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 in Sustainable Housing as well as the Regional Action Plan.

74. 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

75. The Third Forum of Mayors took place in Geneva on 2 and 3 October 2023. On 4 October 2023, the Committee was informed on the Forum outcomes and presented 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.

76. The Committee:

(a) Took note of the information provided about the Forum of Mayors by the Forum Chair;

(b) Endorsed the recommendations of the Forum of Mayors;

(c) Requested the secretariat to organize surveys of mayors and participants who attended the First, Second and Third forums on the format and possible topics of the Forum of Mayors to be held in 2024.

G. Activities of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group

77. The REM Advisory Group supports the Committees 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

78. 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 2024 will focus in 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.

79. 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.

80. As a follow-up activity, a workshop in Madrid on security in land administration, was organized in November 2023 and covered topics of tenure security in land administration. The workshop facilitated 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".

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

82. 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

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

84. 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. Junior Professional Officer, supported by the Government of Italy for 2022-2024, serves as Secretary to the Forum of Mayors.

85. The technical cooperation activities supporting the ECE programme countries require extrabudgetary funding. In 2022-2023, some of the technical assistance activities were covered by funds provided by the governments of Germany as well as Czechia, Slovenia and Switzerland.

86. Given the continuously growing demand from the ECE programme countries for the provision of capacity building and policy advice from the Committee secretariat, additional extrabudgetary funds will be required for the implementation of activities under the 2024 Programme of Work of the Committee.

IV. Any proposed change to the subsidiary structure of the Committee

87. The Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management held its eighty-fourth session on 4-6 October 2023.⁴³ The Committee noted with appreciation the activities of the Working Party on Land Administration, including the organization of its thirteenth session. On the basis of a comprehensive review of activities prepared by the Working Party, the Committee assessed needs for possible adjustments to its mandate and did not propose any. As part of its deliberations, the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management:

(a) Approved the extension of the mandate of the Working Party until 2030 and requested this be transmitted to EXCOM for final approval;

(b) Adopted the draft programme of work of the Housing and Land Management Component of Housing, Land Management and Population Subprogramme for 2024 and recommended it be sent to EXCOM for approval.

88. The Executive Committee is invited to approve these decisions.

V. Follow-up to the 2023 session of the Economic Commission for Europe

89. The high-level segment of the Seventieth session of the Commission was held under the theme "Digital and Green Transformations for Sustainable Development in the Region of the Economic Commission for Europe" in Geneva from 18 to 19 April 2023. Inter alia,

⁴³ The report of the session is contained in document ECE/HBP/219.

the Commission invited the subsidiary bodies, as appropriate, to consider developing proposals in their respective programmes of work, including possible collaboration across subprogrammes, for impactful and measurable solutions that promote digital and green transformations and that can facilitate attaining the objectives of the 2030 Agenda.

90. The Committee discussed at its eighty-fourth session (Geneva, 4–6 October 2023) the outcomes of the high-level segment of the Seventieth session of the Commission and reviewed its activities related to green and digital transformation. The Committee session participants reiterated that digital and green transformation are at the centre of the different workstreams under the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management. For instance, the Committee provides technical assistance to cities bolster their resilience through evidence-based assessments and capacity building activities through its project on urban economic resilience, see more at www.urbaneconomicresilience.org. It supports preparation of the ECE smart sustainable cities profiles under the United for Smart and Sustainable Cities initiative; scenario studies on future land administration;⁴⁴ the ECE country profiles on urban development, housing and land management, which provide best practices as well as evidence-based recommendations for people-centred, forward-looking green digital urban development policies with direct contribution to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These Committee workstreams feed into the work on implementation of the Regional Action Plan 2030 “Tackling challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, climate and housing emergencies in region, city, neighbourhood and home”. They also feed into the ECE Forum of Mayors, which aims at strengthening city-to-city collaboration among ECE mayors, State agencies and the global level in many areas to address among others, the climate change challenge, capitalize on information and communications technology for driving city transformation.

91. The Committee considered that these efforts to support digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the region can be further scaled up and invited the Committee Bureau to develop additional concrete proposals on the approaches to enhance the impact of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies’ instruments to fostering digital and green transformations in the ECE region. These proposals are expected to be presented to the attention of the Committee at its eighty-fifth session (Geneva, 4–6 October 2024).

VI. Intersectoral activities: new activities and/or progress in existing intersectoral activities

92. The Committee on Sustainable Energy and the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management cooperate within their Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings.

93. UN4Ukrainian Cities is implemented in close cooperation with experts from the ECE sustainable transport and Environment divisions.

94. Representatives of ECE subprogrammes provided inputs into the organization of the Third Forum of Mayors and its side events.

VII. Technical cooperation activities

95. In 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;

⁴⁴ <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/pub/363124>

- (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.
- (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 in the VLRs according to the projects’ schedules.

VIII. Cooperation with other organizations

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

97. 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.

98. 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)⁴⁵ where the secretariat organized an SDG11 roundtable and several side events; and contributed to the side event organized by Committee on Forests and

⁴⁵ <https://regionalforum.unece.org/events/regional-forum-2023>.

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)⁴⁶, 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.

99. 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.

100. Following the Seventieth session of the Commission (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 digital and green transformation.

⁴⁶ <https://unhabitat.org/events/second-un-habitat-assembly>.